

MANCHOUKUO'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS

By

AILISHA MARY O'SULLIVAN

Bachelor of Arts

University College Cork

Cork, Ireland

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Thesis Approved:

*Robert M. Grantling*

Thesis Adviser

*John A. Sylvester*

*George F. Jewsbury*

*Norman N. Dunham*

Dean of the Graduate College

## PREFACE

This study examines the puppet state of Manchoukuo, established by Japan in 1932, and its relations with other nations. The League of Nations decided in 1933 that Manchoukuo was not to be recognized either *de facto* or *de jure* by League members. This study examines both those countries which eventually recognized Manchoukuo, and those members of the League which held fast to the resolution of non-recognition, and discusses the various factors which influenced the policies of both groups.

More than 50 years have passed since Manchoukuo was created, and almost 40 years since it expired. The Manchoukuoan government published the Chinese and Japanese texts of its formal legislation and other state papers in its daily official gazette, which has recently been republished on microfilm. The reasoning and planning behind these state papers usually remain undocumented because few internal records of the Manchoukuoan government survived the Second World War. However, the general patterns of decision-making is evident. The circumstances of the creation of Manchoukuo by Japan's Kwantung Army, though once secret, are now well documented. Official records show also that Japan controlled the Manchoukuoan government not only by Japanese military occupation of the country throughout its existence but more directly by appointing Japanese "deputies" to all senior and middle-level Manchoukuoan officials.

These "deputies" had been officials of the Japanese civil service before being transferred to the Manchoukuoan civil service. They retained Japanese citizenship while in Manchoukuoan service, and after a few years they usually returned to positions in the Japanese government and were replaced in Manchoukuo by other Japanese officials following the same career pattern. It cannot be doubted that these Japanese officials "on loan" to Manchoukuo either initiated or controlled every major action taken by the Manchoukuoan government. Consequently, references throughout this study to actions or statements by "the Manchoukuoan government" must be understood as referring to actions that were in essence Japanese.

The ethnocentric term "Far East" and the inaccurate spelling "Manchukuo" have been retained in direct quotations. In all other places, the terms used are the value-free geographic term "East Asia" and the official and linguistically correct spelling "Manchoukuo".

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## CHAPTER I

### THE MANCHURIAN CRISIS AND ITS IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH

#### Explosion at Mukden

At approximately 10:00 p.m. on September 18, 1931, the incident which afterwards became known as the Manchurian Crisis began with an explosion on the South Manchurian Railway.<sup>1</sup> Under the treaties pertaining to the railway, the Japanese claimed the right to maintain troops in the railway zone, to protect and administer the area.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese military blamed the explosion on Chinese saboteurs, a fairly plausible explanation, and used the incident as a pretext for bringing more troops into the area and routing Chinese forces there.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese government denied any responsibility for the explosion, and promptly appealed to both the United States<sup>4</sup> and the League of Nations to arbitrate the dispute.<sup>5</sup>

Subsequent investigations showed that the explosion was, in fact, the work of Japanese military officers who were frustrated by what they viewed as a weak China policy on the part of the Tokyo government.<sup>6</sup> The Manchurian Crisis was the starting point of the Japanese Kwantung Army's aggressive policy towards China. While the government in Tokyo may have harboured some suspicions regarding the Kwantung Army's version of the railway incident, they chose to present a united front to the

world, "and to defend before the League a fait accompli in which they had not been consulted."<sup>7</sup>

#### Initial Reaction in the West

At the time of the Crisis, however, and even in the days immediately afterwards when the matter was brought before the League, the incident received very little attention in the Western world. Europe was pre-occupied with domestic political and economic problems. The depression was affecting the recovery of the whole world. In Austria and Hungary, the financial system collapsed, bringing down the entire structure of international payments with it, and causing chaos in every European country.<sup>8</sup>

Great Britain had just undergone a major change in government.<sup>9</sup> France, as ever, was concerned about the resurgence of her neighbor, Germany.<sup>10</sup> In the United States the situation was equally dismal, the economic depression and domestic politics creating an introspective attitude.<sup>11</sup> An explosion on a railway line in a remote part of East Asia seemed totally insignificant compared with pressing internal concerns. Yet, as time elapsed and the Japanese army continued to move deeper into Manchuria, in defiance of the League's call to withdraw, and in spite of Tokyo's assurance to Geneva, it became obvious to more observant viewers that the situation was not as obscure and as clear-cut as had at first appeared.

#### China's Appeal to the League

China had first appealed to the League on September 21, 1931. On September 28, it requested that a neutral commission of inquiry be

appointed by the League to examine the facts of the dispute.<sup>12</sup> This request was denied, however, partly due to Japan's objections, but mainly due to the refusal of the United States to support such a move.<sup>13</sup> The League was unwilling to act on its own in setting up a commission of inquiry and thus the issue was dropped for the time being. The decision pleased Japan, which had from the beginning called for direct negotiations between Japan and China, instead of arbitration by the League.<sup>14</sup>

On September 30, 1931, the League Council adopted a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Chinese soil, and asking China to protect Japanese nationals and property on her territory.<sup>15</sup> The text of the resolution was forwarded to the United States, which expressed agreement although still holding aloof from formal participation in League actions.<sup>16</sup> Great Britain and France, which as two of the major powers of the League would expect to bear major responsibility in the case of any future League action against either participant in the dispute, but which like the rest of the world were highly occupied with domestic affairs, fervently hoped that the resolution of September 30 would succeed in bringing the matter to a close quickly.<sup>17</sup>

#### Japan Presses Onward

These hopes were shattered, however, on October 8, when the Japanese bombed Chinchow. While up until then the attitude of the West had been sympathetic toward Japan, the Chinchow bombing seriously weakened Japan's position before the world. Whatever suspicions the League and the United States may have possessed about what actually occurred at Mukden, the prevailing view had been that China was rather

weak-kneed and that Japan had legitimate grievances.<sup>18</sup> The bombing of Chinchow, however, indicated that Japan was deliberately expanding its course of warfare, despite promises to the League to the contrary.

After Chinchow, the United States took a much more aggressive policy toward the Manchurian Crisis. On October 9, a message was sent from the United States to the League, encouraging the members not to relax the attitude defined in the September meetings, and promising American goodwill toward whatever policy the League deemed it necessary to adopt.<sup>19</sup>

The United States' changing attitude is probably best illustrated by Secretary of State Henry Stimson's efforts to achieve more direct American participation in whatever steps the League might take. In early October he endorsed the suggestion that a United States representative should sit in on League meetings.<sup>20</sup> Thus, when the League reconvened on October 13 to discuss the East Asian situation, there existed more hope that the matter could be resolved, now that the United States had committed herself more fully.

Japan, however, was opposed to the idea of inviting the United States to participate in the Council's discussions. Yoshizawa Kenkichi, the Japanese representative at the League, was ordered by Tokyo to try to prevent American participation on constitutional grounds.<sup>21</sup> With German support, Yoshizawa advocated establishing a committee to examine the constitutional problems of inviting a non-member to take part in League Council meetings.<sup>22</sup> All other members voted against the control, however, and the motion to extend an invitation to the United States was adopted with only Japan dissenting.<sup>23</sup>

Prentiss Gilbert, the United States Consul in Geneva, took his place in the League Council and participated in the October 17 decision

to invoke the 1928 Kellogg Pact on outlawing war.<sup>22</sup> The Japanese and Chinese governments were sent identical notes, reminding them of their obligation under the Pact to resolve the dispute peacefully.<sup>25</sup> But, Gilbert was withdrawn before the Council meeting concluded, the United States fearing that it was arousing Japan's hostility by its role at Geneva.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Gilbert played no part in the League decision of October 20, which stipulated that a fixed date be set for completing the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Chinese soil.<sup>27</sup>

November 16, 1931, was the date established by the Council. Yet when the League met on this date in Paris, the Japanese forces, far from withdrawing, had expanded their area of occupation in Manchuria. While there were vague murmurings for some sort of economic sanctions to be taken against Japan, the United States refused to support this idea, unwilling to antagonize Japan too much and perhaps risk precipitating a wider war.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that Japan had previously ignored the League's resolution and was continuing to occupy Manchuria, there was a reluctance on the part of at least some members of the League to do anything which might offend Japan. A policy of appeasement was instead pursued.<sup>29</sup>

#### Appointment of a Commission of Enquiry

Japan also had no wish to provoke an open rift with the League at this stage, and thus looked for some means by which it could maintain the appearance of cordial relations with the League, while all the time its forces would continue to push further into Chinese territory, consolidating Japan's position there.<sup>30</sup> While back in September Japan had vigorously opposed the sending of a neutral commission of enquiry into

the area, on November 19, 1931, it proposed that "the League of Nations should send a Commission of Inquiry to the spot,"<sup>31</sup> a proposal subsequently adopted by the Council with the support of the United States.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, on December 10, a commission of enquiry was appointed under Lord Lytton of Great Britain, which was "to study on the spot and report to the Council on any circumstance which, affecting international relations, threatens to disturb the peace between China and Japan, or the good understanding between them on which peace depends."<sup>33</sup> The League was to allow the matter of the Sino-Japanese dispute to lie until the commission presented its report.

However, the commission did not get underway until the following February, by which time the situation in Manchuria had changed considerably. On December 29, Japanese forces began pressing in on Chinchow, and by January 3, 1932, they were in complete control of this area in southwestern Manchuria.<sup>34</sup> It was this continued militancy on the part of the Kwantung Army which prompted the first of the nonrecognition notes from the United States. Having informed some of the major powers, including France and Great Britain, of the attitude which America was going to take, and suggesting that they adopt a similar stance, Stimson on January 7, 1932 sent identical notes to the Japanese and Chinese governments, warning that the United States would not recognize any agreement or situation that impaired its treaty rights in China, or that was brought about by any means contrary to the Kellogg Pact.<sup>35</sup>

The Japanese invasion of the international settlement at Shanghai late in January attracted further attention from the West. The small American Asiatic fleet was dispatched to Shanghai to express the United States' disapproval.<sup>36</sup> Stimson also wrote a letter to Senator William

E. Borah, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter, which was made public, expressed the indignation of the United States over the latest action of the Japanese military.<sup>37</sup>

#### Creation of Manchoukuo

By the time the Lytton Commission arrived back in Geneva in October, 1932, the state of Manchoukuo had been established. On March 1, 1932, under Japan's influence, Manchuria declared its independence as the state of Manchoukuo, and was subsequently recognized by Japan.<sup>38</sup> Notification of the formation of the new state had been sent to the more important western powers, but none agreed to recognize the new state and only the United States chose to reply.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, in the League resolution of March 11, 1932, League members vowed not to recognize any "infringement on the territorial integrity [or] . . . change in the political independence of any member of the League brought about in disregard of Article 10 of the Covenant."<sup>40</sup>

Japan's recognition of Manchoukuo the following September did nothing to improve Japan's position before the League. Nevertheless, it was hoped that an impartial report by the Lytton Commission might still provide a starting point from which a peaceful solution of the crisis, not detrimental to either party, might be found.

The report of the Lytton Commission was published on October 2, 1932, and the authors succeeded in being quite impartial in their discussion and conclusions.<sup>41</sup> If anything, they were accused of being too biased in Japan's favour. In countries as diverse as the Soviet Union,<sup>42</sup> and Ireland, the opinion was expressed that the report practically condoned Japan's actions in Manchuria.<sup>43</sup>

Japan, however, felt that the Lytton report identified Japan as the aggressor, and especially disliked the recommendations of the report.<sup>44</sup> These recommendations, while admitting that a return to the status quo ante bellum would be a mistake, judged that the present state of affairs in Manchuria could not be allowed to continue either. Instead, they advocated autonomy for Manchuria under Chinese sovereignty but with recognition of Japan's interests in Manchuria.<sup>45</sup>

Such recommendations were completely opposed to Japan's plans for Manchuria. As far as Japan was concerned, the state of Manchoukuo was to be kept intact at all costs, and restoring Chinese sovereignty there was totally out of the question. Japan was no longer interested simply in economic rights in Manchuria. The Japanese wanted to be able to station troops there, to have control of the railroads, the harbours, and the railways, and to have authority over the Manchurian government through the placement of Japanese "advisors" in Manchuria.

The objective of Japanese policy toward Manchuria had gone far beyond the 'free participation of Japan in the economic development of Manchuria,' approved by the Lytton Commission, and aimed, indeed, at the complete control of the country, militarily, economically, and politically. The recommendations of the Lytton Commission might easily have been acceptable to Japan before the Manchurian Affair, but in the fall of 1932 they fell far short of what she had decided was her due.<sup>46</sup>

#### Adoption of the Lytton Report

Japan protested openly in the League about the validity of the Lytton Report. The Japanese government questioned the capability of the Commission, referred to the "abnormal conditions"<sup>47</sup> in China, and asserted that Manchuria was not necessarily a part of China.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, the League proceeded to determine a policy on the dispute



based on the Lytton Report. On December 9, 1932, a special committee was entrusted with the Task of drawing up a draft report and proposals, based on the findings of the Lytton Commission.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, however, Japan was still expanding its actions in China. Since the winter of 1931, some groups in the Japanese military had argued that Japan needed also to control the Inner Mongolian province of Jehol, in order to protect Japan's position in Manchuria.<sup>50</sup> This proposal was opposed by the foreign and naval ministries, who feared that such action might precipitate hostilities with the Soviet Union and destroy any possibility of finding a satisfactory solution to the Mukden incident within the League of Nations.<sup>51</sup>

This latter consideration became redundant by December, 1932, when it became known that the Lytton Report rejected the legitimacy of Manchoukuo,<sup>52</sup> while Russia's passive policy in the whole Sino-Japanese dispute indicated that it was not likely to act, even if Japan moved into Jehol.<sup>53</sup> At the very time that the draft report was being brought before the League Assembly in February, 1933, Japan was invading Jehol.<sup>54</sup> On March 4, the capital of Jehol was occupied and the entire province was quickly brought under Japanese control.<sup>55</sup> This brought Manchoukuo's boundary up to the Great Wall, a very short distance from Peking.

On February 24, 1933, the draft report was presented to the League Assembly. A resolution to adopt the report was approved by a vote of 42 to one, with one nation abstaining and 13 not voting.<sup>56</sup> The nations voting for the resolution are grouped geographically in Table I. Japan voted against the resolution, and Siam (Thailand) abstained.<sup>57</sup> Table II is a list of the full membership of the League at that time.

TABLE I  
COUNTRIES WHICH VOTED FOR THE LEAGUE  
RESOLUTION OF FEBRUARY 24, 1933

West Europe	East Europe	Americas	Others
Belgium	Albania	Colombia	Australia
Denmark	Austria	Guatemala	Canada
France	Bulgaria	Haiti	China
Irish Free State	Czechoslovakia	Mexico	India
Luxemburg	Estonia	Panama	New Zealand
Netherlands	Finland	Uruguay	Persia (Iran)
Norway	Germany	Venezuela	South Africa
Portugal	Greece		
Spain	Hungary		
Sweden	Italy		
Switzerland	Latvia		
United Kingdom	Lithuania		
	Poland		
	Romania		
	Turkey		
	Yugoslavia		

Source: A Monthly Summary of the League of Nations. Geneva, February, 1933, p. 27.

TABLE II  
MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE IN 1933

Members	Members	Members
*Albania	*Germany	Nicaragua
Argentine Republic	*Great Britain	*Norway
*Australia	*Greece	*Panama
*Austria	*Guatemala	Paraguay
*Belgium	*Haiti	*Persia (Iran)
Bolivia	Honduras	Peru
*Bulgaria	*Hungary	*Poland
*Canada	*India	*Portugal
Chile	Iraq	*Romania
*China	*Irish Free State	Salvador
*Colombia	*Italy	**Siam (Thailand)
Cuba	++Japan	*South Africa
*Czechoslovakia	*Latvia	*Spain
*Denmark	Liberia	*Sweden
Dominican Republic	*Lithuania	*Switzerland
*Estonia	*Luxemburg	*Turkey
Ethiopia	*Mexico	*Uruguay
*Finland	*Netherlands	*Venezuela
*France	*New Zeland	*Yugoslavia

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\*Countries which voted for the League Report of 1933.

