THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE DIPLOMATIC REVOLUTION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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PREFACE

Diplomatic historians have devoted an almost immeasurable amount of labor and innumerable volumes to the pre-World War I era. This was particularly true during the second quarter of this century, as the publication of the various governmental documents relating to that conflict increased the possibilities for research in the area. In fact, so much has been done that in the past two or three decades most history students have avoided the subject under the assumption that no significant work remained. This thesis attempts to bring a new perspective to this much-studied period, and to the Diplomatic Revolution of the Twentieth Century in particular.

An examination of the historiography of the realignment of the powers between 1902-1907 reveals that almost all historians treat the topic as one of a purely European character, in which East Asia was simply one of several areas of interest to Europe rather than an active protagonist itself. I believe, and it is the contention of this work, that this approach does not adequately account for the series of events which, beginning in 1902 and culminating in 1907, so radically altered the diplomatic relationships of the great European powers. Sufficient attention has not been given to the role of Japan, a newly arrived member of the world power structure, in the inception and the progress of this realignment of nations. It was not a purely European phenomenon. It had its genesis and its raison d'etre in the reorganization and the revitalization of the Japanese Empire during the last quarter of the

nineteenth century.

The completion of any labor leads one to reflect upon the progress of that work through its various stages and upon the debts of gratitude which were thereby incurred. I should be less than deserving of the attentions of those who have so helped me if I failed to acknowledge their assistance.

I must first mention my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Harris of Stratford, Oklahoma, for the years of sacrifice and unfailing encouragement which they have given, and without which my educational progress would have been terminated long ago. I remember with ever increasing appreciation those professors in the Department of History at East Central State College who so freely gave of their time to me as an undergraduate, and who encouraged me to continue my education at the graduate level. I must, of course, thank Dr. Homer L. Knight for his kindness in extending the graduate assistantship to me which made possible my period of study at Oklahoma State University.

Research of this type would be made almost impossible without the assistance of a competent and willing library staff such as the one at the Oklahoma State University Library. Much of this work was done off campus, and it would not have been possible without the special assistance and kindnesses of Mrs. Josephine Monk, Assistant-in-Charge of the Fourth Floor Circulation Desk, and Mrs. Heather Lloyd, Reference Librarian.

The assistance of Professor Douglas D. Hale, my thesis adviser, has been invaluable. Dr. Hale's patient and incisive criticism of this work, his contributions of his time in consultation, and his encouragement are most gratefully acknowledged. Professor Sidney D. Brown also

gave of his time to read the work and offered many valuable criticisms. I thank them both especially for the promptness and the care with which they examined the work. I must, however, assume all responsibility for any errors in fact or interpretation which may remain.

If anything may be labeled as a labor of love, it must surely be the task which falls to the wife who must also serve as typist, editor, errand girl, research assistant, and Encourager-in-Chief. My staff of workers, Clyta Lynn Harris, proved more than adequate to the situation. She is to be congratulated for her tolerance and patience. I am most grateful to her.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Under the cover of the predawn darkness of February 8, 1904, three torpedo boat flotillas from the Imperial Japanese Navy had stolen silently into the outer reaches of Port Arthur, Korea, where the Russian Far Eastern Fleet lay at anchor. Without warning, the Japanese had opened fire and thereby submitted their longstanding quarrel with the Russians to that great and final arbiter--Mars. The following morning the remainder of the Japanese fleet approached the harbor, intent upon the completion of the work so earnestly begun the night before. But Admiral Togo, the Japanese commander, had missed his opportunity. He had no success in drawing the Russians out for a fight on the high seas where the advantage of the shore batteries would be denied them and the superior speed and armament of the Japanese ships could be fully exploited. Togo therefore broke off the engagement and repaired to open waters rather than risk losses in a point-blank gun battle within the confines of the harbor. Though the Japanese had not succeeded in destroying the Russian fleet, they had rendered the Russians incapable of offering a significant challenge to the supremacy of the Japanese navy in the Yellow Sea for many critical months.[1]

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[1]For details of the opening battle of the war, see Edwin Falk, Togo and the Rise of Japanese Sea Power (New York, 1936), pp. 296-299; R. C. V. Bodley, Admiral Togo (London, 1935), pp. 155-157; and Georges Blond, Admiral Togo (New York, 1960), pp. 155-164.

Thus the Japanese opened the first major conflict of the twentieth century with a bold and daring attack which drew the world's attention to East Asia and to developments which had not seemed of particular importance before. How could the small island empire of Japan bring itself to attack such a behemoth as the Russian Empire? How could they possibly entertain any hopes of success? These were the questions Europeans asked themselves. Were the Japanese not aware of the Franco-Russian Alliance and the vast system of international commitments and obligations of which it was a part? With the last question, Europeans awoke to the manifold implications of the Russo-Japanese War. If anyone had forgotten, the fact was now recalled: the Japanese had made an alliance with Great Britain in 1902.[2] Should another European power enter the contest against Japan, this alliance would find its casus foederis. The rise of Japan to world power status and the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, therefore, forced European diplomats to make a serious reevaluation of their policies and positions.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance freed Japan to attack Russia without great concern for French intervention.[3] The actual outbreak of hostilities, in fact, forced France to undertake a serious attempt to reconcile her differences with Britain as insurance against becoming involved in a war in which she and Britain were allied to opposing sides. The resultant entente between Britain and France persuaded the Germans

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[2]I. H. Nish concludes that at this time "it was not widely recognized, either in informed or in less informed circles that Britain was making a major departure in foreign policy." Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907 (London, 1966), p. 244.

[3]W. L. Langer gives great emphasis to the role which the British played in the Japanese decision for war. See his The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2 vols., New York, 1935), Vol. II, p. 720.

to seek and conclude the abortive Treaty of Björkö with the Russians in 1905.[4] These three alliances, excepting the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907, constituted the sum of the adjustments made by the European powers in response to the Russo-Japanese War. The coming of the war was therefore of paramount importance to European diplomacy during the first quarter of the twentieth century and indeed to all subsequent diplomacy. It resulted in a major realignment of international relationships, contributed significantly to the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust between European nations, and, by revealing the weakness of Russia and emphasizing the isolation of Germany, made almost certain the intrigue and unrest which culminated in the First World War a decade later.

The years from 1902 to 1905 offer very fertile fields for the diplomatic historian to cultivate. Many writers have examined the events of this period, but most have considered it primarily from the European viewpoint. They have concentrated upon trends within Europe itself and treated East Asia as a matter of secondary importance--ranking with, but not above, Africa and Central Asia. What is proposed here is the antithesis of this approach. This paper will examine the course of European diplomacy from 1902 to 1905 and attempt to demonstrate the centrality of East Asia as a factor in determining its direction. The touchstone of the entire matter was, of course, Russo-Japanese competition for hegemony which led to war in 1904.

The Russians suffered serious reverses from the very beginning of the war. The Japanese moved quickly and with a well-calculated

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[4]John Albert White termed the entente "the most recent of a continuing series of blows to Germany's security system." White, The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War (Princeton, New Jersey, 1964), p. 175.

precision which contrasted starkly with the confusion and vacillation of the Russian forces. The Japanese army soon demonstrated its proficiency in combat. The battle of the Yalu was opened in April, 1904, and to their chagrin and amazement, the Russians were obliged to give way before the tenacious little "Japs." This successful venture was followed by landings in the area of Kwantung. The Japanese then surrounded Port Arthur, and in August they launched the first in a series of vicious and determined assaults upon that stronghold. Stessel, the Russian commander, assessed the situation, decided it hopeless, and surrendered the fortress with its remaining 28,000 troops on New Year's Day, 1905.[5]

The Russians found circumstances just as disheartening in other areas. A most tragic episode ensued when the Tsar's Baltic fleet, under the command of Rear Admiral Rozdestvensky, began its ill-fated journey in October, 1904, to reinforce the fleet at Vladivostok. In the darkness off Dogger Bank, Rozdestvensky blundered into the midst of a British fishing fleet. Earlier rumors of Japanese torpedo boats in the North Sea, the darkness, and the frayed nerves of the Russian gunners quickly transformed the harmless trawlers into deadly attack craft. The warships opened fire, and in the confusion, Russian was soon firing upon Russian as well as the English fishermen.[6] The incident lasted only a few minutes, but those few minutes wrought considerable destruction upon

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[5]For a condensed chronology of the war on the Chinese mainland, see Richard Storry, A History of Modern Japan (Baltimore, 1960), pp. 139-142.

[6]The letters of a Russian engineer on board the Suvaroff give an interesting insight into the thoughts and fears which led to the Dogger Bank tragedy. See Eugene S. Politovsky, From Libau to Tsushima (trans. by Major F. R. Godfrey, New York, 1906), pp. 9-16.

the British fishing vessels with the loss of two lives and several wounded. Rozdestvensky, unaware of his error, sailed on without making any attempt to render aid or to report the matter.

Though shocked, the fishermen were not struck dumb. A delegation was sent to Parliament, and when the story was made public, the rage of the British people could hardly be contained. As a bit of contemporary doggerel had it,

> And after all this an Admiral came;
> A terrible man with a terrible name,
> A name which we all of us know very well,
> But no one can speak and no one can spell.[7]

The reaction of the British government was immediate. The Russian fleet found itself blockaded in Vigo harbor by the combined Channel, Mediterranean, and Reserve fleets of Britain, and it appeared doubtful that the Russians would be allowed to leave without combat. St. Petersburg was quick to realize that war with Great Britain was not only possible but extremely likely unless resolute action was initiated immediately. Fortunately, the characteristic lethargy of Russian diplomacy was shaken off. Apologies accompanied by protestations of willingness to make restitution were sufficient to prevent the Britons from striking back in anger. Nevertheless, both Russian nerves and prestige were badly shaken by the incident.

The Russians should have taken Stessel's surrender of Port Arthur as an evil omen, for such it proved to be. The Japanese opened an important action against the Russian forces at Mukden in March, 1905, and soon forced the Tsar's troops to retire from that strategic outpost. Russia had suffered a prolonged series of reverses during the first

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[7]Quoted in White, The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War, pp. 139-142.

year of the war; her forces had been able to do nothing more than offer repeated resistance before once again retiring and leaving the Japanese in command of the field. But the Japanese army, though it consistently pushed the Russians back, was unable to trap them and deliver a death-blow. Japan's greatest feat of arms remained to be accomplished by the Imperial Navy.

If Admiral Rozdestvensky and the Russian Baltic Fleet had begun their twenty thousand-mile voyage in blunder, they were destined to end it in total tragedy. The admiral had accomplished nothing short of a minor miracle by bringing the fleet into Asian waters without having had to abandon a single ship. By mid-May, 1905, he was ready to undertake the last leg of the long journey. It only remained for him to sail from the coast of Indo-China to Vladivostok. Before reaching the safety of Vladivostok, however, he had to pass between the tip of the Korean peninsula and the Japanese home islands--through the narrow Straits of Tsushima. The alternative involved making a wide sweep around the eastern side of Japan without adequate coaling facilities and under the constant danger of torpedo boat attacks. The fleet which carried the Tsar's last hopes of victory therefore made its way into the Straits of Tsushima in the early morning hours of May 27, 1905. Shortly after noon, they were intercepted by the Imperial Japanese Fleet under the command of Admiral Togo Heihachiro.[8]

Togo's flagship, the Mikasa, led the Japanese column southward on a course slightly to the east of the northward-bound Russian fleet. When the two columns had converged to a range of a few thousand yards

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[8]It is of ironic interest to note the meaning of this name: "the peaceful son" (Heihachiro) "of the eastern hamlet" (Togo).

Togo ordered the Mikasa turned onto a course which would place her on a course perpendicular to that of the lead battleship in the Russian line. It was no small gamble. For several minutes the ship would be almost stationary in the water as the maneuver was completed, and consequently, dangerously vulnerable to the guns of the enemy ships. As each Japanese ship reached the Mikasa's turning point, it duplicated the maneuver and followed her lead until finally the Japanese battle line was perpendicular to that of the Russians. The "T" was crossed. The result was an overwhelming advantage in firepower for Togo's ships. The entire Japanese fleet was firing broadside, while only the lead ships in the Russian column were able to fire effectively, and then only with their forward turrets. The balance of the Russian fleet were masked by the head of their column and were unable to bring their guns to bear on the Japanese.[9]

As Admiral Togo sailed "across the T" that day, he also sailed into the pages of naval history. Only two Russian ships managed to escape to Vladivostok. This crushing blow brought the realization to the Russian government that a negotiated peace with Japan was the only realistic solution to their dilemma.[10] The Japanese were also willing to conclude peace, as their financial condition was growing more strained daily. Thus, through the good offices of President Theodore Roosevelt, the Portsmouth Peace Conference was convened, and a treaty was concluded on September 5, 1905.[11]

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[9]Richard Hough, The Fleet that Had to Die (New York, 1958), p. 13.

[10]White, The Diplomacy of the Russo-Japanese War, p. 209.

[11]John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, A History of East Asian Civilization (2 vols., Boston, 1965), Vol. II, p. 481.

How appropriate it would have been, if, as their American hosts had done 124 years before at Yorktown, the Japanese could have had a band present to play an appropriate tune--"The World Turned Upside Down." Prior to 1905 the course of world events had been determined almost wholly by the will of the great European powers. From the time of the Renaissance, no Asian nation had figured prominently in the political or military affairs of the world. Indeed, by the middle decades of the nineteenth century it appeared that the civilizations of both China and Japan would collapse before the onslaught of western technology. The Opium Wars, the negotiation of the "unequal treaties," and the subsequent occupation of territorial enclaves along the coast of China seemed to establish a precedent which the Europeans could be expected to follow at the earliest opportunity in regard to Japan. The Japanese, however, had worked feverishly throughout the last third of the century in a desperate attempt to escape the fate which had befallen the Chinese. Copying the useful, discarding the superfluous, adapting and innovating, the Japanese were running a race for their national life, and they knew it.[12]

The Sino-Japanese War of 1894 should have demonstrated to the European powers that the Japanese would not be so easily handled as the Chinese had been. It certainly led the Japanese to a very important

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[12]"Like their Chinese counterparts, Japan's leaders in the 1860's and subsequent decades clearly recognized the military superiority of the Western nations. Military strengthening was one of the objectives enunciated by the Meiji government as soon as it was organized. . . . the Japanese were almost desperately interested in finding out what lay behind the West's superior powers. . . ."

"In fact, from the time of the Iwakura mission, economic development and the development of popular political consciousness became the key objectives of Meiji Japan." Akira Iriye, Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations (New York, 1967), pp. 45-46.

conclusion. The postwar Three-Power intervention deprived the Japanese of much of what they had fought for and also convinced them that sooner or later they would have to fight the Russians. This was prescience indeed, for the conflict did come just one decade later. That it came surprised almost no one; that Japan was victorious surprised many. Even the confident Japanese must have been mildly surprised by the totality of their triumph over western arms.[13]

The Russian defeat was the capstone in the new and radically changed world power structure. The European powers had been engaged in almost frantic diplomatic maneuvering and intrigue since the 1870's, which had been complicated by the emergence of nationalistic antagonism to an unprecedented degree. Under these circumstances, the necessities of security made for some strange bedfellows. Republican France was allied with Tsarist Russia to thwart German expansion at the expense of either France or Russia. Imperial Britain, increasingly concerned for the security of her possessions, pondered the possibilities of an alliance with Germany as insurance in the case of future confrontations with France and her ally, Russia.[14]

The gradual recognition of Japan as a competing world power, however, initiated a series of dramatic changes in this diplomatic

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[13]Most characteristic of this attitude, perhaps, is Blond's account of the sinking of the Oslabia at Tsushima. "Clusters of white-clad Russian sailors could be seen clinging, like a strange swarm of insects, to the steeply sloping deck; then as the slope became sheer, sliding down into the sea. The Japanese sailors watched the tragic spectacle intently; this was something they had never seen--a mighty warship, sunk by their gunfire, going to the bottom." Blond, Admiral Togo, p. 227.

[14]Goldsworthy Dickinson has provided excellent summary of the general international situation from 1870 to 1914. See his The International Anarchy, 1904-1914 (New York, 1926), pp. 29-72.

labyrinth. Within the three years from 1902 to 1905 the world witnessed the formation of three alignments which would have raised incredulous eyebrows had they been suggested as late as 1898: The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, the Entente Cordiale of 1904, and the abortive Treaty of Björkö in 1905. Separately, the three alliances were surprising enough, considering the differences between the erstwhile allies, but they did have one circumstance in common: each had some connection with the increased power and prestige of Japan. Taken together, these events constituted nothing less than a modern European diplomatic revolution--a revolution whose genesis can be traced to two islands, half a world apart.