\*\*Countries which abstained.

++Countries which voted against the Report.

The remaining countries did not vote.

Japan cannot have been too surprised at the outcome; nevertheless, it was disappointed. On hearing the outcome of the vote, Matsuoka Yosuke, the Japanese representative in the Assembly, read a statement and then, "followed by the Japanese delegation in solemn procession, dramatically left the chamber."<sup>58</sup> A month later, on March 27, Japan formally notified the League of its intention to withdraw from membership in the League.<sup>59</sup>

### Summary

The explosion of Mukden had thus provoked an open rift in the community at nations, and had confronted the League of Nations with one of the most difficult problems it was to experience in its entire history. The manner and the extent to which the League fulfilled its responsibilities in the Manchurian Crisis would greatly affect the prestige and the efficacy of the League before the world. In its report of February 24, the League recommended that Manchuria be made an autonomous state under Chinese sovereignty, that Japanese forces outside the railway zone be withdrawn, that negotiations take place between China and Japan, and that the members of the League not recognize the state of Manchoukuo, either de facto or de jure.<sup>60</sup> Unwilling to impose economic or military sanctions, the League was unable to implement any but the last of these proposals. This paper will focus, to a large extent, on how well this policy was carried out by the members of the League.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Takehiko Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-131.

<sup>3</sup>Ian Nish, A Short History of Japan (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 157.

<sup>4</sup>Sara R. Smith, The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932: A Tragedy in International Relations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 22.

<sup>5</sup>The Monthly Summary of the League of Nations II (September 1931): 246.

<sup>6</sup>Nish, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Smith, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Peter Lowe, Britain in the East: A Survey from 1819 to the Present (London and New York: Longman, 1981) p. 137.

<sup>10</sup>Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1963), pp. 11-20.

<sup>11</sup>Smith, pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup>Westel W. Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 1935), pp. 65-66.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 67-68.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 63; Sadako N. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), p. 70.

<sup>15</sup>Summary of the League II (September, 1931):248, 249.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>17</sup>Christopher G. Thorne, Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 29, 30.

<sup>18</sup>Ogata, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup>Smith, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-101.

<sup>21</sup>Ogata, p. 88.

<sup>22</sup>Summary of the League II (October, 1931):301-302.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 302-303.

<sup>26</sup>Ogata, p. 88.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Dorothy Borg, The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938: From the Manchurian Incident Through the Initial Stage of the Undeclared Sino-Japanese War (Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 7.

<sup>29</sup>Lowe, p. 139; Ogata, p.115.

<sup>30</sup>Ogata, p. 116; Willoughby, p. 197.

<sup>31</sup>Willoughby, p. 172.

<sup>32</sup>Borg, p. 7.

<sup>33</sup>Willoughby, p. 178.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>35</sup>U.S. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941, 2 Vol. 1:76 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), 1:76.

<sup>36</sup>Stephen C. Y. Pan, American Diplomacy Concerning Manchuria (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1938), pp. 249-253.

<sup>37</sup>U.S. Department of State, Japan: 1931-1941, 1:83-87.

<sup>38</sup>Ian Nish, Japanese Foreign Policy: 1869-1942: Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 183.

<sup>39</sup>Tatsuji Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Inc., 1935), p. 385.

<sup>40</sup>Summary of the League 12 (March, 1932):106.

<sup>41</sup>Smith, p. 252.

<sup>42</sup>Harriet L. Moore, Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1931-1945 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 20-23.

<sup>43</sup>The Irish Worker's Voice (Dublin): 8 October, 1932.  
The Watchword (Dublin) 1 October, 1932.

<sup>44</sup>Summary of the league 12 (November, 1932):331; 12 (December, 1932) :358; Ogata, p. 378.

<sup>45</sup>Willoughby, p. 407.

<sup>46</sup>Ogata, p. 172.

<sup>47</sup>Willoughby, pp. 408-410.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Summary of the League 12 (December, 1932):360.

<sup>50</sup>James B. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 183.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 183-184.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>53</sup>Ikuhiko Hata, Reality and Illusions: The Hidden Crisis Between Japan and the U.S.S.R., 1932-1934 (New York: East Asia Institute of Columbia University, 1967), pp. 4-5.

<sup>54</sup>Crowley, pp. 184-186.

<sup>55</sup>Nish, Foreign Policy, p. 194.

<sup>56</sup>Summary of the League 13 (February, 1933):27.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Nish, Foreign Policy, p. 190.

<sup>60</sup>Summary of the League 13 (March, 1933):84-85.

<sup>61</sup>Willoughby, p. 726.



## CHAPTER II

### MANCHURIA: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### Introduction

Why should an explosion on a remote site on a railway line in East Asia have provoked such widespread concern around the world? To understand the importance of Manchuria in the international relations of the East, one must probe back into history and discover the special interests which many of the powers harboured there. For various reasons, the area of Manchuria came to be identified as the "cockpit" of Asia, from which much of the East Asian foreign policy was dictated, Why?

Until 1931, Manchuria was an integral part of China, the government of China having de jure control over it.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, however, Japan, at least since 1895, had regarded Manchuria as an area of special interest to Japan's welfare, and had established various legal claims there. Western powers, including Russia, France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States had also displayed some interest in the area, but none of these had come to regard Manchuria as a vital concern. Japan, however, over the years came to view Manchuria as indispensable to its national security, and when an opportunity came in 1931, the Japanese army took it, and moved in to completely control the area.

## The Sino-Japanese War, 1894-1895

Just when Japan began to perceive Manchuria as being vitally important to it is difficult to determine, but Japan's first demands concerning the area came with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895 ending the first Sino-Japanese War. By the terms of this treaty, Japan acquired not only Taiwan and the Pescadores, but also the Liaotung Peninsula in southern Manchuria.<sup>2</sup> Japan did not enjoy these new Manchurian rights for very long. Eighty days after the treaty, a "triple intervention" by France, Germany, and Russia, none of which had any desire to see Japan become too powerful in the East, "advised" Japan to restore the Liaotung Peninsula to China.<sup>3</sup> Japan could not but comply with these "recommendations" and handed the Manchurian territory back to China.

## Relations with Russia

Russo-Japanese rivalry was intensified by the fact that almost immediately after this incident, Russia obtained a lease of the same peninsula from China.<sup>4</sup> Russia went even further after the Boxer rebellion of 1889-1901, and secured de facto military control of Manchuria.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, both Russia and Japan began to take an increasing interest in Korea, which eventually resulted in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.<sup>6</sup> Again Japan was victorious, and in the Treaty of Portsmouth which concluded the war, Japan inherited the treaty rights of Russia in Manchuria. These included the leased area in the Liaotung (Kwantung) peninsula, the southern section of the Chinese Eastern Railway with attached mining rights, and the right to keep troops in Manchuria to protect its portion of the railway? This transferral of

treaty rights was accepted by China in a Sino-Japanese treaty of 1905.<sup>8</sup>

Following the Russo-Japanese War, Japan, through a series of secret agreements with Russia, endeavoured to consolidate its position in Manchuria. The treaties of 1907, 1910, 1912, and 1916 granted Russian recognition of Japan's special interests in southern Manchuria, while Japan accorded the same recognition to Russian interests in northern Manchuria.<sup>9</sup> While these agreements became void with the succession to power of Kerensky's Provisional Government in Russia in March, 1917, their very existence, albeit for a short time, indicates Japan's paramount and growing interest in Manchuria even at this early stage.<sup>10</sup>

#### Foreign Consortiums in Manchuria

Japan's claims to a special interest in Manchuria were further demonstrated by its objections to the attempts of some Western powers to invest in Manchuria at the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of the Western powers had agreed to abide by U.S. Secretary of State John Hay's open door notes of 1898, which provided for the rights of all to carry on trade with China, and prohibited any one country from establishing a trade monopoly in China.<sup>11</sup> While Manchuria was not of especial interest to the Western powers, there were in the early 1900's some attempts to invest in railway construction there and in the rest of China.

At first, Chinese authorities approached the United States for loans to finance various public projects.<sup>12</sup> The United States had encouraged China to invite other countries to participate in the loans, especially Germany, France, and Great Britain, all of which had already

indicated interest.<sup>13</sup> This led to the formation of the Four Power Banking Group, or Four Power Consortium in 1910.<sup>14</sup> Japan and Russia were invited to join in the venture, but while both were interested, they were afraid that such an agreement would injure their own special interests in Manchuria.<sup>15</sup> Political disorder in China, however, resulted in the whole venture falling through, and it was not until 1918 that the idea was broached again.

### The Twenty-One Demands

The twenty-one demands which Japan presented to China in 1915 demonstrated both Japan's territorial ambitions regarding China as a whole, and, more specifically, Japan's territorial and administrative ambitions concerning Manchuria. Though China protested and by leaking the demands to the press, managed to persuade Japan to back down on the most outrageous ones, Japan still gained most of what it wanted.<sup>16</sup> This included the extension of Japan's leases of the Liaotung Peninsula and the South Manchurian and Antung-Mukden railways, the right to lease land in Manchuria for commercial purposes, the right to develop mines in the best mining area of southern Manchuria, and the "right for Japanese advisers . . . to be given preference in case foreign advisers are required in South Manchuria."<sup>17</sup>

### The Lansing-Ishii Agreement

These rights were, however, insecure if the international community refused to recognize them. Thus in the years preceding the Washington Conference of 1921-1922, Japan sought acknowledgment of her spheres of interest from the larger Western powers. The Lansing-Ishii agreement

between American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing and the Japanese representative, Viscount Ishii, was regarded by Japan as a great step in achieving this goal. According to the agreement, the United States acknowledged

that territorial propinquity creates special relations between two countries, and, consequently, the government of the United States recognizes that Japan has special interests in China, particularly in the part to which her possessions [Korea] are contiguous.<sup>18</sup>

While the agreement also contained an affirmation of the principles of the Open Door policy, it certainly could be taken to imply American recognition of Japan's special position regarding Manchuria.

#### The Washington Conference

However, that idea was soon dispelled by the Washington Conference of 1921-1922. While the conference was ostensibly convened to discuss limitation of armaments, it was also used by the United States as a means of curbing Japan's growing ascendancy in East Asia. To secure the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, which was an important defensive alliance for Japan, was one of the United States' main objectives at the conference, and it was achieved.<sup>19</sup> The United States also managed to persuade Japan to renounce its political claims in Shantung, which Japan had gained in the Versailles peace treaty after the First World War.<sup>20</sup> The Nine Power Treaty, also signed at the Washington Conference provided for maintenance of the Open Door policy of equal commercial opportunity in China. This placed further limits on Japan's plans for expansion onto the Asian mainland.<sup>21</sup> However, apart from the general terms embodied in the Nine Power Treaty, regarding the protection of Chinese sovereignty, Japan made no concessions

at the Washington Conference regarding her position in Manchuria.<sup>22</sup>

### 1920: The Banking Consortium

A few years earlier, in 1918, the idea of establishing an international banking consortium in China had been ressurected. Japan which had monopolised loans to China while the Western powers were engaged in the World War, and the United States both supported formation of an international consortium, to include France and Great Britain, which would undertake loan operations in China.<sup>23</sup>

In May, 1919, banking representatives from the four countries met in Paris to draw up plans for the consortium, but actual establishment was delayed until the summer of 1920, as Japan tried to obtain guarantees that its special interests in Manchuria be protected.<sup>24</sup> Japan wanted the other countries involved to agree that the consortium would not intervene in Manchuria.<sup>25</sup> The other powers refused, but gave general assurance that they would not engage in any activity detrimental to Japan's economic security or national defence, and promised not to "countenance any operations inimical to such interests."<sup>26</sup> With these general promises, Japan had to be content, and on October 15, 1920, the formal agreement establishing the consortium was signed.<sup>27</sup>

### Continued Japanese Interest in Manchuria

By her actions since 1895, Japan had clearly shown that it regarded Manchuria as an area of special interest in Japan's national security. This theme continued unabated throughout the 1920's. Japan had extensive treaty rights in the area, including both commercial and military privileges. Japan was also coming, more and more, to view Manchuria

as vital to Japan's future. Manchuria was to provide vital raw materials necessary for Japan's industrial survival and for defense. Manchuria might also be an outlet for Japan's growing population, and a springboard for future Japanese expansion, both in terms of its strategic position, and in terms of providing resources for warfare.<sup>28</sup> A South Manchurian Railway official summed up the prevailing Japanese attitude when he wrote:

. . . Manchuria and Mongolia are Japan's lifeline . . . Every nation has a lifeline that holds the key to its existence. As Gibraltar and Malta are to Great Britain, and the Caribbean Sea to America, there definitely is an important point from which it is impossible to retreat if the nation expects to exist.<sup>29</sup>

Japan's later actions in Manchuria must be seen in the light of this concern for national security.

In the 1920's, relations between Japan and China deteriorated. The launching of the Northern Expedition by the Chinese Kuomintang army greatly alarmed Japanese expansionists, as the success of the Expedition could hasten the reunification of China, diminish Japan's influence there, and more importantly, loosen Japan's grip on Manchuria.<sup>30</sup> The Japanese military especially were annoyed by the frequency of disputes regarding their rights in Manchuria. While Baron Shidehara, the Japanese Foreign Minister, advocated a policy of patience towards China, working within the framework of international law, the military pushed for more immediate and coercive action.<sup>31</sup> Prior to the 1931 Mukden incident, the Japanese military were considering three options: (1) to force concessions from Chang Hsueh-liang, the governor of Manchuria, (2) to replace Chang by a government more cooperative with Japan, and (3) to stage a military occupation of Manchuria.<sup>32</sup> On September 18, 1931, judging that the situation was deteriorating, and that the time

was right, Japanese troops, solely under the directions of their local military commanders, overran Manchuria.<sup>33</sup>

### Summary

The actions in Manchuria in September, 1931, did not result from a sudden whim on the part of the Japanese military. Rather, they were the result of a continuing Japanese policy of special interest in Manchuria and a growing belief that if Japan was to survive as a powerful nation in world affairs, it must have the land and raw materials of Manchuria. This belief was particularly strong in the Japanese army in the early 1900's, and thus, on September 18, 1931 they took matters into their own hands and proceeded to conquer Manchuria, placing Japan in an aggressive, isolated position before the rest of the world. When other governments of the world decided not to recognize Manchukuo, they were expressing their disapproval of Japan's violations of international law, and its policy of expansion on the Asian mainland.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>C. Walter Young, Japan's Special Position in Manchuria: Its Assrtion, Legal Interpretation and Present Meaning (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 1931), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Harold Parlett, A Brief Account of Diplomatic Events in Manchuria (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Paul Hibbert Clyde, Interntional Rivalries in Manchuria, 1686-1922, 2nd ed. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1928), pp. 71-73.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>6</sup>Parlett, pp. 14-16.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Young, pp. 73, 74; E. B. Price, The Russo-Japanese Treaties of 1907-1916 Concerning Manchuria and Mongolia (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 83, 84.

<sup>11</sup>C. Walter Young, The International Relations of Manchuria: A Digest and Analysis of Treaties, Agreements, and Negotiations Concerning the Three Eastern Provinces of China (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 35-43.

<sup>12</sup>Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 169.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-173.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 177, 178.

<sup>16</sup>Parlett, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup>Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 189.

<sup>18</sup>Parlett, p. 84.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas H. Buckley, The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922. (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), p. 127.

<sup>20</sup>Ian Nish, Japanese Foreign Policy, 1869-1942: Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 135-136.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>22</sup>Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 288.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 261-263.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 265-266.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 266.

<sup>26</sup>Parlett, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup>Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 270.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 298-325.

<sup>29</sup>Christopher Thorne, The Limits of Foreign Policy (London, 1972), p. 35.

<sup>30</sup>Takehiko Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), pp. 17, 18.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>32</sup>Nish, p. 178.

<sup>33</sup>Yoshihashi, pp. 1-6.

## CHAPTER III

### LEGAL ASPECTS OF RECOGNITION

#### Introduction

In the League's final conclusions on the Sino-Japanese dispute in Manchuria, on February 24, 1933, it was agreed that the members of the League should not extend either de jure or de facto recognition to the existing regime in Manchoukuo which had been established almost a year earlier.<sup>1</sup> An Advisory Committee was subsequently set up to examine the practical implications of such a policy and to make due recommendations to the members of the League regarding the matter.<sup>2</sup>

This concerted policy of nonrecognition by League members was broken soon afterwards when the government of El Salvador extended de jure recognition to Manchoukuo and established diplomatic relations with the government there.<sup>3</sup> In the following years, continuing up until 1941, other countries, many of them former members of the League of Nations, granted de jure or de facto recognition to the government in Manchoukuo. Even those countries which did not announce recognition established some kind of relations with Manchoukuo--in trade, in exchanging mail, or in keeping consuls in Manchoukuo. Did such relations imply recognition? What conditions must exist before it can be determined that one State has recognized another? How is recognition defined?

### Definition of Recognition

According to international law, the acquisition of land by peaceful means, or the occupation of territorium nullus by means conforming to the rules of the international community, gives rise to valid title.<sup>4</sup> This also imposes on other states the duty to recognize the validity of this new title. Conversely, a situation which arises out of actions which violate international laws cannot claim the same right to recognition.<sup>5</sup> "Recognition is unnecessary . . . only when the lawfulness of the act giving rise to the pretended title is clear and undisputed."<sup>6</sup>

Are there any prerequisites which must be satisfied before recognition of a state may be accorded? Lauterpacht states that there is only one basic principle which is essential for recognition, and that is the "effectiveness of power within the state and of [its] actual independence of other states."<sup>7</sup> Chen lays out more detailed conditions which should be satisfied before a state is granted recognition. Citing Oppenheim, he gives these conditions as people, country, government, and sovereign government.<sup>8</sup> A group of people must be living in a community to make up a state. These people must be settled in a territory having definite boundaries. A government commanding the obedience of the majority of the people must exist. Finally, the state requiring recognition must have a sovereign government, "a power, autonomous, undelegated, and distinct from all external powers."<sup>9</sup>

Recognition of a state does not necessarily imply recognition of the government of that state.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in 1922, the United States refused recognition to the government of Mexico, having "no official relations with that administration. This fact, however, does not

affect the recognition of the Mexican State itself."<sup>11</sup> In the present case of Manchoukuo, however, it does appear that those states which accorded recognition to the government or to the state of Manchoukuo saw the two processes as being synonymous.

### Distinction Between De Jure and De Facto Recognition

While, in the case of Manchoukuo, most states granted the regime there de jure recognition, some accorded only de facto recognition. What is the distinction between the two? Many opposing views have been put forward on this issue. Some authorities define a de jure government as one which comes into being by means which are in accordance with the constitutional regulations of the state in question.<sup>12</sup> Lauterpacht rejects this definition. He argues that the important distinction between de facto and de jure recognition lies not in any adherence to the constitutional law of the state, but in an adherence to the requirements of international law.

Recognition de facto takes place when, in the opinion of the recognizing state, notwithstanding the presence of the principal condition of recognition, namely, that of effectiveness, there are absent other conditions of recognition which, in the opinion of the state in question are required by international law.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the legal aspects or implications of de facto recognition, many writers agree that such recognition implies a certain "lack of intimacy" between the recognizing state and the state being recognized.

Normally, recognition should be full and complete, i.e. de jure; de facto recognition must be regarded as an exception, and as a modification of the normal relationship existing between states.<sup>15</sup>

Chen further comments:

Although de facto recognition may be sufficient evidence of the actual existence of a new state or government, it may not be a sufficient indication of the intention of the recognizing state to treat it in the fullness of international relations.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, de facto recognition becomes an expedient which another state may adopt in order to carry out business with the state desiring recognition, but de jure recognition is withheld until the new state is judged to be behaving properly in the eyes of the recognizing state.<sup>17</sup> De facto recognition, then, does not carry with it the same measure of approval as does de jure recognition.<sup>18</sup> Lauterpacht goes on further and suggests that de facto recognition is of a provisional nature and is subject to withdrawal.<sup>19</sup>

#### Questions Regarding Trade, Postal Services, and Consular Relations

Granted that de facto recognition may not confer the same approval of a situation as does de jure recognition, what distinctions does one look for in endeavoring to determine whether de facto or de jure recognition has taken place? Some authorities define consular and commercial relations as being de facto relations.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the formal opening of diplomatic relations tends to be regarded as an indication of de jure recognition.<sup>21</sup> However, there do not appear to be any clear-cut universally accepted distinctions between de facto and de jure relations.

Discussion of These Issues in  
the League of Nations

Perhaps because it is so difficult in practice to distinguish between de facto and de jure recognition, the League of Nations in its February, 1933 resolution on the Sino-Japanese dispute stated that neither de facto nor de jure recognition was to be accorded to the regime in Manchoukuo, and went on to recommend certain measures which its members were to adopt to show their total nonrecognition of Manchoukuo.<sup>22</sup> It was suggested that members should do all in their power to prevent the admission of Manchoukuo to any international bodies.<sup>23</sup> In the matter of currency, it was recommended that official quotations in Manchoukuoan currency not be permitted.<sup>24</sup> In the areas of consular relations, and the adoption of technical agreements between the Manchoukuoan postal authorities and members of the League, individual members were allowed to make their own decisions.<sup>25</sup> No explicit reference was ever made in the League regarding the subject of commercial relations with Manchoukuo, or the investment of outside capital in that state.

According to certain authorities, some relations and conditions imply at least de facto recognition between two states. Do the areas which the League left to the decision of individual members, such as consular and commercial relations, fall into this category? For example, many members of the League maintained consuls in Manchoukuo. Did this imply recognition?

There is a considerable difference of opinion on this. The League, when it let members form their own policy in this area, stated

explicitly that if consuls were established in Manchoukuo, they were to do or say nothing which might imply recognition on the part of the sending state.<sup>26</sup> According to Wood<sup>27</sup> and Chen<sup>28</sup>, a consul does not represent the sending state in the same manner that a diplomatic representative does. His function is to ensure the rights and interests of the sending state, and to ensure the protection of its nationals residing in the receiving state.<sup>29</sup>

According to some sources, then, the presence of a consul in an unrecognized state does not imply recognition of that state.<sup>30</sup> Others maintain that the crucial question in determining whether or not a state has extended recognition to the receiving state is whether or not applications for a formal exequatur has been made.<sup>31</sup> Normally a person acquires consular status "only after he has received a commission . . . from the sending state and an exequatur from the receiving state."<sup>32</sup> Oppenheim<sup>33</sup> and Gould<sup>34</sup> agree that application for such an exequatur implies recognition of the receiving state.

Thus, in examining the position of nations that maintained consuls in Manchoukuo, the decisive factor would be whether these consuls had been there before the establishment of the Manchoukuoan regime and were simply allowed (both by Manchoukuo and by the sending states) to remain there, or whether the sending states had applied to the Manchoukuoan government after 1932 for new exequaturs.

The author has not been able to establish whether or not new exequaturs were applied for by foreign governments after the establishment of Manchoukuo. It seems likely that if such action had taken place, the Japanese or Manchoukuoan governments would have made the news public, as such a gesture would have indicated some measure of



recognition for the new state.

A January, 1934 issue of the New York Times reported that the Manchurian press was "excited over reports that the British Consul at Dairen is negotiating with Hsinking for opening a new consulate in the Manchukuo capital."<sup>35</sup> However, no further attention was brought to this supposed action on the part of Great Britain. Indeed, in the London Times a month later, Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, stated that while British consular representatives were present in Manchuria, maintaining "such relations with the appropriate authorities as appeared to be necessitated by British interests", there was no question that British recognition was involved in these relations.<sup>36</sup>

Quite a number of countries which had consuls in Manchuria before the establishment of Manchukuo kept these consuls there after the League resolution of 1933, even those which were League members. By 1941, however, this number had changed considerably, being reduced almost exclusively to the Axis powers, as shown in Table III. This decline was due chiefly to the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Manchoukuo never succeeded in establishing very many consular or diplomatic services abroad. The countries in which it did maintain such services were almost entirely Axis associates or Japanese allies. One major exception to this was Great Britain. The Japanese-Manchoukuo Year Book, 1938, stated that Manchoukuo had a counsellor to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Great Britain (See Table IV). As Great Britain was one of the major powers supporting the nonrecognition doctrine, this seems significant and anomalous.

Diplomatic and consular services of some degree were obviously

TABLE III  
DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR SERVICES IN MANCHOUKUO

1932	1937	1941
Austria +	Belgium +	* China +
Belgium +	Czechoslovakia +	* Finland +
*Denmark +	* Denmark +	* Germany
France +	Esthonia +	* Hungary
*Germany +	* Finland +	* Italy
Great Britain +	France +	* Japan
*Italy +	* Germany	* Mongolia
*Japan +	Great Britain	* Romania +
Latvia +	* Italy	* Vatican
Norway +	* Japan	
*Poland +	Latvia +	
Portugal +	Lithuania +	
*Spain +	Netherlands +	
Sweden +	Norway +	
United States	* Poland +	
	Portugal +	
	Sweden +	
	* U.S.S.R. +	
	United States	

\*Countries which recognized Manchoukuo

+Members of the League of Nations at the date shown

Source: The China Year Book (1932, reprinted, Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited: Nendelin/Liechtenstein, 1969), pp. 781-787; the Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book 1938 (Tokyo: The Japan-Manchuokuo Year Book Company, 1937), pp. 687-688; the Orient Year Book 1942 (Tokyo: Asia Statistics Company, 1942), p. 540.

TABLE IV  
MANCHOUKUO'S DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR SERVICES ABROAD

1937	1941
Embassy in Tokyo	Tokyo, Japan
Consulate General, Keijo, Korea	Nanking, China
Consulate, Blagovestchensk, USSR	Berlin, Germany
Consulate, Chita USSR	Rome, Italy
Consulate, Shingishu, Korea	Madrid, SPain
Consulate, Moji, Japan	
Consulate, Osaka, Japan	
Trade Commissioner in Germany	
Trade Commissioner in Germany	
+Counselor, Department of Foreign Affairs in England	
<hr/>	
+Nonrecognizing country	

Source: The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book 1938, p. 688;  
The Orient Year Book 1942, p. 540.

maintained in Manchoukuo, by both recognizing and nonrecognizing powers for some time after the League resolution of 1933. Nevertheless, as it appears that exequaters were never applied for, the continuance of such relations cannot be taken as an indication of recognition of any kind.

What about the conclusion of trade or commercial agreements between two governments? Do such treaties imply mutual recognition? Lauterpacht sees commercial relations as signifying *de facto* recognition.<sup>37</sup> Chen also argues that the conclusion of bilateral treaties, including commercial agreements, may imply recognition.<sup>38</sup> The British government viewed its trade agreement with Soviet Russia on March 16, 1921, as an act of recognition.<sup>39</sup> However, there seems to be no consistency in this area, and many governments who have concluded agreements "with new entities, have, nevertheless, insisted that no recognition had been accorded."<sup>40</sup>

In trying to determine whether or not a bilateral treaty constitutes recognition, it may be useful to consider the subject matter of the treaty, and the language used therein to describe the nature of the relations between the two participating parties.<sup>41</sup> A "treaty regulating, more or less permanently, relations of a general character between states usually constitutes an act of recognition,"<sup>42</sup> as opposed to a "temporary local arrangement."<sup>43</sup> However, there does not appear to be any clear method of deciding what type of treaty has been concluded, and thus whether or not recognition has occurred.

It was the question of postal relations and the degree of recognition which these might imply which received the most attention from the League of Nations. In February, 1934, a meeting was convened "to

decide whether members of the League of Nations could make refunds to Manchukuo for carrying its mail through their territory without violating the nonrecognition pledge."<sup>44</sup> The meeting was prompted by the receipt by the General Post Office in London of a letter from the Department of Communications of Manchukuo, asking to be supplied "with statistics in accordance with the provisions of the Postal Union Convention with a view to the liquidation of the transit payments due in respect to the mails sent through Manchuria."<sup>45</sup> In May of the same year the League reached a decision on the issue "allowing payment to Manchukuo for transit of mail through Manchuria without legally recognizing Manchukuo."<sup>46</sup> It was stipulated that "Manchukuo is not entitled to appeal to the Universal Postal Union and that the arrangement is made only between postal administrations, not between governments."<sup>47</sup> Thus, it could be concluded that the League allowed the conclusion of bilateral agreements concerning postal arrangements, between members and Manchoukuo, but specified that these must not imply recognition of any sort.

#### Summary

In conclusion, then, it seems that recognition can be said definitely to have taken place only when a state formally announces that it has accorded either de facto or de jure recognition to another state, or when a state requests an exequatur with the intention of establishing a consul, thus implying at least de facto recognition. While commercial agreements or other bilateral treaties may indicate that de facto recognition has taken place, this is not necessarily the case. These indications are useful in determining the degree of relations

which exist between two states. However, unless one state openly announces to the international community its acknowledgment of another state, recognition cannot be definitely said to have been granted.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Westel W. Willoughby, The Sino-Japanese Controversy and the League of Nations (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press, 1935), p. 726.

<sup>2</sup>The Monthly Summary of the League of Nations 13 (February, 1933): 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. 14 (July, 1934):167.

<sup>4</sup>Quincy Wright, Legal Problems in the Far Eastern Conflict (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), p. 129.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>7</sup>Herh Lauterpacht, Recognition in International Law (Cambridge: University Press, 1947), p. 340.

<sup>8</sup>Ti-chiang Chen. The International Law of Recognition with Special Reference to Practice in Great Britain and the United States (New York: Praeger, 1951), p. 55.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>12</sup>Lauterpacht, p. 337.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 338.

<sup>14</sup>Chen, p. 289.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 288.

- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 289.
- <sup>17</sup>H. B. Jacobin, International Law: A Text (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1962), p. 49.
- <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 49; Lauterpacht, p. 338.
- <sup>19</sup>Lauterpacht, p. 338.
- <sup>20</sup>Wright, p. 183.
- <sup>21</sup>Quincy, p. 285.
- <sup>22</sup>Summary of the League 13 (March, 1933):71; 14 (May, 1934):111.  
p. 111.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 13 (March, 1933):71.
- <sup>24</sup>Ibid., 13 (June, 1933):143.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.; Wright, p. 150.
- <sup>26</sup>Summary of the League 13 (June, 1933):143.
- <sup>27</sup>John R. Wood and Jean Serres, Diplomatic, Ceremonial and Protocol: Principles, Procedures and Practices (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 64.
- <sup>28</sup>Chen, pp. 196, 198.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 198; Wood, p. 64.
- <sup>30</sup>Louis L. Jaffe, Judicial Aspects of Foreign Relations (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 105.
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid.; Chen, p. 199.
- <sup>32</sup>Luke T. Lee, Consular Law and Practice (New York: Praeger, 1961), p. 27.
- <sup>33</sup>Jaffe, p. 105.
- <sup>34</sup>Wesley L. Gould, An Introduction to International Law (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 235.



<sup>35</sup>The New York Times, 19 January 1934.

<sup>36</sup>The London Times, 1 February 1934.

<sup>37</sup>Wright, p. 183.

<sup>38</sup>Chen, p. 192.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>41</sup>Thus, it was claimed that Soviet recognition of Manchoukuo was implied by the terminology used in the Soviet offer to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchoukuo. The offer read: "The government of the U.S.S.R. agrees to sell to the State of Manchukuo all property relating to the Chinese Eastern." See the New York Times, 6 July 1933.

<sup>42</sup>Chen, p. 194.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>The New York Times, 17 February 1934.

<sup>45</sup>Summary of the League 14 (February, 1934):35.

<sup>46</sup>New York Times, 18 May 1934.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### NATIONS RECOGNIZING MANCHOUKUO

#### Introduction

Despite the policy of nonrecognition adopted by both the League of Nations and the United States, various countries around the world accorded recognition to the new state of Manchoukuo between 1932 and 1941. Such acknowledgment of Manchoukuo was frowned upon by the larger Western powers, but the League of Nations as a body did little to reprimand deviants.<sup>1</sup> When did some nations recognize Manchoukuo? What advantages did they find? What motives influenced their policy toward Manchoukuo?

#### Countries Which Allegedly Recognized Manchoukuo

While it is difficult to produce a definitive list, below, in chronological order, are given those countries which are alleged to have recognized Manchoukuo either de facto or de jure. What can one observe about these countries which may be useful in determining why they chose to recognize Manchoukuo? It seems probable that both economic and political considerations would have influenced policy toward Manchoukuo.