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE

At the turn of the twentieth century, the island kingdom of Great Britain possessed one of the largest empires the world had ever seen. Her dominions ranged from the arctic wastes of northern Canada to the tropical topography of southern Africa, and from Vancouver in the West to Hong Kong in the East. It was an empire which other nations envied, but during the greater part of the nineteenth century they had been unable to offer serious competition. This was a circumstance from which the British took great comfort, for as an industrial nation, they depended heavily upon the favorable balance of trade which the empire afforded them. The British had never taken this position of predominance for granted; they knew full well that it depended very much upon their unchallenged mastery of the seas. This hegemony was seriously challenged during the last decade of the century, however, by the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1894.[1]

The Franco-Russian Alliance linked two of Britain's keenest competitors and significantly strengthened both in the race for world empire.[2] Russia had been enough of a threat to British India throughout

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[1]Julian Amery, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain (4 vols., London, 1901-03), Vol. IV, p. 135.

[2]George Monger termed the Franco-Russian Alliance "an extremely efficient combination." Monger, The End of Isolation: British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907 (London, 1963), p. 7.

the latter years of the nineteenth century, but after 1900, when the Russians appeared to be within a few years of completing railways which would link European Russia with her territories bordering on the Indo-Persian frontiers, the menace was compounded.[3] Only slightly less alarming to the British was the prospect of continued Russian expansion in East Asia, something the projected completion of the Trans-Siberian railway would undoubtedly bring.[4] This Russian challenge was serious enough by itself, but the British found that other nations also wished to increase their wealth and prestige.

The French were competing with the British for the preponderant position in Africa. There, during the late 1890's, they had established control over an area of North Africa which rested upon an east-west axis, while the British forged ahead with the establishment of a Cape-to-Cairo claim on a north-south axis. Obviously the two had to confront each other sooner or later in a situation from which only one could emerge satisfactorily. This happened at Fashoda in 1898.[5] Anglo-French competition was not limited to Africa, however. The British were made increasingly aware of the French presence in Indo-China as the latter attempted to push their sphere of influence further north and ever closer to British interests in the Yangtze region.[6]

Such vigorous competition for colonial possessions emphasized a very important fact for the British government, and this fact, perhaps

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[3]J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy, The End of the Nineteenth Century (London, 1964), p. 293.

[4]Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, Vol. II, p. 679.

[5]Ibid., p. 538.

[6]The British were especially concerned about the Yangtse Valley area. Amery, Chamberlain, pp. 137-138.

more than anything else, alarmed them. The Franco-Russian combination made the maintenance of the two-power fleet virtually impossible and thereby shattered an important cornerstone of imperial policy. It was becoming a financial impossibility for the British to maintain what they considered to be the essential margin of safety. Between 1896 and 1902, overall national expenditure had risen at a rate ten times greater than it had for the corresponding period from 1883 to 1889.[7] Furthermore, as a result of the unfriendly and rather menacing attitude which the European powers had demonstrated during the Boer War, no end seemed in sight. The coup de grace came with the German Naval Bills of 1898 and 1900. If the goals of this construction program were realized, Britain's relationship with the continental powers would be radically and detrimentally altered.[8] Britain's situation was not unique, however; in many ways it was very similar to that of another island empire halfway around the world.

The efforts of the Japanese to modernize and to meet successfully the threat posed by the European powers to East Asia had begun to bear fruit by the 1890's. Japan's successful prosecution of the Sino-Japanese War was tangible proof that she had made very significant progress toward becoming a world power. The rather easy conquests which were made during the war also provided a stimulus to the growth of imperialistic notions among the Japanese. However, any immediate hopes which Japan might have had of establishing herself as a colonial power on the Chinese mainland were quickly erased by the intervention of Russia, Germany, and France in the treaty negotiations between Japan

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[7]Monger, End of Isolation, p. 8.

[8]Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, pp. 654-656.

and China. The Treaty of Shimonoseki, which had represented national power and prestige in May, 1895, had become symbolic of weakness and disgrace by November.[9]

The Japanese realized that they could not match the combined military forces of the three powers, nor could they hope to afford a construction program which would place them on an equitable footing. They surmised, however, that if Japan were to be given the chance to realize its fullest potential quickly, its industries would have to be afforded the magnitude of opportunity which only colonial markets could offer. It is, therefore, very easy to understand the indignation and frustration which gripped the Japanese in the years between 1895 and 1900 as they watched the European powers, Russia in particular, penetrate the same territories which they had so recently denied to Japan. The Japanese did not sit and idly bemoan their fate, however. With the same determination that had marked their amazing progress from 1868 to 1894, they redoubled their efforts to strengthen their military, and particular emphasis was laid upon the construction of a strong, modern naval force.[10] Even though Japan did significantly improve her situation after 1895, she was still no match for the Franco-Russian Alliance.

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[9]Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 26-30.

[10]Sir Ernest Satow, in a report to Lord Salisbury dated March 26, 1898, assessed the situation thusly: "Since the intervention of the three Powers in 1895, which resulted in the retrocession of the Liaotung Peninsula, Japan seems to have taken up an attitude of present resignation to the inevitable, accompanied by strenuous efforts to place her military and naval establishments on such a footing as to enable her in the future to resist any attempt at intervention of the same kind. It was Russia that Japan feared most of the three Powers. . . ." Satow to Salisbury, March 26, 1898, G. P. Gooch and H. W. V. Temperley, eds., British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914 (11 vols., London, 1927), Vol. I, no. 40, pp. 25-27. (Hereafter cited as BD).

To counter this combination, and to insure against the possibility of an unfriendly Germany, the Japanese--like the British--needed an ally.

If Anglo-Japanese relations before 1894 cannot be characterized as friendly, neither can they be classified as unfriendly. The British attitude toward the Japanese probably can be described best as one of benevolent disinterest. They were certainly aware of the Japanese, as an examination of their commercial relations will indicate, but they were more concerned with the protection of the British sphere of influence within China. It was with Britain, however, that Japan concluded an important milepost in the history of her relations with the western powers, the Anglo-Japanese commercial treaty of 1894. Through this treaty, Britain voluntarily renounced extraterritorial rights in Japan. This event was pregnant with significance for future relations. By surrendering what was a constant reminder of national humiliation to the Japanese, the British avoided much animosity and set a precedent for the other powers to follow. With the recovery of these rights, Japan reassumed the trappings of national sovereignty and thereby qualified as a peer in the community of nations.[11]

The year 1900 marked a turning point in the history of both Britain and Japan. Britain had become involved in the Boer War and was quite unprepared for the strain which this undertaking placed upon her resources. Furthermore, at a time when she was totally occupied with the South African republics, Russia began probing sensitive areas of the British empire in Central Asia. The Russians also promoted talk of

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[11]For an excellent account of Anglo-Japanese relations during the 1890's see Charles Nelson Spinks, "The Background of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. VIII (September, 1939), pp. 317-322.

concerted intervention by the continental powers on the behalf of the Boer republics, and this, in particular, made it painfully clear to the British that they stood alone.

To further complicate the situation, the Boxer Rebellion broke out in the summer of 1900, and the attention of the West was once again focused upon China.[12] The Boer conflict prevented the British from giving much active assistance to the restoration of order in China, but the Japanese had no such handicap. As a result of their speedy and efficient performance in China, the Japanese troops who participated in the Boxer campaign won the respect of their western comrades, and the Japanese government caught the eyes of the British government.[13] Japan played a large role in pulling Britain's chestnuts out of the fire in Asia, and this did not go unnoticed.[14] The British attitude toward Japan had been changing, and perhaps no better indication was needed than the loan which Japan had negotiated in 1899. That the British would lend £10,000,000 at four percent interest indicated a high degree of confidence in Japan, and this conclusion was strengthened by the fact that the loan carried no political strings.[15] Both nations were gradually recognizing the complimentary relationship of their respective

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[12]". . . China brought the crisis in British foreign policy to a head." Amery, Chamberlain, p. 159.

[13]"The Boxer crisis gave a new dimension to the relations between Britain and Japan: . . . it was the British and Japanese forces which tended to act together." Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 91.

[14]Aoki, the Japanese Foreign Minister, took the opportunity to send a private and confidential message to London. Presented to the Cabinet, it urged the "imperative necessity for understanding between Great Britain, Germany and Japan to counteract Russian designs." Grenville, Salisbury, pp. 311-312.

[15]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 77.

interests in East Asia. Furthermore, changes were occurring in their governments, especially from the fall of 1900 to the spring of 1901, and these changes would make formal recognition of the common interests much easier.

The British experienced their first significant change in October, 1900. Lord Salisbury, premier and foreign secretary, was forced to surrender the foreign office as a result of his failing health and the increasing dissatisfaction of many party members with his conduct of affairs. The government had taken advantage of several successes in the South African war to call an election for September, and the appointment of a new foreign secretary, Lord Lansdowne, was made during the cabinet shuffle which followed this "khaki election." Lansdowne was to be assisted at the foreign office by Lord Cranborne, and Lord Selbourne replaced Goschen at the Admiralty.[16]

Lansdowne was an able administrator and brought with him considerable experience as a former governor-general of Canada and viceroy of India. Furthermore, he had served as war minister in Salisbury's last cabinet. Such experience, as might be expected, gave him an awareness of the needs and issues which faced the empire. Perhaps as important as all else, however, Lansdowne was always ready for suggestions, and he was careful to keep the lines of communication with his overseas advisers open.[17]

This change was also important because Salisbury had been frequently absent on increasingly long recuperative holidays, and in his

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[16]Grenville, Salisbury, pp. 321-325.

[17]Lansdowne's experience in Government is well covered by Chapters 2-5 in Lord Newton, Lord Lansdowne: A Biography (London, 1929), pp. 24-194.

absence his duties as foreign secretary were assumed by his nephew, James Arthur Balfour. Since Balfour was not particularly fond of the prospect of an Anglo-Japanese alliance, the appointment of Lansdowne as foreign secretary cleared two stumbling blocks from the path of such an eventuality and gave new impetus to British foreign policy.[18]

As if to give a further and more obvious indication of the changes which were occurring, the aged and meddlesome Victoria died in January, 1901, and the crown passed to her personable and politically conscious son, Edward VII. The role of the monarch in the conduct of foreign policy at this time can be overemphasized, but it should be noted that Edward VII took an interest in Britain's image and was anxious to see evidence of increased pro-British sentiment among her neighbors. The active assistance of the throne proved to be no small factor in favor of the emerging pro-alliance element within Great Britain.[19]

The government of Japan was also undergoing changes. The period between 1898 and 1901 marked the most intense phase of the struggle between the aging oligarchs, Yamagata Aritomo and Itō Hirobumi, the chief advocates, respectively, of the concepts of transcendental government and party government for Japan. The contest between these two elements emphasized the introspective nature of Japanese politics at that time. A positive, well-planned approach to foreign affairs was made practically impossible by the transient nature of the Japanese cabinets

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[18]Grenville, Salisbury, p. 326.

[19]Edward's position on the alliance project is perhaps best illustrated by a minute which he placed on one of the foreign office dispatches in August, 1901: "The King considers it most essential that we should give Japan our hearty support on all occasions when it is possible to do so. E. R." Lansdowne to Whitehead, August 14, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 103, pp. 91-92.

of the day. Both Yamagata and Itō, however, had retired to positions which gave them less direct control over the everyday conduct of the government by the summer of 1901. Yamagata resigned the premiership in October, 1900, and Itō, who had succeeded him, also resigned the position in May, 1901. Though their influence continued to be felt, it had changed from a primary nature--policy formulation--to a secondary nature--policy approval, amendation, or rejection.[20]

Another change which proved to be of significance to the course of Anglo-Japanese relations was the appointment of Baron Hayashi Tadasu to be the Japanese minister to Great Britain. Hayashi has been described as "an Englishman in mind and almost in appearance."[21] This refined gentleman of considerable diplomatic ability had served as the Japanese minister to China (1895-97) and to Russia (1897-99), and this service abroad had convinced him that Japan's days of isolation were over. He had, in fact, stated that he hoped to be able to conclude an alliance during his stay in Britain even before he had departed Japan to take up his duties at London in the spring of 1900.[22] Hayashi, however, was running ahead of his government. As a result of the shifts which occurred in October, 1900, and May, 1901, he made no significant progress in impressing his views upon the Japanese foreign office. Even after Viscount Katsura Taro had formed a government to succeed the Itō ministry in June, 1901, it was still another three months before the

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[20]For an excellent and brief discussion of the period see Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig, A History of East Asian Civilization, Vol. II, pp. 305-307.

[21]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 128.

[22]Hayashi had made this statement to G. E. Morrison, a correspondent for The Times. Ibid.

interim foreign minister was replaced by the Katsura appointee, Komura Jutaro. Only then did the Japanese minister to Great Britain find himself in step with his home government.[23]

Thus the changes which occurred in both governments between the fall of 1900 and the summer of 1901 were of primary importance to the progress of Britain and Japan toward the opening of negotiations for an alliance. In each case a group of somewhat younger and generally less conservative men assumed a major share of responsibility for the formulation of foreign policy. These diplomats were almost without exception either favorably disposed toward or actively promoting an Anglo-Japanese alliance. They were no longer merely prophets crying out in the wilderness, unheeded by their less prescient contemporaries. The unfavorable diplomatic circumstances of the two nations made the moment propitious for formal agreements which would offer increased security for both. The British, who had had much to offer to a prospective ally for many years, now very distinctly felt the need for one,[24] and the Japanese, who had needed one for several years, now had something to offer an ally in return.

The event which provided the occasion for serious Anglo-Japanese negotiations occurred in January, 1901. On January 3, The Times printed what was proported to be an accord between Russia and China, the Alexeiev-Tseng Agreement, which would have made Manchuria virtually a Russian protectorate.[25] The Japanese, already disturbed by the continued

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[23]It was Komura who finally telegraphed Hayashi authorization to begin official discussions. Ibid., p. 173.

[24]Monger, End of Isolation, p. 21.

[25]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 112.

Russian presence in the northern Chinese province, were determined to prevent any such development. When the Japanese asked him directly if there were any truth in the rumors, Lamsdorff, the Russian foreign minister, refused to give any specific information. The Japanese thereupon launched a campaign to muster international support. Britain was approached first.[26]

Hayashi talked to Lansdowne on January 12, 1901, and suggested that Britain should join Japan in lodging a protest with the Russians. This Lansdowne declined to do, but he did agree to "advise" the Chinese court against making any such commitments to a single power. The Germans gave similar advice through a separate declaration. Though the Russians gave assurances that they had no intention of seeking to retain territory in Manchuria, the terms of evacuation which they presented China on February 16, made these assurances appear worthless.[27] The draft of this agreement provided for such sweeping concessions to Russia that on March 1, the Chinese appealed to the powers for assistance in obtaining revision. The Japanese were prepared to take determined measures to prevent the Russians from obtaining such a preponderant position in north China as the draft agreement would have given them. They again approached the British, this time suggesting that Japan and Britain should promise the Chinese "material support" if the Russians should continue to press for acceptance of the draft agreement.[28] This, of

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[26]"The Tsardom's expansion into Manchuria was still unchecked; and it became the first task of British statesmanship to find an alternative barrier against it. In the nature of things this could now only be Japan." Amery, Chamberlain, p. 164.

[27]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 113.

[28]Ibid.

course, meant simply that the British and Japanese navies would come to China's aid if the Russians attacked. Such a proposal was more than Lansdowne could accept at the moment, for several reasons. Britain had over 300,000 men committed to South Africa, and she could not risk disaster there by overextending herself in Asia.[29] Furthermore, Lansdowne was not yet satisfied that the Anglo-German Agreement, to which Japan was also a signatory, was worthless, and he was still unwilling to dismiss the possibility of an extended alliance with Germany to counterbalance Russian expansionism in East Asia.[30] It should also be remembered that observers at this time were not convinced that Japan could cope with Russia on the battlefield, even in a one-to-one situation.

Lansdowne, therefore, found himself in no small dilemma. He feared that the Japanese would attack the Russians with the slightest encouragement; yet he also feared that should they do so, Britain might become involved. Just as unpalatable to the foreign secretary, however, was the thought that in the face of repeated British refusals to assist them in curbing Russian encroachments, the Japanese might despair of handling the situation and decide to come to terms with the Russians.[31] Either development was undesirable from the British point of view, but of the two, the latter was probably the more distasteful. A Russo-

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[29]Monger, End of Isolation, p. 12.

[30]Grenville says this conclusion had been drawn by Salisbury even before he retired as Foreign Secretary, but Lansdowne was not at first inclined to agree. Grenville, Salisbury, p. 318. It must also be remembered that Lansdowne was in very close communication with Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, and through Lansdowne, Chamberlain apparently still hoped to forge the Anglo-German Alliance which he had so long desired.

[31]"If she [Japan] could not obtain an alliance with Britain, then, at whatever cost, she must come to terms with the Tsardom." Amery, Chamberlain, p. 165.

Japanese war might be a temporary threat to British security, but a Russo-Japanese entente would be a permanent menace.