Many of the countries listed were allies of Germany or Japan. Thus, it seems possible that their relations with Manchoukuo may have been dictated by their relations with Japan and Germany. In the

TABLE V  
COUNTRIES REPORTED TO HAVE RECOGNIZED MANCHOUKUO

Date of Recognition	Country
September 15, 1932	Japan
March 3, 1934	El Salvador
August 16, 1934	*Dominican Republic
September 2, 1934	Vatican
November 29, 1937	*Italy
December 2, 1937	Spain
February 20, 1938	Germany
October 19, 1938	*Poland
January 9, 1939	*Hungary
June 1, 1939	Slovakia
November 30, 1940	*China
December 4, 1940	*Romania
April 14, 1941	USSR
May 14, 1941	*Bulgaria
July 18, 1941	*Finland
August 1, 1941	*Thailand
August 1, 1941	*Denmark
August 2, 1941	Croatia
October 15, 1941	Outer Mongolia

Source: The Manchoukuo Year Book, 1943. (Hsinking: The Manchoukuo Year Book Company, 1943), p. 401; The Japan Year Book, 1941-42. (Tokyo: Foreign Affaris Association of Japan, 1937), p. 927; Mainichi Nenkan 1944. (Osaka: Mainichi Shinabun Sha, December, 1943; Sakuin Seiji Keizai Dainempyo. (Tokyo: Toyo Keizai Shimpō Sha, 1943), p. 663.

depressed commercial situation of the 1930's, economic factors were probably also present. A third reason could be ideological motives.

Below are some suggested groupings into which one may put the countries which recognized Manchoukuo.

Group A: Japan and its ally Thailand, and the Japanese puppet Wang Ching-wei government of China.

Group B: Germany and its allies or satellites: Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain.

Group C: Poland (before Nazi and Soviet occupation), and the Vatican.

Group D: The U.S.S.R. and its puppet state, Outer Mongolia.

Group E: El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

#### The Political Factor: Groups A and B

Most of the countries which recognized Manchoukuo had strong political ties to either Germany or Japan, or both. As Japan was responsible for creating Manchoukuo, and worked persistently for its acceptance by other powers, it is not surprising to find that Japan's political allies tended to eventually accord recognition to Manchoukuo. Thus, in examining relations with Manchoukuo, it is necessary to first study relations between the recognizing countries and Japan.

With the approach of World War II throughout the thirties, Germany and Japan grew closer together as allies. Toynbee cites their similar positions as "outlaws" from the international community as one of the reasons for this mutual sympathy and understanding.<sup>2</sup> While Japan's actions in Manchuria indicated a possible threat to German economic and

military interests in China, some sections of opinion in Germany thought that Germany could benefit from "Japan's policy of 'law and order' in Manchuria."<sup>3</sup> With the accession of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi government to power in 1933, Germany's relations with Japan became more and more cordial. The Nazi leaders admired Japan's "dynamism,"<sup>4</sup> and viewed Japan as possessing "a crucially strategic position in world affairs."<sup>5</sup> Germany hoped that in the future, Japan would prove a useful ally both against the West and against the U.S.S.R.<sup>6</sup> It also hoped that friendly relations with Japan might benefit German heavy industry at a later date.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of its desire to be on good terms with Japan, Germany did not recognize Manchoukuo in 1932, or even after agreeing to a trade pact with the state in 1936.<sup>8</sup> When the Manchurian Crisis broke out in 1931, the German Foreign Office adopted a policy of strict neutrality.<sup>9</sup> While good relations with Japan were important to Germany, the latter also wished to maintain its already good relationship with China, a friendship which Germany had carefully cultivated for ten years.<sup>10</sup> This friendship was deepened by the presence in China of German military advisors, and the delivery of German war materials to the Chinese.<sup>11</sup> While these advisors were not sent by the German government, both the Chinese and the Japanese interpreted their activities as a sign of German support for China.<sup>12</sup> Germany had economic and, to a lesser extent, political interests in China and thus did not want to antagonise China over Manchoukuo.<sup>13</sup> Germany's entire East Asian policy throughout the thirties was to be marked by its desire to maintain friendly relations with both Japan and China, without upsetting either.

Germany's policy in East Asia was further complicated by

disagreements among German authorities. While the German Foreign Office advocated a policy of neutrality, along the lines of the League of Nations,<sup>14</sup> the German army pushed for a stronger commitment to China, which it viewed as being almost indispensable as a source of raw materials for German armaments.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Nazi leaders leaned toward a closer understanding with Japan.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the years 1931-1939 witnessed an enormous amount of vacillation by Germany as it endeavoured to serve its own interests in East Asia, without antagonising anybody, and making as few political commitments as possible.

As already noted, in the early days of the crisis, Germany strove to remain neutral. While some events may have indicated a slight sympathy for Japan,<sup>17</sup> Germany was not willing to upset either the League of Nations or China by siding with Japan.<sup>18</sup> The German Foreign Office firmly supported a policy similar to that of the League powers,<sup>19</sup> and despite difficulties, this policy continued until 1933. After Germany's withdrawal from the League in October, 1933, the need to appease the League powers lessened, and in the winter of 1933-1934, the German Manchurian Import and Export Company was formed, a move which though not according recognition gave some indication of Germany's positive attitude toward Japan's position.<sup>20</sup> On the whole, it was accepted that Germany's trade with China was more important than that with either Japan or Manchoukuo,<sup>21</sup> but it was thought that a trade agreement of some sort with Manchoukuo might be beneficial, by (1) helping to readjust the imbalance in German-Manchurian trade, which was in the latter's favour,<sup>22</sup> and (2) appeasing Japan with tacit acknowledgment of Manchoukuo.<sup>23</sup>

Japan was so eager to see Manchoukuo recognized by anyone,

especially by one of the stronger western powers, that in the opinion of Constantin von Neurath, the German Foreign Minister, recognition by Germany should be "a trump which we are ready to play at the right time in the political game."<sup>24</sup> China was far too important to Germany, and it would have been foolish to antagonize China by prematurely recognizing Manchoukuo, simply to please Japan, whose full potential as a future ally was uncertain. Thus, the State Secretary to the Foreign Office, Bernard von Bulow, said in February, 1934.

It is not possible at present to opt for Japan when one is not sure that she will be the better customer in the long run, and when, on the contrary one definitely knows that with such an option one would seriously alienate the other good customer, China, and possibly lose her.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, while a trade agreement with Manchoukuo was a definite possibility, recognition was something to be withheld for the time being.

Accordingly, a German trade mission was dispatched to Manchoukuo in 1935 and the following year, the German-Manchoukuoan trade agreement was signed.<sup>26</sup> Under this agreement, German purchases from Manchoukuo were to total 100 million Manchoukouan yuan. Three-fourths of the payments were to be in Manchoukuoan currency, with the remaining fourth in Reichmarks. Manchoukuo was to import German goods worth 25 million yuan.<sup>27</sup> German purchases consisted mainly of soya beans, exports of which had been declining.<sup>28</sup> The first two years of the agreement were not very successful, with Manchoukuo's purchases from Germany falling below the stipulated 1:4 ratio.<sup>29</sup> After 1938, however, as Manchoukuo began to industrialize more, the situation improved somewhat, with expanded opportunities for German heavy industry.<sup>30</sup> Competition from Japan, however, which produced similar goods, meant that this market for German heavy industry never became very large.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless,

Germany was willing to endure these economic setbacks. In its quest for a closer alliance with Japan, politics were to be placed above economic considerations.<sup>32</sup>

On November 26, 1936, Germany also concluded the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan, having earlier in the year participated in the Klein-HAPRO agreement with China.<sup>33</sup> While the latter was a commercial agreement, no doubt both countries viewed their respective treaties as evidence of a political commitment on the part of Germany. The outbreak of overt Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1937 forced Germany into the awkward position which it had so long tried to avoid; that of declaring support for one East Asian power over the other. Initially, Germany tried to mediate in the conflict<sup>34</sup> and bring it to a rapid conclusion, fearing that China would be forced to align with the U.S.S.R. if fighting continued,<sup>35</sup> and also that Japan would ask for Germany's aid in the dispute, citing the Anti-Comintern Pact. On at least one occasion, Japan implied that its actions in North China was covered by the Pact, as Japan was fighting against Chinese Bolsheviks.<sup>36</sup>

Germany's first feat was realized in August, 1937, when a Sino-Russian Non-Aggression Pact was signed.<sup>37</sup> From then on, into 1938, there occurred a marked change in Germany's East Asian policy. In December, 1937, the London Times reported that "German recognition of Manchoukuo has been agreed upon in principle."<sup>38</sup> Germany's hesitancy was due to its desire to remain on good terms with China.

The German interests in China and the pro-Chinese sentiment of large sections of the German public are factors which enter into her Far Eastern policy as well as the ideological alliance with Japan, and as a matter of course, it is desired to avoid pushing China into the arms of Russia.<sup>39</sup>

As fighting in China continued, however, and it seemed as though Japan



would win, German policy shifted in favour of Japan. In January, 1938, the German Ambassador to China, Herbert von Dirksen, recommended:

A complete reorientation of German policy in the direction of Japan, by the withdrawal of the military advisors from China, the total suspension of the deliveries of war material to China, the recognition of Manchoukuo, and a radical shift away from Nationalist China towards the Japanese occupied and influenced areas of North China.<sup>40</sup>

The worsening of Germany's position in Europe increased the desirability of a firmer accord with Japan, even if such a move would offend China.<sup>41</sup>

Good relations with China were still important, but they were overshadowed by the perceived need to have a stronger alliance with Japan.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, in February, 1938, Germany announced that formal recognition would be accorded to Manchoukuo.<sup>43</sup> On January 17, 1939, Manchoukuo accepted an invitation to join the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, Japan, and Italy.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, in the case of Italy, relations with Japan influenced the Italian attitude toward Manchoukuo. While Italy had not supported Japan in the Manchurian Crisis, it did ask for and receive permission from Japan, in November, 1936, to establish a Consulate-General at Mukden,<sup>45</sup> a procedure which at least indicated possible de facto recognition. The League of Nations's sanctions against Italy after the Ethiopian affair brought Japan and Italy into a similar position against the League.<sup>46</sup> This growing friendship between Japan and Italy, plus the desire of Germany, resulted in Italy's joining the Anti-Comintern Pact in November, 1937.<sup>47</sup> Italy's recognition of Manchoukuo a few days later, on November 29, 1937, was a natural outcome of the cordial relations which existed between Japan and Italy.<sup>48</sup> The following year, a barter agreement was concluded between Italy, Manchoukuo,

and Japan.<sup>49</sup> Various agricultural products were exported to Italy from Manchoukuo, in return for which Italy exported industrial commodities to Japan.<sup>50</sup>

Once Italy and Germany had accorded recognition to Manchoukuo, it is not surprising that other Axis states and allies soon followed suit. As Japan, Italy, and Germany became closer through the Anti-Comintern Pact of November, 1937, Franco Spain began to seek recognition from Japan, "through German and Italian Channels with German and Italian support."<sup>51</sup> Italy and Germany had been the first two powers to recognize the Franco Government in November, 1936, a bare four months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>52</sup> On December 1, 1937, over a year later, Japan formally recognized the Franco Government.<sup>53</sup> The establishment of diplomatic relations between the Spanish and the Manchoukuoan governments only 24 hours later was obviously a direct result of Japan's recognition of Franco Spain.<sup>54</sup>

As German and Italian influence in Europe grew, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Finland, Denmark, and Croatia, all granted recognition to Manchoukuo. Table VI shows that in almost every case, recognition by German allies or satellites took place after those countries had been conquered by Germany. Likewise, countries under Japanese influence, including China as represented by the Wang Ching-wei government, and Thailand, acknowledged Manchoukuo also.<sup>55</sup>

While it seems obvious that political alliances between the Axis powers were the main factor in their recognition of Manchoukuo, what is not so easily understood is why the remaining groups of countries mentioned above should have chosen to extend recognition to Manchoukuo. Knowing that such a move would bring condemnation from the United States,

TABLE VI  
COMPARISON OF DATES OF OCCUPATION BY OR ALLIANCES  
WITH GERMANY, AND DATES OF RECOGNITION

Dates of Occupation	Dates of Recognition
November 22, 1938. Czechoslovakia grants autonomy to Slovakia and Ruthenia.	October 19, 1938. Poland recognizes Manchoukuo
March 15, 1939. Germany invades Czechoslovakia, and makes Slovakia a separate state.	January 9, 1939. Hungary recognizes Manchoukuo.
September 1, 1939. Germany invades Poland.	July 1, 1939. Slovakia recognizes Manchoukuo.
April 9, 1940. Germany invades Denmark.	
October 7, 1940. Hungary joins the Axis.	
November 23, 1940. Romania joins the Axis.	
March 1, 1941. Bulgaria joins the Axis.	December 4, 1940. Romania recognizes Manchoukuo.
April 6, 1941. Germany invades Yugoslavia. Croatia declared independent.	
June 22, 1941. Finland joins Germany attack on the U.S.S.R.	June 14, 1941. Bulgaria recognizes Manchoukuo.
	July 18, 1941. Finland recognizes Manchoukuo.
	August 1, 1941. Denmark recognizes Manchoukuo.
	August 2, 1941. Croatia recognizes Manchoukuo.

France, Great Britain, and the smaller League powers, what incentive was strong enough to prompt these countries to acknowledge the new state?

### The Ideological Factor: The Vatican

In the case of the Vatican, it appears that ideology may have been a pertinent factor. The Vatican is reported by some Japanese sources to have recognized Manchoukuo on September 2, 1934.<sup>56</sup> According to another entry in the Japan Year Book, relations between the Vatican and Manchoukuo began on April 18, 1934, when:

the Holy See notified the Manchoukuo Government of its decision to form a separate mission field in Manchoukuo, independent from that of China, and appointed the Rt. Rev. Bishop A. Gaspais as Acting Apostolic Delegate in Manchoukup. This notice . . . was confirmed in August of the same year by an official communication from His Eminence Pierre Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, prefet de la S. Congregation de la Propagande. At the same time, His Eminence in his communication to the Manchoukup Foreign Minister stated that the Catholic missions in Manchoukuo would gladly contribute to the moral and intellectual development of the country according to the disposition of the Manchoukuo authorities.<sup>57</sup>

It is possible that the August and the September dates refer to the same incident. Whatever the case, it seems obvious that relations of some degree certainly did exist between the Holy See and the Manchoukuo government at this stage. There is also a record of a diplomatic mission from Manchoukuo to the Pope in 1938.<sup>58</sup> What underlay this acknowledgment of Manchoukuo on the part of the Vatican?

According to one source, the Vatican's recognition of Manchoukuo may have been part of the war it was waging against communism.<sup>59</sup> The Vatican hoped that Japan would act as a deterrent to Russia, and thus regarded the former's action in Manchuria favorably, pleased with the way Japan worked to weed out communism in occupied areas.<sup>60</sup> "In the eyes of the Catholic Church, Japan was to be the Germany of the East,

the destroyer of Bolshevism in Asia and the mortal enemy of Soviet Russia."<sup>61</sup>

The Vatican may also have been concerned about the safety of Roman Catholics living in Japan and Manchoukuo. In 1933, the number of Catholics living in both areas was substantial as shown in Table VII. From 1931 onwards, relations between the Vatican and Japan improved considerably.