It appears that Lansdowne was not sure of the German response to a Russo-Japanese conflict, and Germany's attitude in such a circumstance would be crucial. The British were strongly suspicious that in a pinch Germany would not support them at the risk of antagonizing the Russians. The Russo-German frontier was too long, and Russia's ally in the West was too anxious to gain revenge for the humiliation of 1871. Under these circumstances, Lansdowne felt compelled to decline Japan's offer of a joint guarantee and to await further developments. When feelers to the Germans confirmed that they would not venture further than strict neutrality in the event of a Russo-Japanese war, Britain's neutrality in the immediate crisis was assured.[32]

Thus, Japan was left to face the Russians alone. Such an eventuality appears to have been somewhat unexpected by the Japanese, as they had conceived of their adherence to the Anglo-German agreement to be more in the nature of an alliance with definite commitments to defend the territorial integrity of China.[33] After the Anglo-German refusal to offer positive resistance, it is very doubtful that the Japanese would have pushed the matter to the point of war by themselves in 1901, but they made an impressive display of bravado in the face of the

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[32]Bülow gave formal assurances to the Reichstag on March 15, 1901: "The Anglo-German agreement has no bearing on Manchuria. . . . What may become of Manchuria? Why, gentlemen, I cannot really conceive what could be more indifferent to us." Ibid., p. 152. Lansdowne, in his attempt to determine German intentions, even went so far as to draft what amounted to an Anglo-German Alliance, though it was never communicated to the German government. For details of the draft see Grenville, Salisbury, pp. 340-342.

[33]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 107-108.

Russian demands. By April 1, Japan appeared to be ready to fight over the draft agreement, but such an extreme step proved unnecessary. On April 5, 1901, Russia withdrew the demands of February 16.[34]

These events were very important to the development of Anglo-Japanese negotiations. Lansdowne now realized that Germany could not be depended upon to resist Russian advances in East Asia. His reluctance to discard Germany as a prospective ally can be partially explained by an investigation of the activities of the notorious Baron Hermann von Eckardstein, embassy secretary in London. Eckardstein habitually overstated or simply fabricated opinions which he presented as being those of the German Foreign Office. His intrigues are now legendary, and they need not be treated in detail here. Eckardstein's duplicity was not so obvious to contemporaries--master of the innuendo that he was--and though Lansdowne many times was suspicious, he could not risk discounting him entirely. The possibility existed, however remotely, that he did represent the opinion of the German Court, even if he did overstate the position of the foreign office. The reluctance of the German government to reject formally the Russian demands of February 16, however, did much to discredit Eckardstein, and Lansdowne obviously was not going to be misled further.[35] As the danger of an immediate conflict between Japan and Russia receded, Lansdowne became less concerned with affecting a more definite agreement with Germany. Baron Hayashi now had time on his side.

The British moved toward the Japanese with increasing momentum during the summer of 1901. Much of the credit for this shift must be given to the work of Francis Bertie and Lord Selbourne. These two

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[34]Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[35]Grenville, Salisbury, p. 343.

members of the government formulated the case for an Anglo-Japanese alliance in separate but equally important documents. Bertie's arguments were important for their effect upon Lansdowne during July, and Selbourne's representation was equally important for the cabinet as a whole when it reconvened in September.

Francis Bertie was Lansdowne's undersecretary at the Foreign Office, and he was among the strongest proponents of an Anglo-Japanese alliance. His influence upon Lansdowne is best demonstrated in the memoranda which he wrote in July, 1901. Lansdowne's familiarity with these can be assumed from the content of his subsequent conversations with Baron Hayashi on July 23 and 31, which were highly colored by the proposals which Bertie had formulated in his memoranda. On July 20, Bertie had written that Japan might feel compelled to accept French and Russian guarantees on the neutrality of Korea, especially if they were combined with a good loan on favorable terms. He feared that "an oriental state might act without caution if it found itself without funds or reliable friends." Therefore, "unless we attach Japan to us by something more substantial than general expressions of goodwill, we shall run a risk of her making some arrangement which might be injurious to our interests." Great Britain must

> inform Japan that [we], knowing the vital necessity to her of Corea not passing under foreign control, are ready to undertake to give Japan naval assistance in resisting any foreign occupation of Corea provided that Japan will promise to give to us, on our demand, <u>military and naval aid</u> in resisting foreign aggression in the Yangtse region and the South of China.[36]

The culmination of Bertie's thoughts can be seen in the note of July 22, which was entitled, very significantly, "Anglo-Japanese

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[36]Nish, <u>Anglo-Japanese Alliance</u>, pp. 154-155.

agreement: reasons why one is desirable and why Germany should not be included."[37] In this document, Bertie very cogently argued that should Russia gain possession of Korea, it would, in conjunction with her hegemony in Manchuria and her hold over any Chinese government, so threaten British interests in China that intervention would be unavoidable. If Britain would be forced to act under such unfavorable circumstances, why not support Japanese resistance to foreign occupation of Korea with naval and financial means through an alliance?

When the cabinet met again on September 5, the matter was brought to its attention by Lord Selbourne, Salisbury's son-in-law and First Lord of the Admiralty. As a result of the threatened intervention of the continental powers during the Boer War, Selbourne had undertaken a serious reevaluation of Great Britain's naval situation, and had become convinced that the margin of safety which the two-power fleet afforded Britain had been lost. In the light of the new circumstances, Selbourne concluded, the navy's strength was "inadequate if applied to a possible war against France in alliance with Russia." He stated that

> The decisive battles in such a war should certainly be fought in European waters; but it does not follow that we should be free to concentrate the whole of our naval strength in these waters and leave the outlying parts of the Empire to await the final issue.
>
> If the British Navy were defeated in the Mediterranean and the Channel the stress of our position would not be alleviated by any amount of superiority in the Chinese seas. If, on the other hand, it were [to] prove supreme in the Mediterranean and Channel, even severe disasters in the Chinese seas would matter little. These considerations furnish, therefore, a sound argument for keeping our naval strength in Chinese waters as low as is compatible with the safety of the Empire.

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[37] Ibid.

> Great Britain and Japan together would next year be able to show eleven battleships against the French and Russian nine, as well as a preponderance of cruisers.
>
> Great Britain would be under no necessity of adding to the number of battleships on the China Station, and at least would be in a position to contemplate the possibility of shortly establishing a small margin of superiority in reserve at home; . . . .
>
> Japan, on the other hand, would be delivered from the nightmare of seeing her rising power crushed by the combination of the French and Russian fleets.
>
> The form which the proposed alliance might take would be somewhat of this sort:
>
> Great Britain might engage herself to come to the assistance of Japan, if in a quarrel between Japan and Russia France came to the assistance of Russia, or vice versa. Japan might engage herself to come to the assistance of Great Britain, if in a quarrel between Great Britain and France, Russia came to the assistance of France or vice versa.
>
> Such an agreement would, I believe add materially to the naval strength of this country over the world and effectively diminish the prospect of war with France or Russia singly or in combination.[38]

The tone of the Selbourne memorandum makes it quite clear that the Dual Alliance was still viewed as the major threat to British interests and that the counterbalance to that alliance was now considered to be Japan. This was at least the conception of the top-level strategists at the Admiralty, and their influence should not be underestimated. This opinion could not have failed to reach Lansdowne, for his conversations with Hayashi in October reveal the essence of Selbourne's memorandum as clearly as the July talks demonstrated the influence of Bertie's memoranda. Both the strategic situation and the form which the future alliance would take were clearly set forth.

Hayashi had long been anxious to be about the business of negotiating for an alliance. He had hinted strongly at the idea several

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[38]Quoted in Zara S. Steiner, "Great Britain and the Creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. XXXI (March, 1959), pp. 29-31.

times, and during one conversation with Lansdowne in April, 1901, he had frankly declared that "it seemed to him highly necessary that the Japanese Government and that of His Majesty should endeavour to arrive at some permanent understanding for the protection of their interests in that [East Asian] part of the world."[39] Lansdowne had parried the suggestion by replying that he would keep his thoughts in mind, but without a substantive proposal he "could scarcely be expected to express an opinion in regard to its merits."[40] This Hayashi obviously could not deliver, for he was acting entirely on his own. The Japanese government was not yet resettled after the resignation of Itō in May, and under such circumstances, it was unwilling to venture into official conversations from which it would be difficult if not impossible to disengage.

During the following ninety days, however, Lansdowne became disenchanted with the German project, and he too became converted to the idea of an Anglo-Japanese alliance.[41] Bertie had not labored in vain, and on July 31 Lansdowne held a momentous conversation with Hayashi. Lansdowne's own words best convey the importance of the event:

> I had some conversation today with the Japanese Minister in regard to affairs in the Far East.
>
> Baron Hayashi told me that the Japanese had a strong sentimental dislike to the retention by Russia of that Province (Manchuria), from which they had, at one time, been themselves expelled.
>
> But Japan's real concern was for Corea. . . .[S]ooner or later it would have to be decided whether the Country

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[39]Lansdowne to MacDonald, April 17, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 99, p. 89.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Monger describes the deterioration of Anglo-German relations during the summer of 1901 very well. See his End of Isolation, pp. 38-45.

> was to fall to Russia or not. . . . They would certainly fight in order to prevent it, and it must be the object of their diplomacy to isolate Russia, with which Power, if it stood alone, they were prepared to deal.
>
> I observed that in our view also it would be most unfortunate that Corea should pass into the hands of another Power. . . . We could no more than the Japanese regard its fate with indifference. . . .
>
> If the Japanese Government desired it, he (Baron Hayashi) would find me ready to discuss the matter with him with a view to the possible establishment of an understanding between our two countries.
>
> Baron Hayashi received my suggestion attentively; such an understanding, he said, would, of course, have to be based on reciprocity of engagements, and that aspect of the case required careful examination; he asked my permission to refer to the matter again. There was, [sic] he said, many "unseen things" connected with it.[42]

Many "unseen things" were indeed connected with the situation. Lansdowne had openly broached the question of formal negotiations for an alliance, but Hayashi had not as yet received instructions from his government authorizing such discussions. Lansdowne's approach, therefore, must have created simultaneous feelings of excitement and anxiety in Hayashi. He must have been thrilled by the prospect of seeing something for which he had wished so long almost within his reach, but surely he realized also that he now had to obtain support from his government quickly or risk losing the confidence of the British foreign office.

Hayashi immediately telegraphed Sonē, the interim foreign minister, and requested instructions. On August 8, he had his reply. The government was quite willing to discuss the matter, but the minimum demands which its communique set forth were so favorable to Japan that Hayashi was slightly apprehensive about returning with such one-sided suggestions. To complicate matters, he was not authorized to present

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[42]Lansdowne to Whitehead, July 31, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 102, pp. 90-91.

these suggestions formally but only to express informally the interest of Japan in discussing the matter. He had not been given the power of plenipotentiary.[43]

On August 14 Hayashi once again met with Lansdowne, and he was no doubt a bit concerned as he contemplated the course which the discussion was likely to follow. Though he still lacked the official powers which he desired, Hayashi was determined not to let the project die at the very moment when it appeared his hopes might be realized. This supposition is strengthened when Hayashi's account of the meeting is compared with Lansdowne's.

Hayashi recorded that after he had unofficially explained the Japanese attitude toward Korea and China, Lansdowne replied that "the vital objects of our agreement should be to preserve the Open Door into, and territorial integrity of, the Chinese Empire, as well as the interests of Japan in Korea." Furthermore, Hayashi went so far as to report that Lansdowne used the word "alliance" several times during the course of the discussion.[44]

Lansdowne came away with an entirely different impression of the meeting. According to his version, Hayashi had raised the question of an Anglo-Japanese "understanding," stating that "his government would be glad to come to such an understanding." Hayashi asked Lansdowne "whether [he] was in a position to explain to him the conditions which [the British] should require." Lansdowne parried this question by stating that since Japan was "more immediately interested" than

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[43]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 158.

[44]Ibid., p. 159.

Britain, it was rather for her to formulate a statement of requirements. Britain would then consider these and reply with her terms.[45]

Lansdowne made no mention of the suggestion on his part of an alliance. Indeed, he quoted Hayashi as saying that "he [Hayashi] did not for a moment suppose that there could be any question of an offensive or defensive alliance between us." The Japanese minister described Japan's policy toward China as one which supported the "open door" and the territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire. As for Korea, Hayashi's country "would go to war rather than see Corea fall into the hands of Russia, if they could be assured against the hostile intervention of a third Power." Lansdowne gave no indication that he responded with any enthusiasm to this statement, but instead suggested to Hayashi that he obtain "definite instructions" upon various points. As soon as he had obtained this, Lansdowne assured him, he would find the British ready to respond.[46]

Of the two accounts, Lansdowne's is undoubtedly the more dependable. It is highly unlikely that the British foreign secretary would have committed himself by speaking of an alliance before he knew of the official position of the Japanese government. Furthermore, it would appear that although Lansdowne was ready to discuss the matter, he was by no means anxious about it. He had only recently begun to swing away from the idea of an Anglo-German agreement, and his writings do not reveal a sudden revulsion for Germany accompanied by a quick turn toward Japan. In this conversation of August 14, Lansdowne had taken the

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[45]Lansdowne to Whitehead, August 14, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 103, pp. 91-92.

[46]Ibid.

matter as far as he could have without a reciprocal move by Hayashi in his official capacity.

Hayashi's motives in communicating his version of the talks to the Japanese government are not difficult to discern. He was highly excited by the prospect of concluding the alliance which he had worked toward for the preceding eighteen months, and he wished to paint a rosy picture for Tokyo. If the prospects of obtaining an alliance with Britain appeared good, perhaps the government might move with more dispatch in granting Hayashi the power of plenipotentiary to proceed with official negotiations. He knew that there was some support at home for Itō's pro-Russian inclinations, and it is likely that by overstating the British response to his approaches, he hoped to steal a march on this element within the government.[47] Whatever his intentions or hopes, the conversation of August 14 put the responsibility for the entire matter on Hayashi's shoulders. He now either had to obtain official sanction for the British negotiations or discontinue his personal approaches to the British foreign office.

It was fortunate for the Japanese that they were given an unearned respite by the dispersal of the British cabinet for their annual holiday during August and September. On September 21, Sonē Arasuke, who had been the interim foreign minister, surrendered that position to Premier Katsura's appointee, Komura Jutaro. Komura, at the age of 47, was an experienced diplomat who had received his education at Harvard Law School and had served successively as minister to Korea, the United States, and Russia. Komura had recently distinguished himself

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[47]For a discussion of these points, see Spinks, "Anglo-Japanese Alliance," p. 326.

through his conduct of Japan's affairs at the Peking conference, and it was there that he became very suspicious of Russia's intentions in China. These suspicions were not eased by what he saw during his return from Peking to take up his duties at Tokyo.[48]

Komura showed an immediate interest in the Anglo-Japanese negotiations. He even went so far as to ask one of his assistants to find out whether Great Britain had ever violated her obligations under an alliance. The new foreign secretary then drew up a policy statement which the cabinet approved at a meeting on October 7. On October 8, Komura drafted a telegram to Hayashi embodying this policy statement. The British proposals for a "defensive alliance" had been carefully considered. Japan wished to cooperate for the preservation of the common rights and interests of both parties, and "to that end Japan welcomed a defensive treaty with Britain."[49] Hayashi was therefore empowered to open negotiations, but he was to exercise due caution by maintaining communications on a strictly verbal basis until the conclusion of the alliance seemed certain.

When Hayashi again met with Lansdowne on October 16, he put forward a general sketch of the arrangement as it was contemplated by the Japanese government. He emphasized the primacy of Japan's interests in Korea, but he also noted a concern for events in Manchuria, as encroachments there might be followed by expansion into Korea. Japan's policy with regard to China was viewed as identical with that of Great Britain; that is, the open door and maintenance of the territorial integrity of China. The alliance itself would be purely defensive in nature and

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[48]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 170-171.

[49]Ibid.

would become operative only if one of the signatories were obliged to go to war with more than one foreign power in defense of the stated policies toward East Asia. Hayashi especially emphasized that the alliance would not be activated by a war involving only a single foreign power. In the case of a Russo-Japanese war, British neutrality would be sufficient.[50]

Lansdowne thanked Hayashi for his statement, and promised to refer it to the cabinet. He added that it appeared to him "to form a useful basis for discussion." Lansdowne's next statement revealed the effect of Selbourne's memorandum upon his thinking. He thought it possible "that the two Navies might with great advantage work together even in time of peace, each Power affording the other facilities for the use of docks, harbours, and coaling stations." Hayashi "cordially" agreed.[51]

The proposals exchanged in this conversation were the essence of the alliance which would be signed on January 30, 1902. The similarity between Bertie's ideas and the substance of Hayashi's proposals is quite evident.[52] Both sides were already reasonably certain of how much the other would concede, and protracted preliminaries were thereby avoided when the conversations proceeded to the status of official negotiations. Why, then, did it take five months for the conferees to pass from unofficial discussions to formal negotiations? And why were yet another three months required to conclude the agreement?

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[50]Lansdowne to Whitehead, October 16, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 105, pp. 96-98.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Bertie's ideas had been "unofficially" communicated to Hayashi by Sir Claude MacDonald, British minister to Japan, who was home on leave during the summer of 1901. Hayashi drew the obvious conclusion that the British were apprising him in advance of their requirements so

When the Russians withdrew their demands upon China on April 5, 1901, the most pressing reason for an Anglo-Japanese understanding was temporarily removed. Furthermore, it was not until September that Anglo-German relations had been dealt a telling blow as a result of an unhappy meeting between William and Edward.[53] The German Empress Frederick, Edward's favorite sister, had succumbed to cancer in August, and the British monarch had journeyed to Germany for the funeral. After having endured the strain of the funeral, Edward had been invited by the Kaiser to a luncheon at Wilhelmshöhe. The King arrived tired and hungry after the four-hour train trip from Homburg, but he was obliged to review a massive guard of honor, sit through an unpleasant luncheon, and then retire to the drawing room where the Kaiser proceeded to read to him a lecture on the errors of British foreign policy.[54] When Lansdowne learned of these proceedings, it undoubtedly did considerable damage to whatever willingness he might still have had to pursue a German alliance.

Finally, the interim nature of the Japanese government between June and October had made it practically impossible for the Japanese foreign office to undertake such a serious step as the opening of formal alliance negotiations with Great Britain. The result of all this was an unwillingness on the part of either side to take the first step. The British had no sense of urgency and therefore would not--the Japanese had no assurance of stability and therefore could not.

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that he could make the first move with more certainty. A. M. Pooley, ed., The Secret Memoirs of Count Tadasu Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador to the Court of St. James from 1900-1905 (London, 1915), pp. 121-122.

[53]For details see Grenville, Salisbury, pp. 356-357.

[54]William's usual tactlessness was manifested in such remarks as the one which referred to Edward's ministers as "those unmitigated noodles." Ibid.

At this point, however, events in East Asia again intervened to emphasize the advantages of an alliance to both Britain and Japan. On October 5, 1901, the Russians presented proposals to Peking which attempted to make the restoration of Manchuria conditional upon the granting of mining concessions there to the Russo-Chinese Bank. This represented a threat to both Japanese and British interests in Korea and China, respectively, since the Russo-Chinese Bank was simply a puppet of the Russian ministry of finance. Such concessions as were demanded would have been tantamount to incorporation of Manchuria into the Russian Empire, and this was a circumstance which neither Japan nor Britain could countenance.[55]

Lansdowne was obviously committed to the idea of the Anglo-Japanese alliance by the time of his conversations with Hayashi on October 16, but during the following two weeks he attempted to make doubly sure of his footing before he proceeded. He obtained the approval of the cabinet for a direct approach to the Russians with a proposal which would have simplified matters greatly. The next day, October 29, he held conversations with de Staal, the Russian minister, and requested the direct settlement of all Anglo-Russian differences in China, Persia, and anywhere else they conflicted.[56] The unenthusiastic Russian response to these overtures did not surprise Lansdowne. On the same day, Lamsdorff refused to communicate the draft of the proposed Russo-Chinese convention over Manchuria until it had been signed, and on November 2, he delivered a further rebuff to Lansdowne by informing him that British

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[55]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 179.

[56]For details of the approach to Russia, see Steiner, "Anglo-Japanese Alliance," pp. 31-35.

proposals regarding Persia would not be considered.

The Russian rejection of Lansdowne's offer for a direct settlement closed the last avenue which might have been open for any Anglo-Russian rapprochement in the fall of 1901. The rebuff also armed Lansdowne for any confrontation which might occur with those within the government who were unfavorably disposed toward the Japanese alliance project. He had now placed himself in a highly defensible position to counter any accusations that he had not given either Germany or Russia enough latitude to come to terms.

Lansdowne had, all the while, been proceeding with the business of formulating the draft to Salisbury on October 25 for his approval, and he then submitted the draft proposal for the approval of the full cabinet on November 5. At this momentous meeting, Lansdowne, with strong support from Selbourne, carried the day.[57] The British counter-draft was now ready for submission to the anxious Japanese.[58]

With the delivery of the first British draft to Hayashi the next day, Lansdowne moved to obtain a very significant concession for Great Britain. He told Hayashi that he had confined himself to the understanding at which they had previously arrived in preparing the draft, i.e., limited to China and Korea, but he

> felt bound to tell him that an Agreement limited in this manner seemed to be in some respects an incomplete solution of the question. . . . The disappearance of Great Britain as a sea Power in the Far East would be a calamity

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[57]See Grenville, Salisbury, pp. 402-403.

[58]Komura had remarked to MacDonald that "if anything is to be done it should be done quickly." MacDonald to Lansdowne, November 1, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 108, p. 99. Lansdowne immediately replied that "no time will be lost." He regarded the situation as "extremely hopeful." Lansdowne to MacDonald, November 1, 1901, Ibid., no. 109, p. 99.

> to Japan, and it would make no matter to her whether such a calamity were to be brought about by a quarrel originating in the Far East or by complications in some other part of the World.[59]

He referred, of course, to the frontier which the British empire in Central Asia shared with Russia, and he thereby served notice to Hayashi that he considered the limitation of the treaty to China and Korea a disadvantage to Britain. If Britain must assume the liability of supporting Japan's predominant interests in Korea, where Britain had little interest, then Japan should be willing to reciprocate by assuming a similar liability in India and points east.

Hayashi replied that he "felt the force of this observation" and promised to convey it to the Japanese government. He also observed that he did not feel the treaty was broad enough regarding Japanese interests in Korea, as it only provided for British assistance in case of absorption of Korean territory by another power. Japan, he felt sure, would wish to be protected "not only against the complete absorption of Corea, but against any serious encroachments on the part of Russia in that country, or indeed, any action on her part which might interfere with the preponderant influence exercised by Japan in many parts of Corea."[60] Thus began the bargaining.

One would expect the negotiations to have been concluded rather rapidly after the initial exchange of drafts, considering the great similarity between the interests of the two parties, but it was at this point that they hung fire. The first British counterdraft was delivered to Hayashi on November 6; it was not until December 12 that the Japanese

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[59]Lansdowne to MacDonald, November 6, 1901, Ibid., no. 110, pp. 99-100.

[60]Ibid.

were prepared to return their first counterdraft--a delay of five weeks. If both sides had been so anxious to conclude the agreement, why should the Japanese now hesitate?

A number of reasons can be offered for what appeared to have been a deliberate stall by the Japanese. Obviously they had to have a certain amount of time to prepare acceptable translations of the text, examine the British proposals, and to prepare counterproposals, but this should have taken no more than two weeks at the maximum. Several factors combined to extend this process for an additional three weeks.

The first problem which confronted the Japanese was the illness of Komura, who was stricken with pneumonia in the second week of November. This complicated matters greatly, since the deputy foreign minister was out of the country and therefore unable to stand in for Komura.[61] The entire business therefore passed to Katsura, and for the greater part of November and the first week of December, it was the premier who did the lion's share of the work in obtaining the approval of the cabinet, the genrō, and the Emperor for the transmission of the Japanese counterdraft. Despite these problems, Katsura was prepared to seek the approval of the cabinet on November 28. Because of Komura's continued illness, the cabinet met at his residence where they gave unanimous approval to the counterdraft. But when Katsura reported the results of the cabinet meeting to the Emperor the following day, he encountered his greatest stumbling block. The emperor refused to give his assent until the redraft had been referred to the genrō and approved by them.

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[61]MacDonald to Lansdowne, November 28, 1901, Ibid., no. 113, p. 101. Furthermore, most of the rest of the government were absent from Tokyo for the autumn maneuvers. MacDonald to Lansdowne, November 25, 1901, Ibid., no. 112, p. 100.

The genrō were the remnant of the Meiji oligarchs who had been gradually removed from the realm of active governmental service by their advancing ages. Nevertheless they still played an important part in the decision-making process. No premier, and Katsura was no exception, could have undertaken a major departure from the traditional policy without first obtaining their approval. This proved to be the most time-consuming and difficult part of the procedure. It was further complicated by the absence of Itō, one of the most influential of the genrō, who had undertaken a journey to Russia via the United States, France, and Germany. Itō had begun his tour in September, claiming that he was going abroad for his health, but from the very start, his trip raised speculations about the possibilities of a Franco-Japanese loan and a subsequent Russo-Japanese rapprochement. Such idle speculation was relatively undisturbing to the Japanese in September, before the negotiations with Britain took a rather sudden leap forward, but by November the increased talk of Itō's true intentions gave Katsura some rather bad moments.[62]

The British were taking note of Itō's movements, and they were apparently none too satisfied that his mission was of a purely personal nature.[63] Itō's trip animated Lansdowne. Whether he was really disturbed is difficult to determine, but his official actions served

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[62]Nish details Itō's activities; see his Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 189-192.

[63]MacDonald had been pressing the Japanese Foreign Office for assurances about Itō's trip and relaying the responses back to Lansdowne. MacDonald to Lansdowne, November 25, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 112, p. 100; MacDonald to Lansdowne, November 28, 1901, Ibid., no. 113, p. 101. When Itō finally reached Russia, Lansdowne could not have been reassured by the reports from the British Ambassador there which indicated the Russians were making a grandstand play for Itō's support. Scott to Lansdowne, December 11, 1901, Ibid., no. 114, p. 102.

notice to the Japanese that the British thought it improper for Itō to be engaging in such conduct at a time when Japan was committed to negotiations with Britain. While Itō was in Paris, Lansdowne and Bertie called Hayashi in and sharply admonished him concerning the Japanese procrastination.[64] Hayashi had personally traveled to Paris, at Katsura's request, and explained the status of the negotiations to Itō, emphasizing the primary role which Japan had played in their inception.[65] This had not deterred Itō from completing his journey to St. Petersburg, but he did consent to go directly to Russia with all dispatch and to stop in Britain on the return trip.

Itō's travels placed the Japanese prime minister in a somewhat embarrassing position. Katsura was at a distinct disadvantage in attempting to communicate with him since he was already in Europe when the British counterdraft arrived. He could not order him back to Japan, for as a genrō, Itō was by no means Katsura's inferior. Katsura was convinced that further delays would result in a British withdrawal from the negotiations, and that in such an event Japan would find herself isolated from both Britain and Russia. He therefore decided to place the matter before the genrō again in a manner calculated to win their approval despite the absence of Itō. At a meeting with the genrō on December 10, Katsura and Komura laid the records of the negotiations before that body and pointed out the fact that the negotiations had been initiated by Japan.[66] This changed the complexion of the matter

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[64]This was obviously intended as a protest against Itō's activities. Hayashi, Memoirs, pp. 145-147.

[65]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 186-187.

[66]Ibid., pp. 195-196.

entirely. The genrō realized that if Japan failed to carry through what she had begun, her international reputation would be considerably diminished. Furthermore, as the genrō could not foresee the possibility of an alliance with Russia, they too became uncomfortable with the thought of isolation from both Great Britain and Russia. They therefore gave their approval for the government to conclude the negotiations with Britain on the basis of the policy statement of October 7, notwithstanding a telegram from Itō on December 8, in which he expressed reservations about the alliance. The Emperor granted Katsura and Komura an audience on December 11, and he then instructed them to pursue the negotiations without further delay.[67]

The meeting between Katsura, Komura, and the genrō on December 10 was a critical point in the course of the Anglo-Japanese negotiations. Komura's illness had been very fortunate for the Japanese in some respects. It had given them a very valid excuse for three weeks of delay, but by the first week of December, its value was expended. Continued delay in replying to the British counterdraft would very likely have led to a withdrawal by Britain, and the Japanese fully appreciated the consequences of that.

The Japanese lost no time in communicating their draft to the British. Hayashi met Lansdowne on December 12, and handed him the document along with his apologies for the delay.[68] This marked the point in the negotiations from which there would be little chance of disruption or discontinuation. The British cabinet meeting of December 19 revealed

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Lansdowne to MacDonald, December 12, 1901, BD, Vol. I, no. 115, pp. 102-103.

that the major bones of contention which remained to be removed were the Japanese counterproposals that attempted to fix British naval strength required in Asian waters and to guarantee Japan a completely free hand in Korea.[69]

The Christmas holiday delayed the negotiations on the British side for another three weeks, as no cabinet was scheduled between December 19 and January 13. Lansdowne, however, was sensitive to the Japanese requests for haste, and he initiated a memorandum to the cabinet during the holiday period.[70] As a result, when the cabinet met again on January 13, he had a draft ready to be approved by that body. The revised draft was approved and handed to Hayashi on January 14, 1902.[71]

The Japanese made some concessions on the strong wording which they had employed in some places, and agreed to couch the description of their interests in Korea in somewhat vaguer terms, but they refused to give much ground on the actual substance of the agreement or to allow it to be extended to cover British interests in Central Asia. Lansdowne was somewhat more successful in modifying the provisions regarding the maintenance of a specific naval strength in Asian waters. The Japanese proposal had committed each ally to maintain "in the Far East a naval force superior in efficacy to the naval strength of any third Power."

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[69]Lansdowne took advantage of a meeting with Hayashi after the Cabinet had met to raise once more the question of extension of the Alliance to cover British interests in Central Asia. Hayashi "replied emphatically . . . that it was useless to propose such an extension of the alliance." Lansdowne then pointed out the other British objections. Lansdowne to MacDonald, December 19, 1901, Ibid., no. 117, pp. 104-105.

[70]Lansdowne's memorandum was dated January 1, 1902, and it argued that the Japanese offer should be accepted as it stood. Monger, End of Isolation, p. 58.

[71]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 215.

Lansdowne succeeded in modifying this considerably: "Great Britain has no intention of relaxing her efforts to maintain, so far as may be possible, available for concentration in the waters of the Extreme East a naval force superior to that of any third Power."[72]

These last changes marked the conclusion of the actual bargaining process. The final British consideration and approval came at the cabinet of January 24. This was immediately communicated to the Japanese, and Komura agreed to the definitive British draft on January 25. He placed the final text before the Japanese cabinet and the Emperor on January 29, and received their approval to conclude the agreement. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was officially concluded on January 30, 1902, when Lord Lansdowne and Baron Hayashi signed the treaty in London.[73] Thus was Baron Hayashi's wish fulfilled.

The alliance was a landmark in East-West relations. For the first time an Asian nation had concluded a military alliance with a western nation for the protection of mutual interests in East Asia. The premier European power of the day had thereby recognized Japan as a world power. Furthermore, the alliance was the result of political circumstances originating almost exclusively in East Asia. Russian encroachments in Manchuria provided the stimulus for Japanese feelers to Britain in the spring of 1901, proved the worthlessness of the Anglo-German agreement over China, and the renewal of these pressures in the fall of that year emphasized the importance of the alliance negotiations to both Britain and Japan.

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[72]For the details of the various drafts and the revisions which were made see Anglo-Japanese Agreement, January 30, 1902, BD, Vol. I, no. 125, pp. 114-120.

[73]Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 216.

The alliance had very far-reaching effects upon the course of European diplomacy, aimed as it was at blocking Russian expansion in East Asia. There can be no doubt that both Britain and Japan viewed the alliance as a pacific means of containing the Russians. The approaches which Lansdowne had made to the Russians late in October, 1901, clearly demonstrate that the British saw the Japanese alliance not as an end within itself but as a vehicle which might facilitate the settlement of Anglo-Russian differences. The Japanese conception of the alliance was somewhat different. Obviously the Japanese were more concerned with the possibility of settling accounts with the Russians by combat, but it should not be concluded that this was their sole purpose in seeking the British alliance. Backed by the British navy, Japanese diplomats could negotiate with the Russians from a position of strength and with a degree of confidence which they did not have previously. They must have also realized that the alliance could have the reverse effect, to stiffen the Russian determination to achieve their goals in East Asia. But the Japanese approaches to Russia after the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance strengthen the conclusion that they did view the alliance as a means of furthering the peaceful adjustment of their differences with the Russians.

The Russians recognized full well the intent of Britain and Japan, and immediately approached their French allies with the request that they join Russia in a joint declaration in reply to the new alliance. This the French consented to do in March, 1902, but they steadfastly refused to allow any extension of the Dual Alliance which might commit them to fight the British over Russia's East Asian adventures. In this refusal lay the genesis of the Entente Cordiale. The French

were quick to realize that the new alliance increased the dangers of an Anglo-French war should developments in East Asia result in a Russo-Japanese war, and thus the way was prepared for the settlement of one of the most persistent rivalries in Europe.