#### The Economic Factor: Poland

The first non-Axis country in Europe to recognize Manchoukuo was Poland on October 19, 1938.<sup>62</sup> As early as 1934, reports had circulated that Poland was already prepared to recognize the new state.<sup>65</sup> According to the New York Times, the Polish Minister to Japan went to Manchoukuo in March, 1934 "to study the situation in Manchoukuo in connection with the Polish Government's intention to recognize the new state."<sup>64</sup> The Minister said that Poland would "probably recognize Manchoukuo before Germany," which was currently examining the commercial situation in Manchoukuo.<sup>65</sup>

It was not until four years later, however, that recognition of any kind was announced by Poland. What caused the delay? Later in 1934, Poland entered into a non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R.,<sup>66</sup> due to fear of Germany, and thus may have felt that recognition of Manchoukuo, a pro-Japanese move, would offend the U.S.S.R.. Whatever the reason, it was not until July 30, 1938, that the question of Polish recognition of Manchoukuo was raised in public again, when it was reported that Poland was seeking "a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation" with Manchoukuo.<sup>67</sup> The following October, a Treaty of Amity was signed.<sup>68</sup>

TABLE VII  
POPULATION OF ROMAN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS IN  
JAPAN AND MANCHOUKUO, 1933

	Number of Protestant Churches	Number of Members	Number of Catholic Churches	Number of Members
Japan	1,461	221,400	299	84,000
Manchoukuo	234	32,193	121	64,263

Source: The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book, 1934. (Tokyo: The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book Company, 1933), pp. 162, 177.

Polish recognition of Manchoukuo was announced, while the treaty provided for "the direct accrediting of consular officials and the furtherance of trade."<sup>69</sup>

The hope of new markets for Polish goods seems the most obvious reason for these actions. In 1936 and 1937, Polish trade with Manchoukuo was virtually non-existent.<sup>71</sup> According to the 1943 Manchoukuo Year Book however, Poland's trade with Manchoukuo did not increase substantially after the Treaty of Amity was signed, and Poland was never listed as a principal country in Manchoukuo's foreign trade.<sup>72</sup> Thus, if the hope of new trade was what prompted Poland's recognition of Manchoukuo, Poland must have been sorely disappointed.

Since Poland was conquered and partitioned by Germany and the U.S.S.R. less than a year after Poland recognized Manchoukuo, it seems possible that Polish policy toward Manchoukuo, and hence toward Japan, may have been prompted by Polish fear of either Germany or Russia. However, there is no evidence of a Polish-Japanese alignment of any sort of this time. If this was Poland's plan, the events of 1939 demonstrated its failure.

#### The Political Factor: The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union, not being a member of the League of Nations at the time of the Manchurian Crisis, was not bound by the League's resolution of nonrecognition. It had been invited along with the United States to aid the League in its efforts to resolve the situation in East Asia,<sup>73</sup> but refused on the grounds that, as Russia was not a member of the League, it could have no influence when it came to making decisions concerning the matter.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, it was felt that as "the

majority of the states forming part of the Advisory Committee were not maintaining relations with the Soviet Union and therefore showed signs of an unfriendly disposition towards the Soviet Union,"<sup>75</sup> it was not possible for Russia to work with the committee. The Soviet Union did, however, suggest that it would abide by any proposal which would provide a just solution to the problem.<sup>76</sup>

When the Manchurian Crisis broke out, Soviet-Japanese relations were fairly cordial,<sup>77</sup> but the U.S.S.R. was isolated politically and in no position to go to war with anyone.<sup>78</sup> Initially the U.S.S.R. sought assurances that hostilities would not spread to North Manchuria, where the U.S.S.R. held the Chinese Eastern Railway, but when Japanese forces took Harbin and Tsitsihar in late 1931, early 1932, Russia resigned herself to the situation.<sup>79</sup> Thus, while the Soviet government must have been alarmed by this threat to what was an important sphere of interest for Russia, it decided to adopt a realistic policy to the affair, realizing that it could not challenge Japan.<sup>80</sup>

Instead, the Soviet Union pursued a conciliatory policy, suggesting a non-aggression pact with Japan as early as December, 1931.<sup>81</sup> Even when it was proposed that the Soviet Union would recognize Manchoukuo in return for such a pact, however, Japan refused.<sup>82</sup> In view of Japan's desire to see Manchoukuo recognized, this refusal appears strange, but, apparently, the Japanese military were opposed to any such alliance on the ideological grounds that Japan should not become "linked with such a completely different policy as that of the U.S.S.R."<sup>83</sup> A second reason was Japan's wish not to appear pro-communist before the world.<sup>84</sup>

Despite this refusal, however, and in spite of continuing Russo-



Japanese friction over border disputes between Manchoukuo and the Soviet puppet state of Outer Mongolia, the Soviet Union decided to follow a policy of practicality with regard to Manchoukuo, and from 1932 onwards can certainly be said to have accorded her at least de facto recognition. As early as May, 1932, the U.S.S.R. agreed to the stationing of Manchoukuoan consuls at China, Blagoveschensk, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok.<sup>85</sup>

July, 1933 brought a Soviet offer to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchoukuo.<sup>86</sup> The first sentence of the offer read, "The government of the U.S.S.R. agrees to sell to the state of Manchoukuo all property relating to the Chinese Eastern."<sup>87</sup> This language was interpreted by some as constituting de facto recognition of the new state.<sup>88</sup>

In the London Times of December, 1934, there appeared a brief account of the signing of the Soviet-Manchoukuo Rivers Navigation Treaty.<sup>89</sup> After the conclusion of the terms of the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway in March, 1935,<sup>90</sup> Japan claimed that the Soviet Union could be said to have recognized Manchoukuo de jure.<sup>91</sup> The U.S.S.R. continued to deny this, but Soviet dealings with Manchoukuo certainly imply at least de facto recognition.

In 1939, Russo-Japanese relations took a decided turn for the worse over the issue of the Manchoukuo-Mongolia border. Japan wished to broaden Manchoukuo's frontiers, thus infringing on Outer Mongolia. From May through September, conflicts occurred on the border almost daily between Japanese and Soviet forces in what was practically an undeclared war. It was not until the signing of the Russo-Japanese Pact of Neutrality in April 1941 that these hostilities finally came to an end, and the Soviet Union also agreed to respect "the territorial

integrity and inviolability of the Empire of Manchoukuo" in return for better relations with Japan.<sup>92</sup>

Thus, like Germany and Italy, the Soviet Union's attitude toward Manchoukuo was largely dictated by its relations with Japan, and by the Soviet decision to accept what it could not change to follow a practical policy of conciliation toward Japan, and to interact with Manchoukuo long before any other major power even considered recognition.<sup>95</sup> Russia having formally recognized the new state in 1941, recognition by Outer Mongolia, its puppet state, soon followed.

#### Group E: El Salvador and the Dominican Republic

El Salvador and the Dominican Republic fall into a category of their own. They were the only American countries said to have recognized Manchoukuo, but confusing accounts of this alleged recognition exist for both countries.

In May, 1934, El Salvador achieved the dubious honor of being the first country, after Japan, to extend de jure recognition to Manchoukuo.<sup>94</sup> A month earlier, according to a report in the New York Times, the Japanese consul in San Salvador had suggested that Salvador might benefit from such a move.<sup>95</sup> Yet, on May 21, 1934, it was revealed that Salvador had, in fact, already accorded recognition to Manchoukuo on March 3 of that year.<sup>96</sup> No reason for the delay in announcing recognition was forthcoming. In correspondence with the League of Nations, El Salvador explained that on receiving news of the enthronement of the Manchoukuoan emperor, it had expressed its "fevrent good wishes for the personal happiness of His Majesty Pu Yi, and for the peace and prosperity

of the Manchu Empire."<sup>97</sup> Salvador had also mentioned its desire that "the most friendly relations would always prevail between the two countries."<sup>98</sup>

The reasons which have traditionally been given for this move on the part of El Salvador have been commercial; that Salvador hoped to secure new markets for its coffee by granting recognition.<sup>99</sup> The idea that Salvador may have been hoped for a new coffee market is plausible, although there is no evidence that its coffee exports to either Japan or Manchoukuo increased substantially as a result of recognition.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, as late as 1938, four years after recognition, Manchoukuo was still merely talking about the possibility of a treaty "of commerce and friendship with El Salvador."<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, it was not until 1939 that Salvador announced that it would appoint an honorary consul in Manchoukuo.<sup>102</sup>

Confusion continues to exist over the question of why, if El Salvador had indeed extended recognition to Manchoukuo in March, 1934, it was not announced until May of that year? The New York Times of February 17, 1935, suggested that El Salvador had somehow inadvertently recognized Manchoukuo, by replying to the announcement of the Emperor Pu Yi's enthronement.<sup>103</sup> "There is opinion to the effect that the message from the Foreign Office of Manchoukuo was answered . . . without any realization that it meant recognition of the Manchoukuo government."<sup>104</sup> Considering Japan's eagerness to have Manchoukuo recognized by other governments, one wonders why there was a two-month delay in communicating the news of recognition by Salvador. Perhaps, Salvador threatened to withdraw its tacit recognition unless Japan promised to expand its coffee imports, but no published evidence of that has been found.

The alleged recognition of Manchoukuo by the Dominican Republic is characterized by even greater uncertainty. Like El Salvador, the Dominican Republic replied to the news of the Emperor's ascension to the throne by sending a note in August, 1934<sup>105</sup> which expressed a "desire to increase the friendly relations existing between the Dominican Republic and Manchoukuo."<sup>106</sup> Despite a report in the December New York Times that Manchoukuoan officials were hoping that the note might be a prelude to recognition,<sup>107</sup> it was not until January, 1935 that the note was answered,<sup>108</sup> and the Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book of 1934 made no reference to the incident.<sup>109</sup> One wonders why officials in Manchoukuo waited five months to reply considering how eager they were for any kind of recognition. As in the case of El Salvador, there is no clear answer.

It was not until four years later, in 1937, that the question of recognition by the Dominican Republic cropped up again. In the Japan Year Book for that year, the following paragraph appeared:

Diplomatic relations with Dominica: On August 16, 1934, the President of Dominica presented his autograph letter to the Emperor of Manchoukuo through the Foreign Office of that country, in return for which the Emperor sent his dated January 1, 1935 to the President. The Foreign Minister of the Republic therefore sent a letter of appreciation to the Emperor through the Foreign Office of Manchoukuo, and in this manner diplomatic relations between the two countries have been established.<sup>110</sup>

According to this account, then, recognition of some sort had been granted in 1934-1935. But a letter in the December 6, 1937 issue of the London Times, contradicted all this. The Charge d'Affaires of the Dominican Republic in London wrote to the editor objecting to a report in the Times a few days earlier, which included the Dominican Republic in a list of countries which had recognized Manchoukuo.<sup>111</sup> He stated:

that the Dominican Republic as a member of the League of Nations has never broken away from the League; consequently,

all reports that it has recognized Manchoukuo are without foundation. The Dominican Republic has always been faithful to the principles and aims of the League of Nations.<sup>112</sup>

Furthermore, in the Manchoukuo Year Book of 1943, the Dominican Republic is not included in a list of countries which had recognized Manchoukuo de jure.<sup>113</sup> Thus, while de facto recognition may have been implied in the notes of 1934-1935, it appears that de jure recognition was never accorded.

### Summary and Discussion

Despite the fact that most of the countries which recognized Manchoukuo were members or former members of the League of Nations, and had voted for the League resolution of February, 1935, which committed League members not to recognize Manchoukuo, the League of Nations never made any attempt to discipline the violators of that resolution.<sup>114</sup>

Only in the case of the first offender, El Salvador, did the League engage in any discussion of the issue. Even then, no penalty of any sort was imposed on Salvador. A few days after it was reported that El Salvador had recognized Manchoukuo, in May, 1934, the New York Times, reporting from Geneva, suggested that the League of Nations was possibly considering "what action to take against El Salvador for recognizing Manchoukuo."<sup>115</sup> The report noted that Salvador's delegate to the League Assembly on the Manchurian incident had not been present at the time of the vote on adopting the nonrecognition resolution.<sup>116</sup> Later when the Secretary General of the League circulated notices to all League members informing them of the League policy toward Manchoukuo, El Salvador had been one of the few countries not responding.<sup>117</sup> The opinion of most League officials in Geneva, however, was that Salvador

was nevertheless bound by the League resolutions, and that its violation of the resolution constituted possible grounds for expulsion from the League.<sup>118</sup>

In the July, 1934, edition of The Monthly Summary of the League of Nations, however, there was no mention of any possible expulsion of Salvador. Instead, the Summary simply reported that in response to the Secretary General's request, Salvador had furnished details of its recognition of Manchoukuo.<sup>119</sup> There was no mention of imposing penalties on El Salvador, or of passing any moral judgment on the actions of the Salvadorean government.

Similarly, in the case of other League members which recognized Manchoukuo, the League made no protest of any kind. Table VIII compares the dates on which some countries announced their withdrawal from the League, with the dates on which they accorded recognition to Manchoukuo.

Despite that fact that both Italy and Hungary were still League members when they announced that they would recognize Manchoukuo, the League Summaries for the relevant dates record no objections on the part of the League of Nations. While it would have been difficult for the League to have taken any punitive action against recognizing countries, it seems strange that not even a verbal condemnation was entered into the League record. Far from criticising acts of recognition of Manchoukuo, The Monthly Summary of the League of Nations for the pertinent dates does not mention these at all. It was this flaccid behavior on the part of the League of Nations, making decisions and resolutions which it could not, or would not, implement, which was to lead to its inefficacy as an international body of arbitration.

TABLE VIII  
COMPARISON OF DATES OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE  
LEAGUE AND RECOGNITION OF MANCHOUKUO

Date of Recognition	Country	Announced Withdrawal*
1934 3 3	El Salvador	1937 7 26
1937 11 29	Italy	1937 12 11
1937 12 2	Spain	1939 5 8
1938 2 20	Germany	1933 10 31
1939 1 11	Hungary	1939 4 11
1941 4 14	** U.S.S.R.	1939 12 14

\*Formal withdrawal took place two years after this initial date.

\*\*Russia was, in fact, expelled from the League five years after its admission in September, 1934.

Source: The Monthly Summary of the League of Nations. (October, 1933; August, December, 1937; April, May, December, 1939).

#### FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>While the New York Times of May 23, 1934, and of May 25, 1934, mentioned the possibility that the League might discipline El Salvador, the first country outside of Japan to accord formal recognition to Manchoukuo, the League refrained from any such action. She did require an explanation from El Salvador as recorded in the July, 1934 copy of the Summary of the League, p. 167, but the League took no disciplinary actions against El Salvador. See Tables II and VIII for other League members who recognized Manchoukuo.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold J. Toynbee. Survey of International Affairs, 1932-1937 (New York: Oxford Univeristy Press; London: Humphrey Milford, 1932).

<sup>3</sup>John P. Fox. Germany and the Far Eastern Crisis 1931-1936: A Study in Diplomacy and Ideology (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 4, 79.

<sup>7</sup>L. K. Rosinger. "Germany's Far Eastern Policy Under Hitler." Pacific Affairs, 11 (December, 1938), p. 424.

<sup>8</sup>New York Times, 1 May 1936.

<sup>9</sup>Fox, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Toynbee, 1937, vol. 1, pp. 293-294.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.; Fox, pp. 15, 16.

<sup>12</sup>Fox, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 28, 30, 31.



<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 9, 18-20.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 52, 53.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 26, 27, 79.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 11, 20.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 29, 30.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 13, 14, 34, 35.

<sup>22</sup>F. C. Jones. Manchuria Since 1931. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 199.

<sup>23</sup>Fox, pp. 29, 30.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>The New York Times, 1 May 1936.

<sup>27</sup>Jones, p. 201.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>29</sup>Rosinger, p. 426.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>G. F. Deasy. "Recent Trends in Manchoukuoan Trade." Economic Geography, 16 (April, 1940), pp. 165-166.

<sup>32</sup>Rosinger, p. 425.

<sup>33</sup>April 9, 1936. This was an economic agreement in which German armaments were exchanged for Chinese raw materials, See Fox, p. 108.

- 34 Toynbee, 1937, vol. 1, p. 295
- 35 Ibid., p. 294.
- 36 Fox, p. 233.
- 37 Toynbee, 1937, vol. 1, p. 295.
- 38 The London Times, 3 December 1937.
- 39 Ibid., 4 December 1937.
- 40 Fox, p. 291.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 292, 293, 305.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 The London Times, 21 February 1958.
- 44 The New York Times, 17 January 1939.
- 45 Toynbee, 1936, p. 905. This conflicts with a report in the London Times, 18 November 1936, which stated that Japan had refused this permission to Italy.
- 46 Ernst, L. Presseisen. Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy, 1933-1941. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), pp. 166.
- 47 Toynbee, 1937, vol. 1, pp. 302, 303.
- 48 The New York Times, 30 November 1937.
- 49 The London Times, 6 July 1938; 25 August 1938.
- 50 H. F. MacNair. Modern Far Eastern Relations. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1950), p. 431.
- 51 The London Times, 19 November 1937.
- 52 New York Times, 12, 20 November 1936.
- 53 MacNair, p. 432.