CHAPTER III

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE ENTENTE CORDIALE

The outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in February, 1904, surprised almost no one; the major concern of most observers was that the hostilities in East Asia would draw the European allies of Russia and Japan--France and Great Britain, respectively--into the conflict with the result of a world war. This fear was not realized, however, for sixty days later, on April 8, Britain and France signed what has become known as the Entente Cordiale. This accord settled the outstanding difficulties between the two nations and greatly reduced the chance of a war between them as a result of the actions of their allies in East Asia. The immediate consequences of this agreement were of considerable significance, but the long-term results proved to be equally important. The Entente Cordiale was the primary vehicle which carried Britain and France into World War I as allies. The signing of the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 was therefore of monumental importance to the subsequent history of Europe, but the story cannot be told without noting that much of the impetus for this European event came from East Asia.

Throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, Anglo-French relations were far from cordial. The competition between the two for world empire and for possessions in Africa in particular finally

brought them to the brink of war at Fashoda in 1898.[1] But 1898 marked a turning point for France, and consequently for Anglo-French relations.[2] It was in this year that the diminutive and autocratic Théophile Delcassé became Minister of Foreign Affairs for France--a position which he would retain for the following seven years. Delcassé brought with him to the Quai d'Orsay considerable prestige as a result of his former service in government and the distinct advantage of preconceived goals.[3] Although bitterly embarrassed by the forced retreat at Fashoda, he did not change his conception of the ultimate goal of French diplomacy--an alliance between France, Great Britain, and Russia.[4] Even as Captain Marchand lowered the French flag and marched away from Fashoda, Delcassé was laying the diplomatic groundwork for the system of ententes through which he hoped to restore the prestige of France.

Delcassé began his efforts to break out of the diplomatic isolation in which the Bismarckian system had placed France by strengthening the Franco-Russian Alliance. Since 1893, this alliance had been the cornerstone of French diplomacy, but Fashoda had demonstrated that it

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[1]A perceptive analysis of Anglo-French relations very accurately described the situation five years before Fashoda. "They have a feeling that we [the British] are always getting the better of them all over the world, and crossing their path at the very point when it is about to open on some extraordinary advantage." Marquess of Dufferin and Ava to Earl of Rosebery, November 3, 1893, BD, Vol. I, no. 351, pp. 285-288.

[2]Dickenson, The International Anarchy, p. 54.

[3]Contemporary writing on Delcassé presents an interesting picture of the considerable personal prestige which he enjoyed. See Francis de Pressense, "The Fall of M. Delcassé and the Anglo-French Entente," The Nineteenth Century and After, Vol. LVIII (July, 1905), pp. 22-33. See also Charles Dawbarn, "Théophile Delcassé, The Man and His Policy," The Fortnightly Review, Vol. XCVI (December, 1914), pp. 474-479.

[4]Charles W. Porter, The Career of Théophile Delcassé (Philadelphia, 1936), p. 166.

was practically worthless as an effective tool for applying pressure upon an adversary. Delcassé achieved a significant strengthening of the alliance in 1899 and then turned his attention to other matters. By 1903, primarily as a result of Delcassé's efforts, France no longer stood alone on the European scene. She had gained considerable influence in Spain as a result of the French foreign minister's assistance as the honest broker in the negotiations to end the Spanish-American War.[5] Through further negotiations, Italy had been effectively separated from the Triple Alliance--morally, if not legally[6]--and, since a Franco-German rapprochement was a very unlikely prospect,[7] Great Britain alone remained to be reconciled in this system of ententes. But despite the determined efforts of Paul Cambon, the French ambassador in London, the British remained aloof from earnest discussions which would have allowed the settlement of disputes on an equitable basis.

Matters were beginning to look more favorable for the French, however. While the British were not ready for serious discussions on the problems which separated them from France, they were careful to avoid any action which might have unnecessarily offended the French after 1901. Circumstances arose which made the British more cautious and gave them second thoughts in relation to France; although the French had no direct control over these developments, they are important to any examination of the later course of Anglo-French relations.

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[5]Ibid., pp. 162-164.

[6]Frederick L. Schuman, War and Diplomacy in the French Republic: An Inquiry into Political Motivation and the Control of Foreign Policy (New York, 1931), p. 163.

[7]E. Malcolm Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914 (New York, 1931), p. 204.

Within a period of eighteen months, Britain had gained a new monarch and a new prime minister. Victoria had died in January, 1901, and Lord Salisbury finally retired from the premiership in July, 1902. Through these two events the officious and Germanophile Queen and the last stalwart defender of "Splendid Isolation" were removed from the diplomatic scene.[8] In their places came the personable, popular Edward VII and James Arthur Balfour. With Balfour as premier, Lord Lansdowne would have a free hand at the foreign office to pursue policies which bore a closer relation to the realities of the situation on the Continent. Although some change had been evinced in the office after Lansdowne succeeded Salisbury as foreign secretary in 1900, Salisbury's retention of the premiership until 1902 had exercised a restraining influence on the reshaping of continental relationships.[9]

The Boer War provided another reason for reconsideration of the honored place which had been given to "Splendid Isolation." This unfortunate little war proved to the British that they were indeed isolated,[10] since it aroused much ire in Europe, and the news was leaked to the British that plans were afoot among several of the powers to intervene in the conflict. Sentiment ran particularly high in Germany; within France, also, the war was viewed as a perfect example of the ruthlessness and hypocracy of British imperialism. The conduct of the war itself gave the British no comfort. It opened with embarrassing defeats and dragged

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[8]Porter, The Career of Théophile Delcassé, p. 173.

[9]Keith Eubank, Paul Cambon: Master Diplomatist (Norman, Oklahoma, 1960), p. 70.

[10]Cambon attributed the conclusion of the Entente to the Boer War, which weakened Britain, and the Russo-Japanese War, which frightened both countries. Ibid., p. 88.

on for what seemed an eternity before an overwhelming number of British troops were finally able to bring the Boers to heel. The British received a very bad press all the while, and they were not notably adept at taking criticism of such a vituperative nature.

The Germans also contributed to the changed British attitude toward France. Britain had toyed with the idea of closer ties with Germany for several years during the late nineties, but by the turn of the century she had become alarmed by German conduct. This alarm may be attributed to several factors; three, however, are of primary importance. First, Germany picked this time to launch a major naval construction program. The Navy Bill of 1900 gave Admiral Tirpitz much of what he wanted in the way of naval construction, but it set in motion the wheels of reaction in Great Britain. The concept of the two-power navy was part and parcel of British strategy, and the German Navy Bill of 1900 was interpreted as a direct challenge to this strategy--a challenge which could not go unanswered.[11] Second, German conduct during the Boer War, the personal actions of William II and the vindictiveness of the German press in particular, further alienated British public opinion and had an adverse effect upon those elements within the British government which hitherto had been favorably disposed toward Germany. Third, the continued coyness of the German foreign office in its conduct of negotiations with the British on the subject of an Anglo-German entente finally began to strain British patience.[12] The British became suspicious

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[11]Raymond J. Sontag, European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932 (New York, 1933), p. 88.

[12]Apparently the Germans discounted the possibility of an Anglo-French agreement and believed they could keep Britain on a string. Pierre Guillen, L'Allemangne et l'Maroc: de 1870 à 1905 (Paris, 1967), p. 674.

of German motives and attributed their hesitancy to a stalling strategy designed to give the Germans time to build to parity with Great Britain on the seas. It was assumed that they would then dictate the terms of a colonial settlement or attack. Thus, by the end of 1902, Anglo-German relations were at low tide, and the British were no longer seriously considering the possibility of an entente with Germany. British public opinion was becoming increasingly anti-German and was beginning to look toward France as a friend and possible ally.[13]

In the examination of the events prior to 1903, the number and nature of the problems which separated France and Britain must be reviewed. Two major and four lesser problems were on the French docket for consideration in the eventuality of earnest talks with the British. All of the problems were of a colonial nature and of the type which have a tendency eventually to lead to conflict.[14]

Uppermost on the list were Egypt and Morocco.[15] France had missed the opportunity of a joint occupation of Egypt in 1882 by hesitating when the British acted to protect their interests on the Nile; however, the French still retained sufficient financial influence in Egypt to be a source of annoyance to the British. Britain's occupation was to have been a temporary measure, but by 1902 twenty years of "temporary" occupation had passed with no end in sight. Although France could not seriously threaten the British position, she could inflict

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[13]Oran J. Hale, Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution: A Study in Diplomacy and the Press, 1904-1906 (Philadelphia, 1931), pp. 253-254.

[14]Eubank, Paul Cambon, p. 89.

[15]Christopher Andrew, Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale (New York, 1968), p. 211.

diplomatic pinpricks, and Britain would be only too happy to be rid of this nuisance.

The quid pro quo for the abandonment of French claims in Egypt was British recognition of the primacy of French interests in Morocco. France looked upon Morocco as the logical extension of her empire in North Africa, and it was most certainly an open gate for any adversary who wished to put pressure on the French in Algeria.[16] The prospect of abandoning Morocco to the certainty of French possession, however, raised an issue which was of concern to every British diplomat: the control of the Straits of Gibralter. The British were hesitant to see this fall into the hands of a powerful colonial rival without the moderating effect of multilateral control.[17]

Newfoundland held a prominent position on the list of issues to be settled. Here France held definite and longstanding rights which dated from the Treaty of Utrecht and which had been confirmed in the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Under these treaties, France had been guaranteed the rights to a long stretch of coast, known as the French Shore, which was valuable both as a fishing ground and as a training school for future members of the French navy and merchant marine. A problem had existed for several decades in the exercise of those rights, however. When Newfoundland achieved self-governing status, it refused to honor the terms of the treaties and passed legislation in 1885 which hampered the operations of French fishermen. Continued protests were to no

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[16]Eubank, Paul Cambon, p. 74.

[17]Monger lists neutralization of the Straits of Gibralter as the first among Lansdowne's conditions for abandoning Morocco to France. Monger, The End of Isolation, p. 129.

avail, and no clear solution to the problem had been found as of 1903.[18]

Lesser problems also existed between the French and British in Siam, the New Hebrides, and Madagascar,[19] but these were of a less critical nature and constituted more of a nuisance factor than real threats to the peaceful conduct of affairs. Yet the importance of disposing of them should not be ignored, for it is the accumulation of such minor annoyances which can often precipitate war when a major source of irritation arises.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 rendered the British much less receptive to French advances during the ensuing eighteen months. By the terms of this treaty, if either of the contracting parties became involved in a war with two powers, the other was committed to armed support of that party. Herein lay the key to the developments to be considered below. The British entered into this agreement as a precautionary measure; its purpose was to forestall a Russo-Japanese rapprochement and to improve Japan's bargaining position, thus facilitating a peaceful settlement by bringing Russia to reason.[20] For a while the alliance appeared successful in achieving its goals. Russia had negotiated a convention with China in April, 1902, which provided for the evacuation of Russian forces from Manchuria and seemed to be the harbinger of a more pacific Russian Far Eastern policy. With the

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[18]Graham H. Stuart, French Foreign Policy (New York, 1921), pp. 123-125.

[19]Ibid., pp. 121-123.

[20]E. W. Edwards, "The Japanese Alliance and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904," History, Vol. XLII (1957), p. 20.

Russo-Japanese see-saw thus balanced and Alsace-Lorraine as a permanent barrier to any Franco-German accord, Britain had little reason in 1902 to feel compelled to strike a bargain which would require substantial concessions to France.

By early summer of 1903, however, the continued procrastination by Russia in fulfilling her agreements in East Asia had transformed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance from a negative into a positive factor in the initiation of Anglo-French negotiations.[21] As Japanese impatience with the continued Russian occupation of Manchuria grew, so did British anxiety. The British willingness to make meaningful concessions to the French in order to achieve a comprehensive settlement of Anglo-French problems increased correspondingly. Under no circumstances did the British wish to see the casus foederis of their alliance with Japan become operative as would be the case should France become involved in the conflict which appeared imminent.[22]

Concurrent with these developments in East Asia was Edward VII's visit to Paris in 1903. Edward quickly won the hearts of the Parisians, and by the time of his departure public manifestations of affection for the British monarch bore witness to the success of his visit.[23] This is important, for although the diplomatic initiative had come from France for several years, the French public had been slow to forget Fashoda; as

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[21]Of all the problems facing the British, Monger has termed those in the Far East as ". . . the most serious of them all." He noted that ". . . at the end of April, it suddenly flared into life again, more urgent, more dangerous, than all the others." Monger, The End of Isolation, p. 123.

[22]Schuman, War and Diplomacy, p. 168.

[23]Eugene N. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904-1906 (Chicago, 1930), pp. 86-87.

a result, the French diplomats had been working ahead of the country at large in approaching Britain for a rapprochement.[24]

In Britain, the reverse was the case. British public opinion had for some months past been favorably inclined toward a rapprochement with the French. It was the government which dragged its feet on that side of the Channel. Cambon had communicated the signs of improvement in the public disposition to Delcassé on several occasions in the early spring.[25] It should be noted, however, that it was not until the reappearance of trouble in the Far East during the early summer months that the British government began to evince a change of attitude. By the time of the French President's arrival in London during the first week of July, it appeared that the government had concluded that it must come to an accord with the French to protect Britain from the danger of entanglement in the event of a Russo-Japanese conflict.[26]

Delcassé accompanied President Loubet on the visit to London and during the stay there, he met with the British foreign secretary, Lord Lansdowne. The results of this meeting are interesting and significant. After covering the other minor areas of disagreement rather summarily, Delcassé put forward the two major points of interest to

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[24]"Delcassé was, however, not representative of France, not even of the French government. . . . Hatred of England died hard; Fashoda was still a painful memory." Sontag, European Diplomatic History, p. 92; This judgment was confirmed by the British Ambassador to France, Monson to Lansdowne, May 22, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 353, p. 290.

[25]Cambon to Delcassé, March 13 and April 13, 1903, France, Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1871-1914 (2nd Series, 1901-1911, 14 vols., Paris, 1931-32), Vol. III, nos. 137 and 192, pp. 183-85 and 258-260. (Hereafter cited as DDF,)

[26]Lansdowne's conversation with Eugene Étinne revealed the changed British attitude. Lansdowne to Monson, July 2, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 356, pp. 292-293.

France: British recognition of the primacy of French interests in Morocco and the principle of territorial compensation for French rights in Newfoundland. He emphasized to Lansdowne repeatedly that if agreement could be reached over Morocco, he believed the remaining problems could be solved with a minimum of difficulty. When Lansdowne put forward the question of Spanish interests in Morocco, Delcassé assured him that they would be respected. He added that the neutrality of the Moroccan coasts around the Straits of Gibralter would be guaranteed, as would British commercial liberty in Morocco proper. Finally, he advanced the proposition of territorial compensation for the surrender of exclusive French rights in Newfoundland as a part of the comprehensive settlement.[27]

Lansdowne accepted the three points in principle. But now, it was his turn. After recapitulating the points of interest to the two parties, Lansdowne mentioned the question of Egypt which Delcassé had avoided. He made his point perfectly clear just by mentioning the subject, and he did not attempt any further discussion at this point.[28] Egypt for Britain, Morocco for France: both parties knew well what they wanted. The problem which now remained was to determine the price each was willing to pay.

The implications of the Delcassé-Lansdowne conversation of July 7, 1903, are manifold. Quite obviously the British had decided that the time had come to resolve their problems with the French and to achieve a comprehensive settlement--even at the price of significant

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[27]Delcassé to Cambon, July 21, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 362, pp. 471-473.

[28]Lansdowne to Monson, July 7, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 357, pp. 294-297.

concessions.[29] For the French, of course, it was the crowning achievement of several years of hard work. But why had the British chosen this particular time? To answer this question, one needs only look at the course of events in East Asia from April through June.

By April, 1903, events in East Asia had again taken on grave overtones. Russia failed to meet her obligations under the convention of 1902 which she had negotiated with China for the withdrawal of troops from Manchuria, and the Japanese attitude was becoming increasingly truculent. Delcassé received reports from Japan which indicated that the Japanese were reaching the limits of their patience. The continued Russian dawdling and rumors of Russian war preparations were exciting public opinion. The Japanese were no longer playing the role of the patient, long-suffering Oriental.[30]

The reports from St. Petersburg gave no reason for optimism either. Ambassador Bompard reported to Delcassé on April 24 that he did not believe the Russians intended to evacuate Manchuria, and that in the final analysis, neither Russia nor Japan would be willing to make concessions which would satisfy the other.[31] Russia gave further evidence of her intentions on April 28, when she presented China with a list of demands to be met before the withdrawal of Russian troops from Manchuria would be ordered. The Chinese rejected these out of hand, and the situation became increasingly tense over the next few weeks. The demands,

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[29]"There was only one way out: a close entente with France." Monger, The End of Isolation, p. 127.

[30]Harmand to Delcassé, April 16 and May 5, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, nos. 185 and 222, pp. 253-255 and 299-301; Durail to Delcassé, April 28 and 29, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, nos. 204 and 206, pp. 282-283.