- <sup>54</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>56</sup>The Manchoukuo Year Book, 1943. (Hsinking: The Manchoukuo Year Book Company, 1943), p. 401.
- <sup>57</sup>The Japan Year Book, 1935. (Tokyo: Foreign Affairs Association of Japan, 1935), p. 1165.
- <sup>58</sup>The London Times, 12 September 1938.
- <sup>59</sup>Avro Manhattan. The Vatican in World Politics. (New York: Gaer Associates, 1940), pp. 79, 410.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 410, 411.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 411.
- <sup>62</sup>The London Times, 20 October 1938.
- <sup>63</sup>The New York Times, 5 March 1934.
- <sup>64</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup>Toynbee, 1934, p. 704.
- <sup>67</sup>The New York Times, 30 July 1938.
- <sup>68</sup>The London Times, 20 October 1938.
- <sup>69</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup>MacNair, p. 432.
- <sup>71</sup>The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book, 1943. (Tokyo: The Japan-Manchoukuo Year Book Company, 1942), p. 349.
- <sup>72</sup>The Manchoukuo Year Book, 1943, p. 349.
- <sup>73</sup>A Monthly Summary of the League of Nations. 13 (February, 1933):28.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 11 (March, 1933):70.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Harriet L. Moore. Soviet Far Eastern Policy, 1931-1945. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 2.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.; T. A. Bisson. "Manchoukuo: The Initial Soviet Reaction." Foreign Policy Reports, 14 (February, 1939), p. 259.

<sup>79</sup>Bisson, p. 259.

<sup>80</sup>Ikuhiko Hata. Reality and Illusion: The Hidden Crisis Between Japan and the U.S.S.R, 1932-1934. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 304.

<sup>81</sup>Bisson, p. 260.

<sup>82</sup>Hata, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>84</sup>Sadako N. Ogata. Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Press, 1964), pp. 167-168.

<sup>85</sup>The London Times, 24 May 1932. These were all places situated on or near the C.E.R. See map for further details (Appendix A).

<sup>86</sup>The New York Times, 6 July 1933.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>The London Times, 28 December 1934.

<sup>90</sup>MacNair, p. 430.

<sup>91</sup>The London Times, 26 March 1935.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 14 April 1941; David J. Dallin. Soviet Russia's Foreign Policy, 1939-1942. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), pp. 217, 220, 224.

<sup>93</sup>MacNair, p. 430.

<sup>94</sup>The New York Times, 22 May 1934.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 10 April 1934.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1934.

<sup>97</sup>Summary of the League, 14 (July, 1934):167.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>The New York Times, 10 April; 22 May 1934; MacNair, p. 430.

<sup>100</sup>Salvadorean trade is not mentioned as significant in the Japan or Manchoukuo Year Books for this period.

<sup>101</sup>The New York Times, 16 November 1938

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 22 May 1939.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 17 February 1935.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Toynbee, 1935, vol. 1, p. 422.

<sup>106</sup>The New York Times, 29 December 1934.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>The Japan Year Book, 1937.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>The London Times, 6 December 1937.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>The Manchoukuo Year Book, 1945, p. 401.

<sup>114</sup>See Footnote Number 1.

<sup>115</sup>The New York Times, 23 May 1934.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Summary of the League, 14 (July, 1934);167.

## CHAPTER V

### NATIONS NOT RECOGNIZING MANCHUOKUO

#### Introduction

The League of Nations' resolution of March 11, 1932, stated that the League would not recognize any situation in East Asia brought about by force. The final report on the Manchurian affair, adopted by the Assembly in February, 1933, reiterated this policy of nonrecognition. Most League members upheld his policy throughout Manchoukuo's existence. The United States, which published its own statement of nonrecognition early in 1932, and worked in cooperation with the League Advisory Committee in the dispute, also refused to recognize Manchoukuo.

Why were there countries so adamantly opposed to the recognition of Manchoukuo? It is true that many were signatories of either the Kellogg-Briand Pact<sup>1</sup> or the Nine Power Treaty.<sup>2</sup> All except the United States were members of the League of Nations, and thus had a certain commitment to uphold its decisions and its covenant. Yet many of the countries which did recognize Manchoukuo were parties to these agreements also, but chose to ignore them.

Why did some countries refuse to abandon the League policy of non-recognition? Acceptance of the new state might have benefited them commercially, and would certainly have gained them favour with Japan. As Japan had become a major power, this latter consideration was not

unimportant, especially when one considers how the eventual outbreak of war anticipated throughout this period. Why, then, was recognition now accorded?

#### Countries Which Did Not Recognize Manchoukuo

As in the case of countries which recognized Manchoukuo, below are some suggested categories into which the nonrecognizing countries may be placed.

Group A. Great Britain, France, and the United States. Three of the traditionally great powers of the West. The former two were also founding members of the League of Nations.

Group B. The smaller powers of the League.

Group C. Countries which eventually came under Axis rule: Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, and Norway.

#### Group A: The Great Powers

The policy of each of the great powers was hampered by conflicting interests. While all wished, or felt obliged, to uphold a certain amount of moral justice in the Manchurian affair, which might involve disciplining Japan, all three had interests in East Asia, and closer to home, which limited their freedom to take a harsh policy against Japan. All tried to find a middle policy that would demonstrate concern over the incident, but would not require any military or financial risk.

Great Britain. As one of the two major powers of the League, and a founding member also, Great Britain felt, to some extent, simply obliged to uphold the decisions of the League.<sup>3</sup> However, the summer



and fall of 1931 had been a period of domestic instability in Great Britain, with the collapse of the Labor Government under Ramsay MacDonald and formation of a National Coalition Government, also under MacDonald.<sup>4</sup> This split the Labor party and put the government in the hands of the Conservatives.<sup>5</sup> On September 21, the very day that China appealed to the League of Nations, Britain went off the gold standard.<sup>6</sup> Six days earlier, the British fleet at Invergordon had mutinied.<sup>7</sup>

Small wonder then, that Britain was not ready to pay much attention to an incident in Manchuria. Its initial reaction was to avoid entanglements at all cost. Immediate reports of the incident were confusing, and Great Britain feared that whatever view it expressed would offend either Japan or China. Thus, a cautious policy of neutrality emerged.<sup>8</sup> Great Britain sincerely hoped for a peaceful solution to the dispute, involving no punitive action against either Japan or China. As one of the major powers, Britain knew that any such disciplinary action would naturally involve it, and would not be without repercussions.

Great Britain, then, hoped to resolve the problem through the League of Nations, in some collective policy with the other League members,<sup>9</sup> and possibly with the United States as well.<sup>10</sup> Yet, Britain was not overly pleased with the policy of nonrecognition suggested by Henry H. Stimson, the American Secretary of State, early in 1932.<sup>11</sup> Unlike the United States, Great Britain had no tradition of a nonrecognition policy in East Asia. In response to Stimson's suggestion of such a policy in January, 1932, Britain stated that as long as the Open Door policy was maintained in East Asia, it saw no need for a nonrecognition policy.<sup>12</sup>

Like the other large powers which had some interests in the dispute Britain opposed any action "which would only inflame Japanese feelings

and precipitate a dangerous situation."<sup>13</sup> Britain had various commercial and territorial concerns in Asia and did not want Japan to gain an undue advantage there.<sup>14</sup> Rather than prompting Great Britain to take a firmer stand toward Japan's actions in Manchuria, however, this factor instead provoked a policy of appeasement toward Japan. Having neither the inclination nor the resources to protect its interests in East Asia, Britain shrank from any intervention which might antagonize Japan and put British interests in Asia at greater risk.<sup>15</sup> This concern over British interests in East Asia did not go unnoticed by Japan, which was willing to "respect the position of Great Britain" in such areas as "Shanghai, Canton, and other places along the Yangtze River and South China."<sup>16</sup> Britain's willingness to accept Japan's early 1932 promise to maintain the Open Door in Manchuria indicated a hope of preserving British rights and interests in China through a conciliatory policy toward Japan.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, at least until the attack on Shanghai in January, 1932, Britain sympathized with Japan's claims to a special position in Manchuria. In the words of an analogy used by some British officials throughout the affair, "the League had no more business in Manchuria than it would have had in India."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, "it was upon the basis of common imperialistic interests that Japan expected to develop cooperation with Great Britain in China."<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, Britain had to remember its friendship with the United States, which condemned Japan's action in Manchoutuo. According to one source, the Anglo-American friendship was so important to Great Britain that it greatly influenced British policy in the affair, Britain was not a "free agent,"<sup>20</sup> but had to "keep in with the United

States on account of the War Debts question."<sup>21</sup> There was also a further need to maintain good terms with the United States, for, if further fighting occurred in the East, Britain was not at all sure of its ability to defend its interests there, and so would have to call on the United States for help.<sup>22</sup>

British policy, then, was dictated by her need to placate both the Japanese and the Americans who were on opposing sides. Yet by pursuing a middle path, adopting nonrecognition in accordance with the League and the United States, while still maintaining the need to conciliate Japan and refusing to enforce sanctions, Britain pleased neither side.<sup>23</sup>

The British nonrecognition policy was adopted along with the rest of the League in a collective decision and Britain never wavered from it. Yet, Great Britain constantly, until the late 1930's, tried to mend its relations with Japan. There were suggestions that it would have been willing to drop nonrecognition if the United States led the way. According to a report in the New York Times of March 5, 1934, London officials said that it was "only a matter of time before the present policy . . . [would] be modified."<sup>24</sup> A second report a few days later reiterated this view, and added that Britain expected recognition to eventually come from Washington also. According to the article, there were "various unconfirmed rumors to the effect that this is on the cards."<sup>25</sup>

Throughout 1934, feelers were put out about the possibility of renewing the old Anglo-Japanese alliance with a nonaggression pact of some kind.<sup>26</sup> At about the same time, the Federation of British Industries sent a trade mission to Manchoukuo to examine ways of furthering

British commercial interests there.<sup>27</sup> These two moves were inevitably linked by many observers, despite efforts by British officials to "emphasize that the sending of a trade mission had no connection whatever with political matters, and . . . that British recognition of Manchoukuo is still impossible."<sup>28</sup>

China protested the mission, charging that Lord Barnby, the Chairman, had implied that Britain should recognize Manchoukuo.<sup>29</sup> China also argued that, even without formal recognition, the sending of the trade mission violated the League resolution of February, 1933, which "implied that neither political nor economic relations should be established with the state set up by Japan."<sup>30</sup> When the mission returned in December, 1934, it was expected that it would "advocate immediate recognition of Manchukuo . . . point to the opportunities for British trade in the Manchurian market, and . . . urge the government to remain on the best possible terms with Japan."<sup>31</sup> While the trade mission did not go that far, it did strongly encourage British businesses to become involved in the "development of a new Japanese empire on the mainland of Asia,"<sup>32</sup> and stressed the importance of good Anglo-Japanese relations."<sup>33</sup> The proposals of the trade mission were never taken up, however, and the idea of an Anglo-Japanese nonaggression pact was also abandoned.<sup>34</sup>

While the non-political nature of the Federation of British Industries' trade mission was continually stressed, there was another British commercial mission underway in China in the fall of 1934. Sir Frederick Leith Ross led a one-person mission which was definitely political in some of its activities.<sup>34</sup> China was then in the process of switching from an economy based on the pure silver standard, to a paper currency, and

required help from the other powers in implementing this change.<sup>36</sup> Britain sent Leith-Ross to advise the Chinese and to advance British interests. He was also to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation between the Chinese and the Japanese.<sup>37</sup> His recommendations included the possible recognition of Manchoukuo.<sup>38</sup>

The work of the Leith-Ross mission was not viewed favorably in Japan, and it produced few results in the long run.<sup>39</sup> In 1936-1937, however, there was renewed discussion of a new Anglo-Japanese alliance, this time at Japan's initiative.<sup>40</sup> While these proposals came to nothing, they demonstrated a desire on both sides in those years to renew the old Anglo-Japanese friendship.

Like most of the other Western powers which refused recognition to Manchoukuo, Britain nevertheless retained consular representatives in the new state.<sup>41</sup> As noted earlier, this need not imply recognition. On the question of consular representation, Sir John Simon, the British foreign secretary, stated: "No question of recognition by his Majesty's government of the existing regime in Manchuria has been involved in these relations."<sup>42</sup>

France. Being a major League power like Great Britain, France also was morally obliged to uphold any resolution of the League. And, like Britain, France was beset with many domestic and European problems in 1931 and so was willing to abide by any League decision which did not require much action.<sup>43</sup> As in most other matters, France's attitude toward the League was dominated by the French view of Germany. The French were interested in the League chiefly as an instrument for holding Germany at bay.<sup>44</sup> As a peace-keeping body for settling other disputes in the world, the League was of little interest to France. Thus, while

France was willing enough to uphold a policy of nonrecognition which involved no tangible cost, it was not ready to participate in imposing sanctions on any one.<sup>45</sup>

A further reason for its commitment to the League of Nations was France's desire to stay on good terms with both Great Britain and the United States, which it wanted as allies in the event of another war with Germany.<sup>46</sup> Although France had some sympathy for Japan in the Crisis,<sup>47</sup> and although Japan approached the French early in 1932, seeking some kind of alliance, France tried to remain neutral in East Asia.<sup>48</sup>

With regard to a possible France-Japanese alliance, the official approached was instructed to "evade the offer courteously . . . taking care not to leave any trace which could make our attitude toward the League of Nations of the signatories of the Treaty of Washington appear ambiguous."<sup>49</sup> France could not afford to "compromise her relations with Britain and the United States, which she considered fundamental, by Far Eastern questions which were of secondary importance to her."<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, France did not want to antagonize Japan for fear of endangering its Asian possessions, and so accepted the nonrecognition policy while remaining very sympathetic toward Japan.<sup>51</sup>

France did however have a substantial commercial interest in Manchoukuo. This may have been due to a deliberate policy on the part of Japan to encourage French investment in Manchuria, and so win French support for Japan's policies in China.<sup>52</sup> As early as March, 1933, barely a month after the report on the dispute had been adopted in the League Assembly, the New York Times ran an article entitled, "French Flirting With Manchukuo," which reported on the apparent interest of French financial groups in Manchoukuo.<sup>53</sup>

According to the article, this move was receiving "considerable attention from the press, as an indication of the friendly attitude of France, and as a possible forerunner of recognition."<sup>54</sup> By July, the Tokyo France-Japanese Association was formed, by "French and Japanese financial interests to make investments in the new state of Manchoukuo."<sup>55</sup> Throughout 1934 there were conflicting reports on whether or not any French investments had been made.<sup>56</sup> However, French trade with Manchoukuo was never very important and is not even mentioned in many Manchoukuoan sources.<sup>57</sup>

The United States. The United States was never a member of the League of Nations. Despite this, and despite its unwillingness to become involved in the League's actions concerning Manchuria, the United States found itself playing a major role in the negotiations and decision-making. The United States originated the policy of nonrecognition which the League eventually adopted toward Manchuria. Thus, the motivation of the United States and its participation in the affair are of particular importance.

Like France and Great Britain, when the crisis began in September, 1931, the United States was facing many other problems of a more urgent nature. Because of the world-wide depression, the American economy was continually worsening and unemployment was rising. Elections of the preceding November had resulted in a split congress, which not only worried President Herbert Hoover about his chances of re-election in 1932, but, more importantly, made it virtually impossible for him to put through policies which might help redeem the economic situation.<sup>58</sup> Besides this, isolationism was still a dominant philosophy

in the United States, and it would take an important cause, plus a strong president, to persuade isolationists in either party of the need to become more involved in world affairs.