[31]Bompard to Delcassé, April 24, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 194, pp. 265-267.

needless to say, caused a furor in Japan.[32] Such tensions provided ample encouragement for both France and Britain to move toward a settlement of their differences.

Anglo-French negotiations got under way with a meeting between Lansdowne and Cambon on July 15. Cambon presented a more detailed statement of the French proposals at this time, and Lansdowne brought the issue of Egypt into the conversation.[33] It was not until August 5, however, that Cambon was prepared to make a full statement of French proposals. At this meeting Lansdowne informed him that Great Britain would expect French recognition of the British position in Egypt as the quid pro quo for British recognition of French interests in Morocco. Cambon raised the question of territorial compensation for the surrender of exclusive French rights in Newfoundland, and Lansdowne's reply made it clear that this was going to be one of the more difficult problems to settle.[34] French public opinion would demand meaningful concessions for the surrender of such tangible rights, and such concessions would be equally difficult for Lansdowne to make without offending British public opinion.

The British reply to the French proposals was not ready until October 1. The cabinet had been on vacation, and in addition a ministerial crisis in September had resulted in the resignations of Joseph

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[32]Durail to Delcassé, April 28 and 29, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, nos. 204 and 206, pp. 282-283.

[33]Cambon to Delcassé, July 22, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 363, pp. 473-476; Lansdowne to deBunsen, July 15, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 358, p. 298.

[34]Cambon to Delcassé, August 6, 1903; DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 392, pp. 516-520; Lansdowne to Monson, August 5, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 364, pp. 306-307.

Chamberlain and several others. The British proposals, when they finally came, were substantially what had been expected, and contained nothing more than a formalization of the views which Lansdowne had expressed in the meeting of August 6.[35] It was now a matter of time and bargaining.

On October 14, the two governments signed an arbitration treaty,[36] and conversations proceeded on the nature of the settlement. Throughout October and November, Lansdowne and Cambon continued to bargain over the price of compensation for French rights in Newfoundland and the details of the settlement in Egypt and Morocco.[37] Lansdowne drove a hard bargain over these points, but on December 11, it appeared that the war of nerves was beginning to disturb him somewhat. In his conversation with Cambon on that date, he expressed great concern over the worsening situation in East Asia. He noted that Britain was not bound to give assistance if Japan became engaged in a war with only one power, but he expressed some fear of the reaction of British public opinion to the outbreak of a Russo-Japanese war. He requested Cambon to ask Delcassé to intervene in St. Petersburg to quiet the situation, and he promised to work to that end in Tokyo. The situation, he feared, was becoming very grave.[38]

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[35]Lansdowne to Cambon, October 1, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 369, pp. 311-317.

[36]Cambon to Delcassé, October 14, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 10, p. 18; Lansdowne to Monson, October 14, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 371, pp. 318-319.

[37]Cambon to Delcassé, November 4 and 22 and December 11, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, nos. 59, 98, and 120, pp. 83-84, 127-129, and 173-174.

[38]Cambon to Delcassé, December 11, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 121, pp. 175-176; Lansdowne makes no mention of this in his dispatch to Monson. Lansdowne to Monson, December 11, 1903, BD, Vol. I, no. 380, pp. 333-334.

The developments had indeed become threatening. Two factors in particular contributed to further alarm among the British. The Russian moves toward Manchuria and Korea continued. First, the Russians were working feverishly to complete the railway system in Manchuria to facilitate the movement of troops and supplies to the East. This would indicate that anything but a withdrawal was being planned. Secondly, the Tsar appointed a viceroy for the Far East who was made responsible to him alone. The viceroy was given the duty of maintaining order and security. The British interpreted this as a preliminary to further annexations by the Russians.[39] They knew full well that any such move would make war unavoidable.

The first weeks of October brought rumors of Japanese mobilization as a result of the continued Russian refusal to evacuate Manchuria. The reports to the French foreign office noted the possibility of a Japanese landing in Korea.[40] The Japanese evidently believed the Russians to be building fortifications along the Korean border, and the continued arrival of Russian army and naval reinforcements at Port Arthur did not quiet these fears. The report of the French ambassador at Peking on November 7 revealed the reason behind the build-up. The negotiations with China for the evacuation of Manchuria were broken off, and Russian troops reoccupied the strategic city of Mukden.[41] By the first week of December, war appeared to be only a matter of time.

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[39]Lt. Col. d'Amade to General André, August 24, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 406, pp. 538-540.

[40]Col. Moulin to General André, September 30, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 448, pp. 593-595; Boutiron to Delcassé, October 1, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. III, no. 450, p. 596.

[41]Durail to Delcassé, November 7, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 63, pp. 87-88.

Russia and Japan continued to negotiate on the problem throughout December, but by the first week of January, it was obvious that the Russian attitude had pushed the Japanese to the limit of their patience. Not only had Russia continued to refuse to evacuate Manchuria--a point which the Japanese might have conceded had the Russians not seemed intent upon taking Korea--but they now raised their demands with regard to Korea by insisting upon the delimitation of the Japanese sphere of influence at the thirty-ninth parallel.[42] On January 6, the French foreign office received a report from Seoul that the Japanese were landing supplies and munitions in Korean ports. There were also reports of numerous Japanese soldiers in civilian garb in the port cities, and the French ambassador assumed that the landing of Japanese forces in Korea was imminent.[43] On January 14, in their final response to the Russian proposition, the Japanese refused to consent to a partition of Korea at thirty-nine degrees or to recognize the Russian occupation of Manchuria.[44]

Meanwhile, the conversations between Cambon and Lansdowne continued through December and into January without any substantial progress. For all practical purposes, the major issues, Egypt and Morocco, had been settled shortly after the conversations began. The problem which remained to be settled was the extent of the territorial compensation which France should receive from renouncing her exclusive rights

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[42]Harmand to Delcassé, December 20, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 130, pp. 189-198; Delcassé to Cogordan, January 6, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 155, pp. 220-221.

[43]Fontenay to Delcassé, January 6, 1904 DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 156, pp. 221-222.

[44]Harmand to Delcassé, January 14, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 177, pp. 247-248.

in Newfoundland. The French had first proposed that Britain cede the colony of Gambia, a narrow enclave of territory intruding into the French colony of Senegal on the west coast of Africa; but Lansdowne refused to consider the suggestion. The French finally abandoned hope of concession on this point and suggested a significant rectification of the border of northern Nigeria and the French Sudan. This the British also refused; they offered, instead, what Delcassé referred to as "shreds" of territory north of Sokoto, Nigeria. Needless to say, the French rejected this offer as completely insufficient, and the talks came to a standstill by the middle of January.[45]

Cambon met with Lansdowne on January 18 and suggested that he take the problem of compensation before the cabinet once more. Somewhat pessimistically, Lansdowne agreed.[46] The British apparently appreciated the gravity of the situation.[47] Events in East Asia were becoming more critical with each day that passed, and obviously the French had reached the limit of their patience with the British on the matter of territorial compensation. When Lansdowne met with Cambon on January 23, he brought with him an offer of more significant proportions than had been previously made. It granted the right of passage through Nigeria to those

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[45]For a summary of the bargaining on this point, see Delcassé to Cambon, January 16, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 184, pp. 257-258; also Lansdowne to Monson, January 13, 1904, BD, Vol. I, no. 384, pp. 377-338.

[46]Cambon to Delcassé, January 18, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 196, pp. 272-273.

[47]At this point Cromer telegraphed Lansdowne from Egypt: "To allow negotiations to break down now would in my opinion be little short of a calamity, whether from the general or the local Egyptian point of view. . . . I cannot but think that this point, which appears to me of the utmost importance, would be understood in England and would serve as an adequate justification for some concessions elsewhere." Cromer to Lansdowne, January 24, 1904, BD, Vol. I, no. 387, pp. 339-340.

parts of the French Sudan made inaccessable by the rapids of the Niger River; it offered a rectification of the frontier of Gambia which would give France access to the Gambia River below its rapids; a parcel of territory marked by a semicircle around Sokoto, Nigeria, would be ceded; and the border of French and British lands on Lake Chad would be altered to give France territory which would permit construction of a road in that region. Cambon was obviously pleased by this turn of events, and while he maintained his reserve perfectly, he commented that he believed it would be useful to continue the discussions.[48]

Clearly, Delcassé was interested in the British offer, and on January 26, he instructed Cambon to request clarification on certain points of the proposal.[49] Cambon accordingly obtained a letter from Lansdowne on February 5, which attempted to give greater clarity to the British offer.[50] Delcassé was still not satisfied with the extent of the concessions, and on February 18, Cambon introduced a new demand for the cession of the Iles de Los in the bay outside Konakry, French Guiana.[51] Again Lansdowne went before the cabinet, and at a meeting with Cambon on February 25, after a bit of verbal fencing, he consented to cede the Iles de Los to France.[52]

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[48]Cambon to Delcassé, January 24, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 212, pp. 286-288; Lansdowne to Monson, January 23, 1904, BD, Vol. I, no. 388, pp. 340-341.

[49]Delcassé to Cambon, January 26, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 217, p. 295.

[50]Lansdowne to Cambon, February 5, 1904, BD, Vol. I, no. 389, pp. 341-343.

[51]Cambon to Lansdowne, February 18, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 287, pp. 372-375.

[52]Cambon to Delcassé, February 25, 1904, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 316, pp. 217-419.

For all practical purposes, the Entente Cordiale was concluded. The discussions dragged on through March as a result of Delcassé's efforts to pry still a few more concessions from the British, but when he attempted to reintroduce the question of territorial compensation, Lansdowne threatened to break off the negotiations on March 31.[53] This quickly sobered the French foreign minister, and on April 8, 1904, the formal agreements were signed.

What broke the logjam and brought about the conclusion of the agreement after so long a time? Once again, the events in East Asia, which became so critical during the last two weeks of January and which finally erupted into war during the first week of February, deserve the greater share of the credit.[54] To explain fully the relationship between Anglo-French negotiations and the Russo-Japanese quarrel, however, one must examine the respective viewpoints of the British and the French as to the possible consequences of a Russo-Japanese war for them.

From the beginning, the British viewed the prospect of a Russo-Japanese war with more alarm than did the French. Although the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance did not require the British to render assistance unless Japan became involved in a war with two powers, the British feared that they might be forced to intervene anyway. They did not hold a very high opinion of the prowess of the Japanese military;[55] it was feared that if Japan did become embroiled in a war with Russia,

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[53]Lansdowne to Monson, March 31, 1904, BD, Vol. I, no. 408, pp. 359-360.

[54]A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783-1919, (3 vols., New York, 1923), Vol. III, p. 310.

[55]Monger, The End of Isolation, p. 126.

she would be crushed. This was an eventuality which the British were not prepared to stand by and accept. It would mean the destruction of the British position in East Asia, and it was doubtful if British public opinion would tolerate the imposition of a harsh settlement by the Russians upon the Japanese. Furthermore, the British were never quite able to free themselves from the spectre of a continental coalition. Germany remained the unknown quantity, and the British were inclined to believe that should the conflict spread, Germany would cast her lot with Russia and France, and Britain would find herself in desperate straits.[56]

It was no accident that Lansdowne's decision to talk with Delcassé in July, 1903, followed upon the heels of a worsening in the Russo-Japanese situation.[57] On several occasions after the negotiations began, Lansdowne approached Cambon on the subject of Russo-Japanese or Anglo-Russian relations and inquired about possible ways of ameliorating them. In the meeting of December 11, 1903, Lansdowne gave Cambon his assurances that Britain did not desire to become involved in the course of events in East Asia, and Cambon reciprocated for France.[58] With the outbreak of war in February, the two met again and gave mutual assurances that they desired no part of the conflict.[59] These declarations probably gave some reassurances to the British, and can no doubt be credited with increasing their hesitance in making territorial conces-

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[56]Sontag, European Diplomatic History, p. 89.

[57]One author does attribute the timing to coincidence, however. He concludes that there was not sufficient cause in July to postulate a Russo-Japanese conflict. Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 286-287.

[58]Cambon to Delcassé, December 11, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 121, pp. 175-176.

[59]Eubank, Paul Cambon, p. 90.

sions to the French throughout December and the greater part of January. The concessions of January 24 and February 25, however, indicate British unwillingness to push their luck to the point of allowing the negotiations to collapse. It was a very well-timed bit of work on their part.

To understand the French conduct throughout the course of the negotiations, and during December and January in particular, it is necessary to examine the personal attitude of Delcassé toward the situation. The negotiations were the culmination of five years of hard work on Delcassé's part. An entente with Great Britain had been his avowed goal since he had assumed office in 1898. Until the East Asian situation had thoroughly disturbed the British in 1903, however, he had enjoyed little success in his labors. But, whereas the British became convinced that genuine trouble was going to erupt between Russia and Japan, Delcassé refused to the last moment to believe that war would come.[60] To this disbelief can be attributed much of his insistance upon greater territorial cessions than the British were willing to make.[61] In either case, should war by chance come, he, like the British, felt certain that Russia would easily defeat the Japanese. He apparently agreed with Cambon that France had a right to be difficult; she could afford to wait.[62]

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[60]At a cabinet meeting on February 5, three days before the Japanese attack on Port Arthur, Delcassé firmly announced: "I'll answer for peace myself." Maurice Paleologue, Three Critical Years, 1904-05-06 (New York, 1957), p. 15.

[61]So persistant was Delcassé in his effort to obtain all possible that Lord Newton condemns his conduct and states that he ". . . imperilled the whole agreement by haggling over details in the final stages of the negotiations." Newton, Lord Lansdowne, pp. 293-294.

[62]Cambon to Delcassé, November 18, 1903, DDF, Ser. 2, Vol. IV, no. 89, pp. 115-116.

The coming of the war was a blow to Delcassé. He was obviously shaken by the surprise, and although he continued to haggle with the British for several more weeks and gained a few more concessions thereby, the Russian reverses in the first eight weeks of the war weakened his bargaining position.[63] Out of fear of French public opinion, he tried to pry a final concession from the British in March, but in the face of Lansdowne's threat to break off negotiations he quickly dropped the matter and signed the agreements within the week. He, too, was unwilling to risk the dangers of the months of war ahead without an understanding with his neighbor across the Channel.

In the final analysis it was the coming of the Russo-Japanese War, and the threat of world-wide conflict it brought with it, which brought both Britain and France to the realization that their differences had to be settled. The Entente Cordiale was the manifestation of that realization. But the true significance of the Entente was not limited to its effect upon Anglo-French relations. Just as the earlier Anglo-Japanese Alliance set in motion many of the forces which contributed to the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale, so this in turn aroused the diplomatic activity which culminated fifteen months later in the abortive Treaty of Björkö between Germany and Russia.

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[63]Alfred Francis Pribram, England and the International Policy of the European Great Powers 1871-1914 (Oxford, 1931), p. 97.

CHAPTER IV

GERMANY AND THE TREATY OF BJÖRKÖ

On July 23, 1905, Emperor William II boarded Tsar Nicholas' yacht, the Polar Star, for what proved to be a momentous occasion in the history of Russo-German relations. While the imperial yachts lay at anchor in the Bay of Björkö for two days, William bombarded his younger cousin with warnings about the perfidy of Russia's European neighbors and complained bitterly of the thankless tasks which Germany had undertaken for Russia's benefit during her hour of need. When William felt he had properly prepared Nicholas, he pulled a document from his pocket which he placed before the despondent Tsar. The rather melodramatic words of William describe the occasion very adequately:

> The Czar seized me by the arm, drew me into his father's cabin and closed all the doors. "Show it [to] me please." The dreamy eyes sparkled. I drew the envelope from my pocket, unfolded the sheet on the writing desk of Alexander III before the pictures of the Czar's mother, between photographs from Fredensborg and Copenhagen, and laid it before the Czar. He read the text once, twice, thrice. . . . I prayed the dear God to be with us and guide the young ruler. It was deathly still; only the sea murmured and the sun shone joyfully and clear in the cozy cabin, and directly before me lay the Hohenzollern and high in the morning air waved the imperial standard. I was just reading the letters on the black cross, God with us, when the Czar said, "That is quite excellent. I quite agree!" My heart beat so loudly that I could hear it. I pulled myself together and said casually, "Should you like to sign it? It would be a very nice souvenir of our entrevue." He read it once more and replied, "Yes I will." I opened the ink-well, extending to him the pen, and he wrote with a firm hand "Nicolas." Then he passed it to me, I signed it, and as I arose he, deeply moved, folded me in his arms and said, "I thank God and I thank you, it will be of

> most beneficial consequences for my country and Yours; You are Russia's only real friend in the whole world, I have felt that through the whole war and I know it." Tears of joy stood in my eyes--to be sure the sweat poured from my brow and back--and I thought of Frederick William III, Queen Louise, Grandfather and Nicholas I. Were they near at that moment? At any rate they saw it all and were overjoyed.[1]

Thus was the Treaty of Björkö concluded on July 24, 1905.

The history of the Treaty of Björkö is, in a larger sense, the history of the deterioration of German foreign policy in the fifteen years following the dismissal of Bismarck in 1890, but its immediate genesis can be found in the sequence of events initiated by the signature of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. This alliance, as has been noted, relieved Japan's fears of a war with both members of the Dual Alliance if the Japanese eventually found it necessary to go to war with Russia to protect Japan's interests in Korea. Japanese foreign policy therefore became less tolerant of Russian pretensions in Manchuria and more obviously intent upon settling the issue by combat. As this tendency manifested itself during the spring and summer of 1903, the British became more fearful of finding themselves embroiled in a conflict with France as a result of the hostility of their respective allies. Lord Lansdowne, appreciating the gravity of the situation, welcomed Delcassé's advances in the summer of 1903, and thus opened the way for the discussions which led to the entente between England and France in the spring of 1904.

For all practical purposes the signing of the Entente Cordiale left Germany diplomatically isolated. Although the Triple Alliance was theoretically active, the Germans discounted its value because of

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[1]Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, pp. 283-284.

Austria's nationalities problems and Italy's suspected undependability.[2] The position of unchallenged strength from which German diplomats had spoken during the days of the Dreikaiserbund was gone, but its memory remained. William, in particular, could not bring himself to accept this situation.[3] Just as Tantalus tried repeatedly to touch the cool waters with his parched lips only to watch them recede before him, so the Kaiser tried again and again to forestall the isolation of Germany only to be rewarded with repeated frustrations.

The Kaiser's disappointments were the result of flaws in the German political structure combined with an unfortunate combination of personnel at the highest levels of policy formulation. The direction of German foreign policy was not the result of a well-coordinated effort, but was rather a contest of wills between three individuals--William II, Bernhard von Bülow, and Friedrich von Holstein, and this situation was aggravated by another. There was insufficient communication between the various governmental agencies which served as listening posts for the foreign office officials, and in many cases important information which should have affected the formulation of German foreign policy never reached either the Kaiser, Bülow, or Holstein. Furthermore, several instances could be cited which demonstrate that information was not freely shared among the three, and, accordingly, not one of them was ever in possession of what could be termed the

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[2]As one newspaper editor put it at the time: "If we were today forced to fight Russia and France, not a single rifle would be fired in Italy and Austria." M. Harden, "Der neue Trust," Zukunft, April 23, 1904, quoted in E. Malcolm Carroll, Germany and the Great Powers, 1866-1914 (New York, 1938), pp. 496-497.

[3]William began to suffer from the "nightmare of the coalitions." Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 138.

"total picture." Simply put, this meant that the German government was often at odds with itself in the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy.[4] This created very real problems, since foreign diplomats tended to assume that the military monarchy was the epitomy of precision. The myth of "Prussian efficiency" led foreigners to conclude that the Germans made no move without a purpose, when in fact, German diplomacy between 1902 and 1905 was often very poorly conceived and executed. The potential for distortion and confusion which these circumstances introduced into the conduct of international relations can be readily appreciated.

In recounting the events which led to Björkö, three stories must be related, because the principle architects of German foreign policy, William, Bülow, and Holstein, saw three ways for Germany to avert diplomatic isolation after 1904. The Kaiser, with his usual penchant for the grandiose, believed the solution lay in a combination of the Dual and the Triple Alliances.[5] To achieve this merger, William planned to negotiate an alliance with Nicholas II, who would then secure the adherence of the French while William brought the Hapsburg Empire and Italy into the arrangement. If William were successful in this venture, Germany could expect to wield considerable influence as the senior partner on the continent, and the British would be forced to either acquiesce or face the dangers of opposing a powerful coalition. If the Tsar were unable to bring the French into the proposed alliance, the Dual Alliance would be disrupted and France would be forced to seek closer ties with

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[4]Jonathan Steinburg, "Germany and the Russo-Japanese War," American Historical Review, Vol. LXXV (1970), pp. 1965-1966.

[5]Raymond J. Sontag, "German Foreign Policy, 1904-1906," American Historical Review, Vol. XXXIII (1928), p. 280.

Great Britain. But with the Russo-German frontier guaranteed by treaty, Germany would be unimpressed by an Anglo-French alliance. In the event of war it would not save Paris, for the Germans were quite aware that "the English ships have no wheels."[6]

Holstein, however, not only realized the improbability of such an accomplishment, but denied its desirability as well. He believed that Germany should first attempt to conclude similar agreements with both Britain and France and thereby nullify the importance of the Anglo-French entente as a diplomatic coup. If this procedure failed, Germany would have to score a diplomatic triumph over France through a policy of veiled threats backed by the German military, thus demonstrating the essential worthlessness of the Anglo-French entente and emphasizing Germany's international importance. Holstein's alternative clearly demonstrated the bankruptcy of German diplomacy by 1904. He had fallen back upon the old policy of Machtpolitik which had failed during the 1890's.[7]

Somewhere between William's Russophile tendencies and Holstein's mailed fist, Bülow took his position. The chancellor is the most difficult of the three to analyze because of his eclecticism. He could adopt an independent position only to a degree, for when it came into open conflict with William's opinions, Bülow was usually obliged to give way to maintain the security of his office.[8] On the rarer

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[6]Holstein to Hugo von Radolin, July 13, 1905, Norman Rich and H. M. Fisher, eds., The Holstein Papers (4 vols., Cambridge, 1955-1963), Vol. IV, no. 902, p. 353. (Hereafter cited as HP.)

[7]Sontag, "German Foreign Policy," p. 280.

[8]An excellent example of this was Bülow's attempt to moderate William's overtures to Nicholas in the months of December, 1903, and January, 1904. William haughtily replied that these were private

occasions when he opposed Holstein, he was confronted not only by a superior knowledge of international affairs but by a more powerful intellect as well, and he usually capitulated or compromised rather than risk Holstein's resignation.[9] Bülow can be safely described as an intermediary between the Kaiser and Holstein who synthesized their thinking into something which could be called a third opinion. It is not too much to say that the Kaiser supplied Bülow with an office and Holstein supplied him with thoughts.[10]

Holstein's thoughts, however, had ceased to offer viable alternatives for German foreign policy long before the spring of 1904. He was extremely hesitant to make significant concessions to Great Britain before the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and as a result Germany lost what proved to be the last chance to achieve an entente with Britain in 1901. Holstein wrote on December 31, 1901, that "at the present day Germany with her enormous strength on land and sea is a factor which no power that wishes to perform an important act dare leave in its rear without having previously come to an understanding

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letters and advised the Chancellor to mind his own business. Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 138. Holstein complained earlier that Bülow was afraid to combat anti-English feeling for fear of estranging himself from the Kaiser. Diary Entry, November 11, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 812, p. 272.

[9]Bülow was very much on the horns of a dilemma in the summer of 1905 when Holstein became angered by the Kaiser's persistant conduct of a diplomatic course contrary to that outlined by the foreign office and therefore offered his resignation. Holstein to Bülow, September 19, 1905, HP, Vol. IV, no. 913, p. 373.

[10]Holstein described Bülow to his diary: "In some ways I feel sorry for Bülow. He is not a strong character, and up till now has achieved everything by amiability and his cleverness in taking people. But this by itself is not enough in the face of H.M.'s constantly growing awareness of his position as ruler." Diary Entry, January 11, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 792, p. 245.

with her."[11] This estimation of Germany's international importance may have been reasonably accurate, but Holstein had overplayed his hand. The fear of German reaction was not strong enough to deter Britain from a very "important act" on January 30, 1902.

A memorandum which Holstein prepared for Bülow in July, 1902, clearly demonstrated that he did not appreciate the magnitude of the changes which the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance signaled.

> In accordance with your wishes I have tried to do something about England. . . . In my opinion--and I am not the only one to hold it--the efforts now being made to represent England as irreconcilable and a demonstrative conciliatory gesture by the Kaiser as necessary are aimed against you. . . . I for my part would speak up without hesitation if I saw the least danger from England. On the contrary, however, I think that all this 'crying wolf' and all these so-called 'warnings' are utter nonsense. Those who originated these warnings don't believe them themselves; it is all designed to work on the excitable nature of the Kaiser.
>
> 'Meeting them half-way' is not going to achieve anything. . . . Nothing demonstrative, everything must be done quietly and gradually.[12]

Obviously, Holstein's confidence was not easily shaken. His reserved attitude can be partially explained by the absence of any clouds on Germany's horizons six months after Britain and Japan had allied themselves. The Anglo-German flirtation during the spring and summer of 1901 had brought Delcassé to attempt to approach Germany twice,[13] while the Russians would make overtures at the September meeting between William and Nicholas at Danzig. The conversations at Danzig only reinforced Holstein's confidence in his analysis of the German position,

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[11]Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 79.

[12]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, July 29, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 803, pp. 257-258.

[13]Carroll, French Public Opinion, pp. 200-201.

for there the Russian foreign minister had stated that "an alliance between Germany and Russia would be the greatest blessing and is a goal to be striven for."[14] Feeding upon itself, German complacency waxed fat.

The equanimity with which Holstein awaited further developments was only superficially justified. Though the Franco-Russian approaches might have been indicative of a willingness to recognize Germany's status as a great power and a desire to cooperate with rather than confront her, the Germans should not have expected their neighbors to stand, hat in hand, awaiting the Kaiser's pleasure. Indeed, by late autumn 1902, the signs of further change were appearing. But rather than taking warning from them, Holstein persisted in interpreting them with what increasingly appears as unwarranted optimism. In a memorandum dated October 1, 1902, he analyzed the international situation.

> . . . The attitude of France is one of watching and waiting; as though they were trying to lure us into statements that might be exploited elsewhere, particularly in London. . . .
>
> After these experiences it does not seem advisable for us to continue to negotiate directly with France, . . .
>
> If we continue confidential negotiations with Delcassé . . . we not only risk his ignoring our proposals in dealing with others, but that he might spice them with a nice anti-English flavor and then communicate them confidentially to London. Because [of] this [the] entire behavior of Delcassé can leave no doubt that he at present regards a Franco-English understanding as the main goal of his policy. It would be unfortunate if this understanding were brought about just because Delcassé was given the opportunity to present Germany to the English as the villain in the piece.[15]

The specific negotiations to which Holstein referred were those for the evacuation of Shanghai by the German, French, and British troops

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[14]Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 78.

[15]Memorandum by Holstein, October 1, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 807, pp. 263-265.

who had occupied the city since the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, but the attitude which he evinced here was the one which permeated his thinking. He had, of course, noted the possibility of an Anglo-French rapprochement, but he could not rid himself of what would appear to have been his bête noire, chronic suspicion.

Having thus raised the spectre of an Anglo-French understanding, Holstein proceeded to assure himself that though it might appear outwardly possible, in reality such an eventuality could not occur.

> As for the Franco-English rapprochement, . . . in the present world situation in which the existence of England is not threatened, there is no English government that would dare come before Parliament with the statement that, with the exception of a narrow coastal strip around Tangier, all of Morocco had been conceded to the French. . . . Before John Bull would concede that, he would have to feel much smaller than he does today, for now after the conclusion of the Boer War he again feels very big.[16]

The most outstanding error in Holstein's analysis was his overestimation of British confidence after the Boer War. The British were, if anything, more certain than before that they should seek the security of further alliances. Germany, until 1902, had been high on Britain's list of potential allies, but the advice of Holstein had played an important role in alienating the British. He apparently could not now conceive of the British becoming concerned enough to make concessions sufficient to resolve the multitude of Anglo-French differences.

The cogent summary which he had made of Delcassé's policy on October 1 seems to have been less satisfying to Holstein in November. On the third he wrote: "I no longer understand French Near Eastern policy as conducted by M. Delcassé." He requested the German ambassador

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[16]Ibid.

to Spain to "ask your friend the Spanish Ambassador sometime in conversation and without emphasis what in fact he thinks of Delcassé's Mediterranean and Near Eastern policy."[17] It is strange indeed that he could not see what was so obvious. By the end of 1902 an Anglo-German entente was no longer a realistic possibility, and Holstein noted that "the minimum demanded by Germany's best friends in France was a retreat to the language frontier. . .", and that "as long as this view obtains. . . and I will hardly live long enough to see a change--all talk of a [Franco-German] rapprochement is pointless."[18] He had all of the factors catalogued, but he steadfastly refused to accept the conclusion to which they inevitably pointed--given time and a pressing reason, Britain and France would adjust their differences.

Indications of a major power realignment continued to appear throughout 1903. Bülow met with Metternich, the German ambassador to Britain, for a series of conversations in May, and a memorandum which he subsequently sent to Holstein demonstrates clearly that the German foreign office was not ignorant of the potential for change which existed.

> The English have long been inclined to reach an arrangement with the Russians (whom they fear), if only the latter's demands weren't too high. In all attempts to achieve a rapprochement between Russia and England hitherto, England has always been courting a recalcitrant Russia. The obstacle to an Anglo-Russian understanding has always lain in St. Petersburg. The Russians are intriguing in London, but Eckardstein overestimates both the significance and the success of these mining operations.

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[17]Holstein to Hugo von Radolin, November 3, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 809, pp. 266-267.

[18]Holstein to Hugo von Radolin, November 6, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 810, p. 268.

> Do you think the English might incite the Japanese to soften up the Russians and make them more desirous of an arrangement with England?[19]

The question which Bülow put does, of course, credit the British with a more sinister motive than the historical record appears to justify, but in formulating his closing question, Bulöw had recognized a most important prospect. If a Russo-Japanese war were to occur, Britain might be able to exploit Russia's difficulties to achieve an adjustment of their differences.

An Anglo-Russian rapprochement could be achieved with greater ease, however, if it were to be preceded by an understanding between Britain and the other member of the Dual Alliance. Once again, Bülow, in forwarding the opinions of Götz von Seckendorff, emphasized the possibility of an Anglo-French entente.

> No one in England thinks of attacking us; but there is a strong tendency in England to reach an understanding with France and in particular with Russia--partly due to fear, especially of the latter Power, partly also because England feels the need of an ally but does not want us as an ally at this stage, being cross with us.[20]

Here Bülow noted trends that should have galvanized Holstein into action. The summer of 1903 was another of those periods of tension when it was generally thought possible that Japan might attack Russia. The fear of which Bülow wrote was Britain's concern that such an eventuality might involve her in a war with both Russia and France. It should have been obvious that the British would move to prevent such a development.

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[19]Bernhard von Bülow to Holstein, May 15, 1903, HP, Vol. IV, no. 815, p. 247.

[20]Bernhard von Bülow to Holstein, May 16, 1903, HP, Vol. IV, no. 816, p. 275.

By the end of 1903, however, Holstein was still unwilling to abandon his policy of watchful waiting. Eventually he thought to win the war of nerves and enjoy the spectacle of one of the powers seeking an alliance on Germany's terms. He advised Bülow to "Stick fast by Bismarck's negative point of view. Foreign policy, like photographic development, cannot stand the light of day."[21]

Such a negative approach had its limitations, and as circumstances in East Asia became more and more threatening, this fact became obvious to everyone except Holstein. The German foreign office had for some time thought that if Russia and Japan came to blows, Germany would receive formal requests from Russia for assistance. Such an occurrence would have placed Germany in the classical Bismarckian situation, that of tertius gaudens--the Dual Alliance and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance confronting each other, and Germany committed to neither.[22] Under these circumstances the Germans might be able to extract considerable concessions for their support. Bülow wrote to Holstein in January, 1904, that "it would of course be a good thing if 'somewhere far away' the nations came to blows."[23] Fishing in troubled waters is an ancient and honored pastime.

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[21]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, November 21, 1903, HP, Vol. IV, no. 817, p. 276.

[22]Otto von Mühlberg, the deputy state secretary, expressed these opinions after a meeting with the Russian Ambassador in July, 1903. Bülow noted in the margin: "We shall have to deal with this matter with the greatest care and delicacy." Steinberg, "Germany and the Russo-Japanese War," p. 1067.

[23]Bernhard von Bülow to Holstein, January 16, 1904, HP, Vol. IV, no. 818, p. 277.

The same letter which expressed Bülow's hope for a nice little war "somewhere far away" also put four very significant questions to Holstein. Bülow asked:

> 1. All in all, do you think it would be better for us if there were a war in the Far East than if the storm were to pass?
> 2. Do you think it completely impossible that in the latter case the Russians would for the time being act with more caution in the Far East, and instead pay more intensive attention to their European policy than they have done in the last few years?
> 3. Do you believe that the Franco-Russian alliance would survive a war in the Far East?
> 4. Do you not believe that the war must definitely lead to a sharpening of the conflict between Russia on the one hand and England-America on the other, while if peace is maintained, Russia might be tempted to cultivate her relations with England-America, and even Japan, more carefully in the future?[24]

The second question revealed the one fear from which the Germans never truly freed themselves. It was the bête noire of German diplomats. If Russia did not expand eastward she would turn her attention to Europe, and the expansion of European Russia would eventually result in a Russo-German conflict. The thought of the Russian hordes swarming over the Oder made German blood run cold.