On September 19, 1931, barely 26 hours after the explosion in Mukden,<sup>59</sup> the incident was brought before the League of Nations by the Chinese representative there, Mr. Sze.<sup>60</sup> On the assurance of the Japanese representative that his government was doing everything possible to resolve the situation, the Council brought the discussion to a close.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, in the United States, Secretary of State Henry H. Stimson, while not unduly worried about the affair, did contact the Japanese Ambassador, Debuchi Katsuji, and ask him to cancel his triennial leave.<sup>62</sup> That the United States was initially not too concerned by the affair, or at least that it did not expect to play a large role can be seen in a State Department press release stating that the United States "saw no reason to invoke the Kellogg-Briand Pact as a means of preserving peace between the Japanese and Chinese governments."<sup>63</sup>

On the third day of the dispute, however, China again brought the matter before the League Council, this time citing Article 11 of the Covenant.<sup>64</sup> At the same time, China appealed to the United States under the Kellogg-Briand Pact.<sup>65</sup> China asked that the United States "take such steps as will insure the preservation of peace in the Far East and the upholding of the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes."<sup>66</sup> According to Smith,<sup>67</sup> however, this note was never answered, and Stimson, in his work on the affair, does not mention it either.<sup>68</sup> The State Department was opposed to invoking the Kellogg Pact, for fear that such a move would needlessly provoke the more volatile groups in Japan by appearing to place the blame on Japan



as the aggressor.<sup>69</sup>

The United States was willing to consider some sort of action under the Nine Power Pact, and communicated this to Geneva, where much emphasis was being placed on the position that the United States might take in the crisis. In the words of a New York Times reporter on September 21, "There is a strong desire . . . to know that the Council can count on at least the moral support of the United States . . . and expressions of American opinion, official, public, and press are awaited eagerly."<sup>70</sup>

On the whole, however, the United States was willing to let the League of Nations go ahead in its discussions, and hoped that a solution would be found there. The resolution of the September 22 meeting of the League called for withdrawal of both Chinese and Japanese troops from the territory of the other, and also recommended that the United States, as a party having much interest in the area, be advised of all the League reports concerning the affair.<sup>71</sup> In reply to this, Stimson's note of September 24 assured the League of the sympathy and agreement of the United States regarding the League resolution.<sup>72</sup> The resolution of September 30, which embodied virtually the same recommendations concerning the withdrawal of troops, also met with a positive reaction from the United States.<sup>73</sup>

Despite this affirmation of support for the League, the United States made no immediate steps toward any decisive action in arbitrating the crisis. It was not until after news of the bombing of Chinchow had been received on October 8, 1931, that the United States began to come out more clearly on the side of the League. Stimson decided that failure on the part of the United States to support the League might

prevent the League from finding a solution to the problem. Thus, while he still tried to develop "his policy according to the 'independent judgment' of the United States government,"<sup>74</sup> he "also tried to give all possible and practical cooperation to the peace machinery which was attempting to bring peace."<sup>75</sup>

Delighted by this sign of support from the United States, the president of the Council, Aristide Briand of France, suggested that the United States be invited to participate in Council discussions.<sup>76</sup> This was strongly opposed by the Japanese representative.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the proposal was adopted on October 16 and Prentiss Gilbert, the American Consul at Geneva, immediately took a place at the Council table.<sup>78</sup> The excitement of the Council at the presence of an American delegate soon cooled, however, as it became evident that the United States was again, despite the assurances of previous notes and the appointment of Gilbert, unprepared to commit itself to the kind of support that the League was looking for.

After his dampening first speech to the Council when he declared that the United States was "not in a position to participate with the members of the council in the formulation of any action envisaged under that instrument [that is, the Covenant]."<sup>79</sup> Gilbert made only two statements in public meetings.<sup>80</sup> This was hardly the full-fledged support that the Council had hoped for. The United States, while hopeful that the League would find a peaceful solution to the dispute, feared possible war with Japan, especially if the League took economic sanctions against Japan. Gilbert was given very little power of negotiation, and his presence at the Council had very little effect.<sup>81</sup>

These conflicting aims on the part of the United States eventually led to its adopting a policy of nonrecognition. While the United States on the one hand supported the League's efforts to mediate in the situation, and was genuinely concerned about Japan's activities in the East, it was afraid of the military and economic risks involved in blocking Japan's aggressive path.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the United States had to find a middle ground of some sort, a policy which would express disapproval of Japan's actions and block any new political or territorial expansion. but would, at the same time, not involve any military or economic cost.<sup>83</sup>

If fighting had ended in the fall of 1931, despite the infringements of the Japanese on Chinese territory, it is possible that the United States and the League might have been prepared to let the matter drop. With the attack on Chinchow, however, in early 1932, the situation could no longer be ignored. On January 7, 1932, Stimson published the subsequently famous nonrecognition note. For Stimson, wanting to take some sort of action against Japanese aggression, but knowing that economic and military sanctions would never be invoked, the non recognition policy was to be a "substitute which would carry the force and implications of a moral condemnation."<sup>84</sup>

In addition, Stimson hoped that such a note might "serve as a rallying point for the other nations and as 'the substitute for sanctions for which we all . . . [have] been groping.'"<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, Stimson made out a draft of the nonrecognition note which was explained to both the French and British ambassadors. The United States especially hoped for the cooperation of Great Britain, realising the latter's great financial interests in China.<sup>86</sup> The British, however,

saw no need for such a note as long as the Open Door policy was maintained. Thus, on January 7, 1932, the United States unilaterally published its note of nonrecognition, stating that the United States government would not

Recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, to which treaty both China and Japan, as well as the United States, are parties.<sup>87</sup>

Stimson's letter to Senator Borah the following February, following the attack on the international garrison at Shanghai, reiterated this policy of nonrecognition and also discussed the moral obligations of signatories to uphold both the Nine Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.<sup>88</sup> The United States was to adhere firmly to this policy of nonrecognition thereafter.

#### Group B: The Small League Power

Throughout the Sino-Japanese dispute, it tended to be the small states of the League of Nations which were most critical of Japan's violation of the Covenant, and which most strongly favored sanctions of some sort against Japan.<sup>89</sup> Thus, while they considered the League's final policy of nonrecognition to be totally inadequate, they were determined to carry it out as the only practical course. Why were the small powers so supportive of the League resolutions?

The support of the small powers for the League in the Sino-Japanese controversy was largely based on their perception of the League's role in world affairs. They saw it as "an instrument for the promotion of peace through justice."<sup>80</sup> Throughout its history, they were the "most ardent advocates of open diplomacy and of a strict interpretation of

the Covenant in the League, as well as the constant defenders of the rights and influence of the Assembly."<sup>91</sup>

While the small powers' championing of the League was admirable, it was a course of action not totally devoid of self-interest. For the small states, weak in military power, the League was important as a body that could uphold the territorial integrity of its members. "The maintenance of the principle of the Pact . . . [meant] more to the smaller and weaker states than to the wealthy and powerful nations."<sup>92</sup> Thus, the Manchurian Crisis was a serious issue for the smaller powers, one that would show whether the League could or would protect the independence and sovereignty of its members. If the League failed to support China, it would have failed the main purpose of the Covenant as far as the small states were concerned.

Naturally, then, it was the small powers which most strongly supported China in the dispute. They were very critical of any attitude which suggested that the size, importance, and special interests of Japan should be taken into consideration.<sup>93</sup> Rather, they constantly maintained that firm measures should be taken against Japan, possibly including economic sanctions.<sup>94</sup> Again, however, their policy cannot be said to have been totally unselfish. They had virtually nothing to lose and practically everything to gain by supporting some collective action by the League against Japan. As they were:

far removed from the scene of trouble and lacked any material interests in the Far East that were liable to suffer, [they] could and did show a moral fervour and determination to carry out the Covenant to the letter, such as the Great Powers could not afford to emulate.<sup>95</sup>

It would be the latter which would have most at stake in such an action. Thus, while the small states did have grounds for supporting

the League, their attitude was largely based on the self-interest for which they so criticised the great powers.

It may also be useful in this discussion to note the economic and diplomatic relations which the small League powers had with both Japan and China. In 1931, most of them did have foreign diplomatic and consular services in both countries.<sup>96</sup> Several of the small League powers maintained consular services in Manchuria even after the establishment of Manchoukuo.<sup>97</sup> In economic relations, however, one sees a different pattern. While most of the small powers had few economic assets in the East, some, like Belgium, did have a considerable financial stake in China.<sup>98</sup> Trade with Japan tended to be relatively unimportant. Thus, it does not seem implausible that the policy of some of the small powers regarding Manchoukuo was dictated, at least in part, by a concern for their economic interests in China.

This is borne out of a study of Belgian policy in the crisis. In late 1932, the Belgian ambassador in Geneva conceded that Belgium's policy was in part based on financial considerations. He said that "no Belgian government could afford to side with Japan at Geneva, as Belgium had to consider her trade interests in China; the Chinese would take it out on them if they did so."<sup>99</sup> Two years later, the New York Times reported that "informed circles" in Brussels thought that Belgium was prepared to recognize Manchoukuo.<sup>100</sup> While Belgium denied this, she did not rule out the possibility of future recognition, which she felt could be used "as a valuable argument in future commercial negotiations."<sup>101</sup> While Belgium never did recognize Manchoukuo, these statements show that her policy toward both Japan and China in the dispute, was not uninfluenced by material considerations.

Ireland, or the Irish Free State as it was then known, provides a good example of a small power which adamantly opposed Japan's actions in Manchuria and criticized the hesitancy of the larger League powers to discipline Japan in any way. The then Irish President, Eamon deValera, who became president of the League Council in 1932, was especially critical of the way in which the interests of the larger League powers influenced final decisions, with the voice of the small powers counting for little. It may have been with this in mind that he said in his opening speech to the League Assembly in September, 1932, that

People are saying that the equality of states does not apply here in the things that matter, that the smaller states, whilst being given a voice, have little real influence in the final determination of League action, that they have not that which they were intended, or are entitled to, under the covenant.<sup>102</sup>

In Irish newspapers, Japan was definitely seen as the aggressor in Manchuria. The Irish Independent, a middle-class paper, The Watchword, and The Irish Worker's Voice, two working-class socialist papers, all agreed that Japan's actions were imperialistic. The Workers' Voice described Japan's presence in China as one of "imperialist oppression"<sup>103</sup> while The Watchword spoke of Japan's "colonisation policy."<sup>104</sup> The Independent compared Japan's actions to the "empire Building."<sup>105</sup> of the previous century.

Her [Japan's] present claims in Manchuria and her attitude in enforcing them are strictly in accordance with the best traditions of the Great Powers in the nineteenth century, whether in China, India, or Africa, only, unfortunately, for her, that predatory hayday has now run its course.<sup>106</sup>

Irish opinion was equally critical of the League of Nations, The Watchword describing it as being made up of "Conservative, Imperialistic Governments."<sup>107</sup> The paper was also very critical of the Lytton Report when it was published in the fall of 1932.

The other countries have too many skeletons in their own cupboards to seriously interfere with Japan. Great Britain has her Ireland, India, and South Africa; America has Phillipines, Cuba, Haiti; France her Syria and other protectorates . . . and hence Japan may well feel secure from moral opprobrium or effectual action.<sup>108</sup>

The Worker's Voice was equally critical, suggesting that the "proposals in the Report . . . [were] a prearranged affair . . . with Japan and with the interntional imperialists."<sup>109</sup>

Thus, one finds a remarkable unity of opinion regarding the Sino-Japanese dispute, and who the guilty parties were.

Whatever their reasons, whether commerical or moral, the small powers were consistent in maintaining the League resolution of nonrecognition. This attitude made them the focus of quite a large amount of hostility from Japan and Manchoukuo, the latter threatening to take economic measures against the small powers.<sup>110</sup> Czechoslovakia, in particular, aroused a lot of hostility. A statement issued by Manchoukuoan officials said, "it is within our power to deliver a servere blow to Czechoslovakia and other pronouncedly unfriendly powers through economic channels."<sup>111</sup> Despite such threats, the small powers remained faithful to the resolution of nonrecognition throughout Manchoukuo's existence.

#### Summary

Many of the Leage members, then, chose to uphold the policy of nonrecognition. Yet, in almost every case, this adherence to the League's principals was not due to any feeling of moral obligation, but rather, due to self-interest. Just as most of the recognizing powers acted out of reasons of political expediency, so too did the nonrecognizing powers.



## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup>Signatories of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 included the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Sixty-four countries signed altogether.

<sup>2</sup>The Nine Power Treaty was signed by the United States, Great Britain, Belgium, France, Italy, China, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Lowe. Britain in the Far East: A Survey from 1819 to the Present. (London and New York: Longman, 1981), p. 138; Sara R. Smith. The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932: A Tragedy in International Relations. (New York: Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 246.

<sup>4</sup>Lowe, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup>Smith, pp. 5-6.

<sup>6</sup>Lowe, p. 137.

<sup>7</sup>Smith, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Roger Louis. British Strategy in the Far East, 1919-1939. London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 179.

<sup>9</sup>Christopher Thorne. Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War Against Japan, 1941-1945. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 30

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Lowe, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup>The London Times, 11 January 1932.

<sup>13</sup>Malcolm D. Kennedy. The Estrangement of Great Britain and Japan, 1917-1935. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1969), p. 261.

<sup>14</sup>Thorne, pp. 17, 30, 33, 34.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 30; Louis, p. 204; Sadako N. Ogata. Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 164-165.

<sup>16</sup>Ogata, p. 164.

<sup>17</sup>Lowe, p. 140; The London Times, 11 January 1932.

<sup>18</sup>Louis, P. 202. See also pp. 175, 181, where Louis cites British Ambassadors Sir John Tilley and Sir Francis Lindley.

<sup>19</sup>Ogata, p. 164.

<sup>20</sup>Kennedy, p.268.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Thorne, pp. 30, 37, 38.

<sup>23</sup>Louis, pp. 202-205.

<sup>24</sup>The New York Times, 5 March 1934.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 23 March 1934.

<sup>26</sup>Lowe, p. 149.

<sup>27</sup>The New York Times, 30 August 1934.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 30 Septemer 1934.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 13 December 1934.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 21 December 1934.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Louis, pp. 224-226.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 231-233.

<sup>36</sup>Lowe, pp. 150, 151.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-153.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>41</sup>The London Times, 1 February 1934.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Arnold Wolfers. Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles. (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1963), pp. 185-186.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 185, 193.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>47</sup>Ogata, pp. 159, 179.

<sup>48</sup>J. Nere. The Foreign Policy of France from 1914-1945. (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 158.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., Ogata, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup>Ogata, pp. 165, 166.

<sup>53</sup>The New York Times, 5 March 1933, Sec. IV, p. 8.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 30 July 1933.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 18, 21 January; 13, 21 February; 5 March; 30 April;  
30 November 1934.

<sup>57</sup>See The Japan Manchoukuo Year Book for the period.

<sup>58</sup>Smith, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>60</sup>A Monthly Summary of the League of Nations, 11 (September, 1931):  
246.

<sup>61</sup>Smith, p. 23.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Henry L. Stimson. The Far Eastern Crisis: Recollections and  
Observations. (New York and London:Harper and Brothers, 1936).

<sup>69</sup>Smith, p. 30.

<sup>70</sup>The New York Times, 21 September 1931.

<sup>71</sup>Summary of the League, 11 (September, 1931):247.

<sup>72</sup>Smith, p. 77.

<sup>73</sup>Summary of the League, 11 (September, 1931):301.

<sup>74</sup>Stephen C. Y. Pan. American Diplomacy Concerning Manchuria. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1938), pp. 231-232.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Summary of the League, 11 (September, 1931):301.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Pan, p. 235.

<sup>79</sup>Smith, p. 111.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., pp. 112, 113; Pan, pp. 237-239.

<sup>82</sup>Pan, p. 238.

<sup>83</sup>Smith, pp. 232, 233.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 233; some historians argue that Stimson would have preferred to have taken a much firmer line with Japan, possibly using naval power. President Hoover, however, opted for a more cautious approach, and it was he who first suggested the nonrecognition policy. See Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson: A Study in Statecraft. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954).

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>87</sup>Pan, p. 245.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 251-253.

<sup>89</sup>Kennedy, pp. 260, 261.

<sup>90</sup>William E. Rappard. "Small States in the League of Nations." in Problems of Peace, Geneva Institute of International Relations, (1935 reprint edition, Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970): 9:49.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>92</sup>Sean Lester. "The Far East Dispute from the Point of View of the Small States." In Problems of Peace (New York: Oxford University Press, 1934)8:121.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 121, 122.

<sup>94</sup>Wolfers, p. 195.

<sup>95</sup>Kennedy, p. 261.

<sup>96</sup>The China Year Book, 1931, (Shanghai, 1931; reprinted edition Nendelin Liechtenstein: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1969), p. 65.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid. See Chapter III for a discussion on the place of consular services in the process of recognition.

<sup>98</sup>Grover Clark. Economic Rivalries in China. New Have, CT: Published for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace by Yale University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 45, 46..

<sup>99</sup>Kennedy, p. 261.

<sup>100</sup>The New York Times, 27 March 1935.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 5 May 1935.

<sup>102</sup>Maurice Moynihan, ed., Speeches and Statements by Eamonn deValera, 1917-1973 (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1980), p. 29.

<sup>103</sup>The Irish Worker's Voice, 8 October 1932.

<sup>104</sup>The Watchword, 26 March 1932.

<sup>105</sup>The Irish Independent, 10 November 1931.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>The Watchword, 20 February 1932.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 1 October 1932.

<sup>109</sup>The Worker's Voice, 8 October 1932.

<sup>110</sup>The New York Times, 26 March 1933, Sec. IV, p. 8.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

### MANCHOUKUO'S FOREIGN POLICY

#### Introduction

So far, the policies of other countries regarding Manchoukuo have been discussed, but what of Manchoukuo's own foreign policy? How did the Manchoukuoan government react to recognition or nonrecognition by the rest of the world?

In the early days of the Manchoukuoan state, the attitude of the Manchoukuoan government toward other nations had been extremely friendly, as the new state sought recognition. Both in commercial and in legal matters, Manchoukuo asserted that it would honor the commitments previously made by China to other countries. Such assurances were soon found to be worth very little in practice, however, especially in the realm of trade. Manchoukuo moved to shut out other nations. This was partly a plan to create a Japan-Manchoukuo commercial bloc, and also partly a coercive economic policy aimed at penalising countries which would not recognize Manchoukuo.

#### Commercial Policy

Early in its existence, Manchoukuo had guaranteed that it would respect the principle of the Open Door, the equality of commercial opportunity for all nations.<sup>1</sup> These promises were soon found to be meaningless, however, as Manchoukuo's whole economic policy worked



against the importation of western consumer good and promoted Manchoukuoan trade with Japan.<sup>2</sup> Between 1930 and 1937, foreign exports to Manchoukuo declined, except from Japan, whose exports rose dramatically, and the United States, whose exports remained at about the same level as before.<sup>3</sup> Some foreign companies asserted that Manchoukuo's tariff system worked against foreign goods in favour of Japanese.<sup>4</sup>

The Manchoukuo government also passed various trade laws which limited Manchoukuo's foreign trade almost exclusively to Japan. The Foreign Trade Control Law of December 9, 1937, put numerous commodities under government control.<sup>5</sup> Wheat, flour, and sugar could be imported only from Japan, and rice imports were limited to Japan and Siam.<sup>6</sup> Large scale imports of manufactured tobacco from China (Shantung) and America were not allowed.<sup>7</sup> In the export trade, sales of maize, castor seeds, hides, leather, furs, and lumber either were not allowed to countries other than Japan or were very limited.<sup>8</sup> Other laws followed which increased government control over trade and over industrial development.<sup>9</sup> All of these measures were part of the Kwantung army's plans to create a war economy.<sup>10</sup> Foreign trade was severely curtailed for imports from Japan. The only items imported from other countries were those required for constructional schemes and not available from Japan.<sup>11</sup>

Foreign companies and commercial interests in Manchoukuo thus found themselves being forced out of the Manchoukuoan market. The Oil Monopoly Law of November, 1934 declared all petroleum products to be a government monopoly and restricted their production and distribution to agencies approved and licensed by the Manchoukuoan authorities.<sup>12</sup> The oil distribuiton trade was placed in the hands of a government-created company, shutting out the Anglo-Asiatic Petroleum Company and the

American Standard Vacuum Oil Company which together had previously managed over 80 percent of the oil sold in Manchuria.<sup>13</sup> Though foreign governments protested, the monopoly was not relaxed and foreign oil companies had to withdraw from Manchuria.<sup>14</sup>

Other foreign companies were also forced to leave Manchoukuo, such as the British Jardine Engineering Company, the Czech Skoda Steel Work, the German Siemens Schukert Company, and the American concern of Andersen, Meyer, and Company,<sup>15</sup> While Japan professed a desire for foreign businesses and investment in Manchoukuo, all it really wanted was the latter.<sup>16</sup>

#### International Relations

Manchoukuo's exclusive economic policy was closely linked to its general foreign policy. Desperately wanting recognition, Manchoukuo had earlier indicated that it would be prepared to use economic pressure to persuade other countries to acknowledge its legitimacy. Despite the promise to maintain the Open Door, a 1933 press report said that Manchoukuo was considering the use of economic sanctions against the small powers of the League, who were the most vocal opponents of the new state.<sup>17</sup> Officials were said to be toying with the idea of delivering "a severe blow to Czechoslovakia and other pronouncedly unfriendly powers, through economic channels."<sup>18</sup>

This idea of linking economic policy and recognition was picked up again in 1934, when foreign governments protested to Japan over the Oil Monopoly Law. Japan asserted that Manchoukuo was an independent realm, outside of Japan's jurisdiction, but hinted that recognition on Manchoukuo might provide more direct access to the Manchoukuoan

authorities.<sup>19</sup> The following year, the London Times reported that Manchoukuo's assurances regarding the Open Door were conditional on whether or not recognition had been accorded by the foreign governments interested in Manchoukuoan trade.<sup>20</sup> It was not until December, 1938 however, that a more definite policy was stated. The New York Times reported from Shanghai that "henceforth Manchukuo will discriminate against nations that do not grant it formal recognition."<sup>21</sup> In its foreign policy, Manchoukuo was said to differentiate four groupings of countries:

First, Japan, which forms a united front with Manchukuo. Second, the new governments that are being founded in occupied area of China and Inner Mongolia. Third, Germany and Italy, who are allied with Japan in the anti-communist pact. Fourth, powers that have not recognized Manchukuo.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, when Manchoukuo began discussing the abolition of foreign extraterritorial privileges in 1935. it argued that this move was justified by the nonrecognition of Manchoukuo by certain powers. It was asserted that nonrecognizing countries had no rights in Manchoukuo, and thus could not continue to claim extraterritorial privileges for their nationals in Manchoukuo.<sup>23</sup>

Foreign claims . . . rested in Manchukuo's declaration of independence, in which existing treaty obligations were accepted. Foreign powers could not accept Manchukuo's promise while ignoring its independence.<sup>24</sup>

These sentiments were reiterated by Chang Yen-chin, the Manchoukuoan Foreign Minister in July, 1936. He added that foreign governments would be invited to negotiate for the partial recognition of their rights, but otherwise these were to be abolished.<sup>25</sup>

### Summary

Thus, while Manchoukuo professed a desire for good relations with other nations, in practice it worked to close all interaction between itself and other states, with the exception of Japan, and of the major Axis powers. The economic policies of the Manchoukuoan regime discouraged any foreign activity in Manchoukuo, while unilateral abolition of extraterritorial rights angered the foreign countries concerned. Manchoukuo's efforts to use threats against foreign rights and economic interests to induce other nations to recognize Manchoukuo were on the whole a failure. Instead, these attempts at manipulation served only to antagonize foreign governments and increase the isolation of both Manchoukuo and Japan in the international community.

## FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup>F. C. Jones, Manchuria Since 1931 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 192, 193.

<sup>3</sup>George F. Deasy, "Recent Trends in Manchoukuoan Trade," Economic Geography 16 (April, 1940), p. 164.

<sup>4</sup>Jones, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 193, 194.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 194, 195.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>The New York Times, 26 March 1933.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Jones, p. 195.

<sup>20</sup>The London Times, 28 March 1935.

<sup>21</sup>The New York Times, 11 December 1938.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>The London Times, 30 July 1935.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>The New York Times, 1 July 1936.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Manchoukuo, despite its formal rejection by the League of Nations, and despite its own exclusive, almost antagonistic attitude in economic policy, succeeded in achieving quite a degree of acceptance by other powers. While in some instances this acceptance was implied rather than explicit, it existed nonetheless. Although Manchoukuo never became a state of any great importance in world politics, in itself, its very existence violated the principles of the Covenant of the League, and of the Washington and Kellogg-Briand treaties. Thus, any measure of recognition by other governments, especially by governments of major nations, implied a rejection of these principles, and represented a victory for the aggressive policies of militaristic Japan.

The recognition of Manchoukuo by countries like Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, and the U.S.S.R. was especially important, because not only did these countries hold positions of political importance in the whole arena of world politics, they also, were all at one time, members of the League of Nations, which had established a nonrecognition policy. Indeed, excepting the U.S.S.R., which was not then a League member, they had all supported the adoption of this resolution of nonrecognition in 1933. The acknowledgment of Manchoukuo by lesser members of the League, such as El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria, was also significant in that it further weakened the League's authority to

arbitrate in international disputes.

Perhaps even more significant were the relations which some nonrecognizing nations maintained with Manchoukuo. France and Great Britain, the two most powerful members of the League, and the United States, never fully severed their ties with Manchoukuo. They maintained consuls there at least until 1937, and also carried on some trade with Manchoukuo, albeit a very small amount. While maintaining consuls there does not constitute recognition, as discussed in Chapter III, it certainly indicates more than nonrecognition. How can one maintain consuls in a state which possesses no legal existence?

Moreover, there was also the possibility that even the strongest nonrecognizing nations, France, the United States, and Great Britain, eventually would recognize Manchoukuo's legitimacy as an independent state. France demonstrated that it was not opposed to the idea of economic negotiations with Manchoukuo as early as July, 1933. From the United States and Great Britain, there also came suggestions that Manchoukuoan recognition was not out of the question.

One can conjecture that even the most powerful Western nations might eventually have recognized Manchoukuo if it had not been for the outbreak of war in China in 1937, in Europe in 1939, and in the Pacific in 1941. These conflicts pitted Japan and its allies against the major Western powers. Only the demise of Manchoukuo at the war's end in 1945, when it was given back to China, brought the recognition issue to an end. In 1938, Britain accepted Italian rule in Ethiopia even though it had been condemned by the League in 1935. This indicated that Britain could, and would, ignore League policy if it appeared advantageous to do so.



Only among the smaller League powers was there a vehement desire to adhere to the League resolution of nonrecognition, and even in their case, self-interest was the deciding factor, rather than any strong commitment to the League principles. Recognizing Manchoukuo and accepting Japan's militaristic actions there, would have undermined the only international agency to which the small League powers could turn to for protection if they were attacked. For their own protection, the small powers had to uphold the League and its commitment to protect the territorial integrity of its members.

Why were some nations so reluctant to carry out the League resolution of nonrecognition which they had voted into being? In almost every case, as with the small League powers, it seems that it was a question of political expediency. For Germany, Russia, and other East European countries, recognition of Manchoukuo was a means of improving relations with Japan and its allies. For the nonrecognizing countries, the United States, Great Britain, France, and others, continuing some degree of relations with Manchoukuo reflected their need to placate Japan and protect their own commercial and territorial interests in East Asia, without offending the smaller League nations or China by overt recognition.

The possibility of economic opportunities with Manchoukuo may also have influenced the attitude of some governments toward Manchoukuo, but, on the whole, these opportunities never materialized. Manchoukuoan trade was predominantly with Japan. Ideology seems to have been the key factor in the Vatican decision to recognize Manchoukuo, as it had no commercial or territorial interests there.

Despite widespread disregard for its policy toward Manchoukuo, the

League of Nations did not even verbally admonish any of the countries which accorded recognition to the new state. While this is perhaps understandable in the case of fairly important League members like Italy and Poland, and in the case of countries which were not members of the League, such as Germany and the Soviet Union, it is strange that the League failed to condemn such minor powers as El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

By ignoring violations of the nonrecognition resolution, the League undermined its own authority, showing that it was either unable or unwilling to intervene in a delicate international situation. While a verbal admonition would probably not have achieved anything, history would have at least recorded that the League of Nations had tried to uphold its principles and policies. Instead, however, it decided to "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil", in a desperate hope that the situation would somehow disappear. By 1945, with the demise of Manchoukuo, the situation did vanish, but by that time, the League of Nations itself had dissolved.

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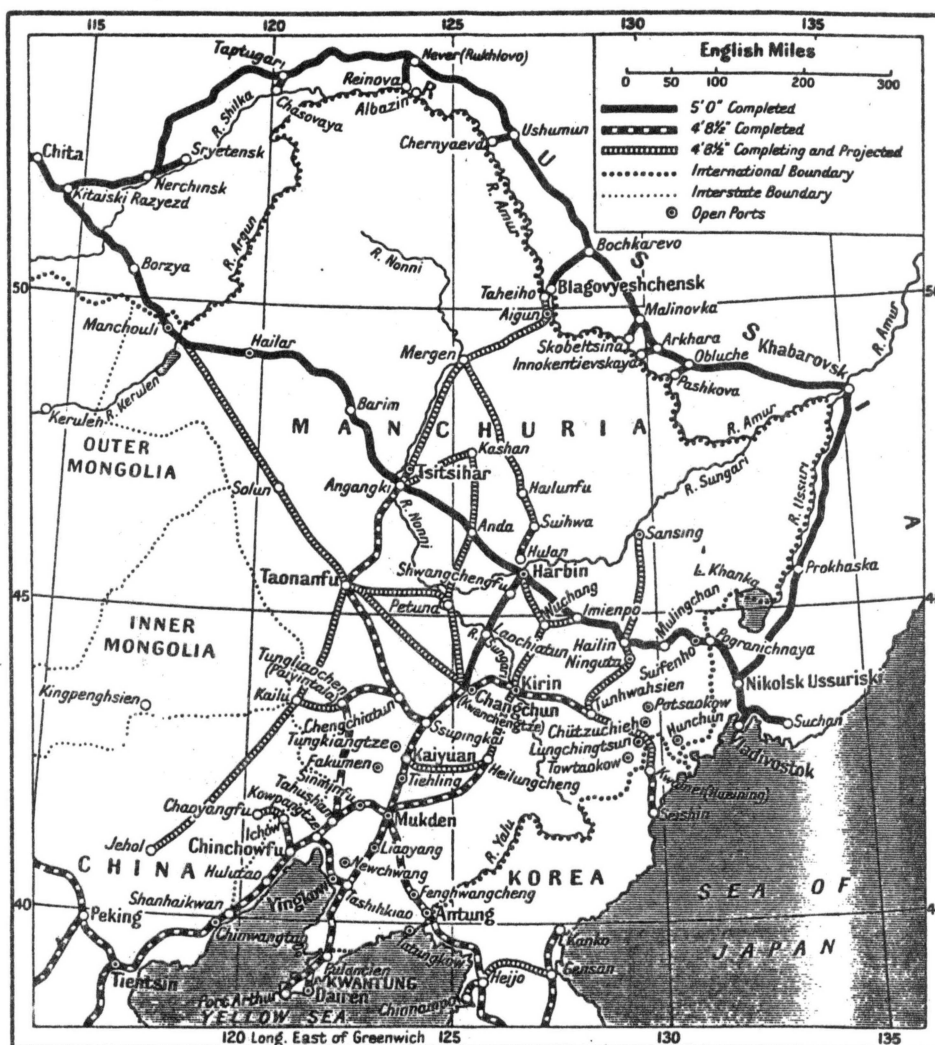
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## APPENDIX





Manchurian Railways

Note: This does not include the western boundary of Manchoukuo which extended to include the province of Jehol.

Source: Sir Harold Parlett. A Brief Account of Diplomatic Events in Manchuria. (London: Oxford University Press, 1929.)

VITA \

Ailisha Mary O'Sullivan

Candidate for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Thesis: MANCHOUKUO'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland,  
August 20, 1962, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P.J. O'Sullivan.

Education: Graduated from St. Joseph's Secondary School,  
Castleisland, County Kerry, Ireland, in May, 1979; received  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and History from Univer-  
sity College Cork in 1982; completed requirements for the  
Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in May,  
1985.