Holstein emphasized the importance of the strategic considerations which Bülow's questions raised. "The Far Eastern question can be postponed," he replied, "the Balkan question can not. The latter rests on popular sentiment, the former does not." As for the possibility of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement, Holstein thought it "out of the question, because America has taken an anti-Russian stand and England will and must remain on the same side as America." He thought it probable that the Dual Alliance would survive a war in the Far East, "but

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[24] Ibid.

(here he demonstrates his priorities), not a war in the Balkans." As for Germany's attitude, Holstein left little doubt about the course which should be pursued:

> One can truly say that during the whole of its existance the Russian Empire has never had so many enemies at once as now. Germany would shoulder no easy task if she were to take over all these enemies. In fact it is impossible to give a diplomatic opinion without basing it on military and naval appreciations of the power position.[25]

Obviously, vacillation is not one of the charges which may be brought against Holstein. These words which he penned in January, 1904, convey essentially the same advice as those he wrote in December, 1901.[26] Germany must stand aloof and await the moment when her power would be decisive. She could then command the maximum price for her favor. In other words, "Nothing demonstrative, everything must be done quietly and gradually."[27]

Gradualism, however, held no appeal for the Kaiser. It was with increasing difficulty that Bülow exercised a restraining influence upon William. It would appear that Germany had at least one individual who, as Addison said, was willing to "ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm." William was obsessed by the idea of an alliance between the Houses of Hohenzollern and Romanoff, and he was furthermore convinced that he could obtain his goal through the strength of his personal influence over the Tsar, Nicholas II. This obsession was intensified when William realized toward the end of 1903 that Delcassé was on the

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[25]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, January 17, 1904, HP, Vol. IV, no. 819, pp. 277-278.

[26]Cf. footnote 11, page 76 above.

[27]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, July 29, 1902, HP, Vol. IV, no. 803, p. 258.

verge of completing that series of ententes which would unite France, Italy, Spain, and England in a series of interlocking agreements. This impending circumstance made the Russo-German alliance project appear even more imperative to him, for it was the first step toward the realization of his scheme for a continental league.

The Russians, however, were not eager for closer ties with Germany, a fact which left William in need of some event which would emphasize the importance of German friendship to the Russians. This, a Russo-Japanese war would do nicely, and for this reason the Kaiser took every opportunity to urge the Tsar to be resolute in his relations with the Japanese. His moods fluctuated in a direct ratio with his estimation of the chances for war. Bülow recounted a very enlightening incident.

> When the Kaiser received a telegram from the Tsar on January 21, 1904, that is to say more than a fortnight before the outbreak of hostilities, expressing the hope that peace would not be jeopardized, His Majesty was much cast down. He feared that the Tsar would never let it come to a war with Japan. . . . The anxiety which Japan, America, and, in particular, England, had caused the Tsar, would lead him to a rapprochement with these powers and probably also to a tightening of the knot of alliance with France.[28]

The coming of the Russo-Japanese War in February, 1904, was an event which the Kaiser, Bülow, and Holstein could contemplate with a degree of equanimity. An ultimate Russian victory was a foregone conclusion, but it would take time before the Russian behemoth could be roused for a total effort in East Asia. In the meantime, Russia's security in Europe would be virtually a German hostage. Though Germany's policy-makers differed among themselves as to which course should be followed,

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[28]Bernhard von Bülow, Memoirs of Prince von Bulow (2 vols., Boston, 1931), Vol. II, p. 71.

all three agreed that the long-awaited crossroads had been reached.

By the spring of 1904, however, the initiative in directing Germany's foreign policy had passed to the Kaiser. Bülow claims that by that time he had become convinced that a Russian alliance should be pursued, although he visualized himself rather than the Kaiser as the primary vehicle for its realization.[29] He had convinced himself "by a careful study of the international, political, and commercial situation, that [Germany] must come to an understanding with Russia. If this were accomplished, Roumania, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, and the other countries would follow."[30] This sounds strikingly like William's continental league, but Bülow would achieve it by other means. "It would be more practical to shut up two real statesmen together, . . . Herr Witte, and the German Chancellor, so that they might as quickly as possible reach an understanding satisfactory to both parties."[31] It is clear that Bülow had more than mere tariff treaties in mind.

William and Bülow apparently now shared the vision of a Russo-German alliance and the hope of a subsequent continental bloc, but Holstein still nourished his doubts about the wisdom of the enterprise. In a memorandum he asked:

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[29]The German Diplomatic Documents, however, tend to modify the impression of complete conversion which Bülow attempts to convey in his memoirs. During April he was working with Richthofen, the foreign secretary on a plan to expand the Anglo-German talks for an arbitration treaty into a naval treaty and possibly even into a defensive alliance. He specifically cautioned Richthofen to keep the matter secret from the Kaiser. Bülow to Richthofen, April 19, 1904, E.T.S. Dugdale, ed., German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914 (4 Vols., New York, 1930) Vol. III, no. 124, p. 192. (Hereafter cited as GDD.)

[30]Bülow, Memoirs, p. 47.

[31]Ibid., p. 48.

> And what could possibly cause Germany to stand by Russia and endanger herself? . . . But if Germany were to take sides, her world trade would be endangered. If one tickles the tiger, one must expect him to use his claws. Time will probably show whether and to what degree there is a causal connection between the Herero revolt[32] and the 'key to the Baltic.'[33] If he were to use his claws again he might do so more violently, perhaps too violently. Are we in fact capable of taking on the English and the Americans?[34]

But Holstein's negative approach no longer satisfied either William or Bülow. The conclusion of the Entente Cordiale appears to have been the event which convinced the Kaiser that he must salvage the situation through forceful and personal action.[35]

William had been carrying on a surreptitious correspondence with the Tsar for several months in an attempt to incite him to more forceful action against the Japanese.[36] Before he moved further in this

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[32]Early in January, 1904, a revolt of the native Hereros had broken out in Southwest Africa which many Germans believed to have been instigated by the British.

[33]Here he refers to Danish neutrality, which, it was assumed, Britain would violate if she wished to strike at the German or Russian fleets.

[34]Memorandum, February 22, 1904, HP, Vol. IV, no. 823, p. 283.

[35]The Entente appears to have come as somewhat of a surprise to William even though German diplomats had been reporting regularly on its negotiation. It would appear that he simply did not believe that England and France could, in the final analysis, adjust their differences. On a statement that England would trade Morocco for Egypt he placed a marginal "?", presumably indicating disbelief. Prince von Radolin to Bülow, March 23, 1904, GDD, Vol. III, no. 4, p. 190.

[36]His personal correspondence with the Tsar actually dates back into the 1890's, but it was only in late 1903 that the Kaiser began to bombard Nicholas with messages designed to promote a Russo-Japanese war and alienate him from the French and English. In letters in December 1903, and January 1904, for example, he hinted at Japanese arming of Chinese forces, British opposition to Russian expansion in East Asia, and Japanese mobilization for war being aided by the "gift" of two cruisers from Britain. See Isaac Don Levine, Letters from the Kaiser to the Czar (New York, 1920), nos. XXIX-XXXI, pp. 95-103. At the time

direction, however, he paused to attempt to restore Germany's self-confidence in a series of boisterous speeches. The Kaiser publicly launched his personal diplomatic initiative at Karlsruhe on April 28. The tone of his speech left no doubt that something was in the offing.

> I hope that peace will not be disturbed and that the events which we see taking place before our eyes tend to fix feelings in one direction, to clear the eye, to steel the courage, and to make us united, if it should be necessary for us to interfere in the policy of the world, so that peace will not be disturbed.[37]

This was much more than a personal tirade, for the Entente Cordiale was a blow to Germany's diplomatic prestige which demanded a contre-balance. William obviously intended to provide it. At Mainz he dedicated a bridge on May 1, and he spoke again.

> I wish from my heart that peace, which is necessary for the further development of industry and trade, may be maintained in the future. But I am convinced that this bridge will prove completely adequate, if it has to be used for more serious transport purposes.[38]

His tone became even more truculent at Saarbrücken on May 14. He expressed his "rockfast conviction that we have a clear conscience, and do not look for trouble anywhere, God knows, and He will stand by us if ever our peacefulness is attacked by hostile power."[39] By these petulant demonstrations, William sought to rebuild German morale and to restore confidence after the announcement of the Anglo-French agreement,

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Bülow objected to the "Willy-Nicky" correspondence, but the Kaiser very bluntly informed him that it was private correspondence, and the Chancellor would kindly "mind his own business." Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 138.

[37]Quoted in S. B. Fay, "The Kaiser's Secret Negotiations with the Tsar, 1904-1905," American Historical Review, Vol. XXIV (October 1, 1918), p. 53.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., p. 54.

but he chose to pursue his primary objective by more furtive means.

Through his letters to the Tsar, the Kaiser had been busily planting seeds of doubt about the intentions of France,[40] and the perfidy of Britain,[41] while assuring him of Germany's pro-Russian sentiments. William, the stronger personality of the two, obviously exercised a considerable amount of influence over the weak and irresolute Nicholas, and the Kaiser attempted to exploit this advantage to the fullest between the summers of 1904 and 1905. His duplicity borders on the incredulous in this undertaking. An excellent example of this was his reception of Edward VII, his uncle, at the Kiel regatta in June, 1904. On the twenty-fifth he made Edward an honorary admiral of the German fleet, the purpose of which he portrayed as purely pacific. The navy, he said, would complement the German army which had maintained European peace for thirty years. Following these subdued words, which contrasted so starkly with the language he had used in the previous two months, he congratulated Edward upon his efforts for peace:

> Everyone knows, too, Your Majesty's words and work that your Majesty's whole effort is also directed toward this goal--toward the maintenance of peace. As I have steadily set my whole strength to reach this goal, may God give success to our efforts.[42]

Four days after this public display of amicability between the British and German sovereigns, William telegraphed Nicholas a report on the

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[40]In the letters of February 11, William sent Nicholas documents which confirmed the sale of arms to China by Japan (of which he had earlier reported rumors) and pointed out that the raw steel for these arms was produced by France and shipped to Japan for finishing. See Levine, Letters from Kaiser, no. XXXII, pp. 105-107.

[41]He informed Nicholas on June 6 that the Entente Cordiale was designed to prevent France from aiding Russia. The spirit of this letter is primarily anti-British. Ibid., no. XXXIV, pp. 112-115.

[42]Quoted in Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 54.

proceedings at Kiel.

> Uncle Albert's visit going, of course, well . . . . His wish for peace is quite pronounced, and is the motive for his liking to offer his services where-ever he sees collisions in the world. Best love to Alice. Sympathise sincerely with your fresh losses of ships and men.
> Willy, A. of A.[43]

This apparently innocuous telegram was William's cunning way of taking a backhanded slap at his uncle and planting a bit of suspicion in the Tsar's mind at the same time. It must be remembered that although the Russians were being consistently defeated in the combat which was raging over the Yalu Valley during the summer, they remained supremely confident that they would crush the Japanese as soon as the mobilization program could be gotten into full swing. It was axiomatic that Russia could never react to a stimulus in less than six months. This was, in fact, the opinion held in common throughout Europe. If this is understood, it is evident why anyone who urged the Russians to conclude peace in the summer of 1904 would immediately arouse the suspicion of St. Petersburg that he was either a simple-minded fool or harboring pro-Japanese sentiments. Since not even Nicholas was naïve enough to impute stupidity to Edward, William's little inuendo led to the latter conclusion. The Russians had long been convinced that if the British were not guilty of actively encouraging the growth of a bellicose spirit in Japan, they at least did nothing whatsoever to prevent it.[44]

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[43] Ibid., p. 55.

[44] Holstein had noted this attitude in January. Holstein to Hugo von Radolin, January 27, 1904, HP, Vol. IV, no. 820, pp. 278-279. Even before then William had been working on Nicholas. On December 1, 1903, he wrote to Nicholas that ". . . the Crimean combination is warming to its work. Your ally is making rather free with his flirt [with Great

The Kaiser, of course, urged no such precipitate peace upon the Tsar. His actions conveyed nothing but the best wishes for Russian successes against the Japanese. On July 10, he went so far as to send an open telegram to the Russian commander of the Viborg Infantry Regiment congratulating him upon the prospect of soon meeting the enemy.[45] This could hardly have been calculated to increase European confidence in Germany's declaration of strict neutrality and the veracity of her government. Throughout the summer of 1904, however, William was not closely supervised by his chancellor or by the foreign office, i.e., Holstein. Bülow and Holstein, as a matter of fact, were fully engaged in a running argument ostensibly over the conduct of Richthofen.[46] but in fact emanating from Bülow's support of the Kaiser's inclinations toward the Russian alliance project. Holstein's innate hostilities toward anyone who crossed him were multiplied by his ill health, which necessitated his hospitalization in late June for an operation. The altercation culminated in Holstein's resignation on July 1,[47] but Bülow refused to act upon it until the matter was finally smoothed over in the fall. It was not until late October, however, that Holstein returned to his duties, and by that date the Kaiser's alliance scheme was moving with the assistance of grave international complications.[48] It is

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Britain]. You should pull him up a little." Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 138.

[45]William was honorary colonel of this regiment. Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 56.

[46]See HP, Vol. IV, nos. 828-861, pp. 289-311. In reading this correspondence it becomes evident that Richthofen is merely an excuse for Holstein's pique at the Kaiser and Bülow.

[47]Ibid., no. 830, p. 292.

[48]The complications were the Dogger Bank incident, which created an Anglo-Russian war scare, and the coaling of the Russian fleet by

doubtful whether Holstein could have blocked the course of events that led to the proposition of the alliance to the Tsar,[49] but his continued pessimism in the late fall indicates that he might have attempted to block the project had he been able to do so.

The crisis which followed the Dogger Bank incident provided the Kaiser with the opportunity to approach the Tsar openly for an alliance. With British public opinion in such an excited state, William could legitimately argue that he feared the possibility of a British attack should German colliers continue to service the Russian Baltic Fleet. He therefore telegraphed Nicholas on October 27:

> It is not impossible that the Japanese and British governments may lodge a joint protest against our coaling your ships, coupled with a summation [sic] to stop further work. The result aimed at by such a threat of war would be the absolute immobility of your fleet and inability to proceed to its destination for want of fuel. This new danger would have to be faced in community by Russia and Germany together, who would both have to remind your ally, France, of obligations she has taken over in the treaty of dual alliance with you, the "casus foederis". It is out of the question that France, on such an invitation, would try to shirk her implicit duty toward her ally. Though Delcassé is an anglophile "enragé", he will be wise enough to understand that the British fleet is utterly unable to save Paris. In this way a powerful combination of three of the strongest Continent Powers would be formed, to attack whom the Anglo-Japanese group would think twice before acting. . . . The naval battles fought by Togo are fought with Cardiff coals. . . . I am sorry for the mishap in the North Sea.[50]

Once again, William had correctly judged the Tsar's state of mind. Nicholas replied on the 29th:

German colliers, which created fears of an Anglo-German war with Japan assisting Britain.

[49]The Kaiser's overtures, the contract for the German colliers, Bülow's support for the Kaiser, etc.

[50]Quoted by Fay, in "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 60.

> I agree fully with your complaints about England's behavior concerning the coaling of our ships by German steamers, whereas she understands the rules of keeping neutrality in her own fashion. It is certainly high time to put a stop to this. The only way, as you say, would be that Germany, Russia, and France should at once unite upon an arrangement to abolish Anglo-Japanese arrogance and insolence. Would you like to lay down and frame the outlines of such a treaty and let me know it? As soon as accepted by us France is bound to join her ally. This combination has often come to my mind; it will mean peace and rest for the world.[51]

The Kaiser and Bülow lost no time in replying to Nicholas' telegram. In a lengthy letter William expressed his gratitude to Nicholas for the opportunity "to be of some use to you in a serious moment." Without the knowledge of any other governmental officials, he and Bülow had drawn up the articles of the treaty and were forwarding it forthwith.[52] The proposed alliance would, of course, "be purely defensive, exclusively directed against European agressor or agressors, [sic] in the form of a mutual fire insurance company against incendiarism." Then, to secure a most willing ear for his proposals, the Kaiser tossed in a few remarks about the British and the French.

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[51] Ibid.

[52] The following is a translation of the Kaiser's original French text of the treaty:

Their Majesties the Emperor of All the Russias and the Emperor of Germany, in order to localize as much as possible the Russo-Japanese War, have agreed to the following Articles of a treaty of defensive alliance.

Article I: In case one of the two Empires should be attacked by a European Power, its ally will aid it with all its land and sea forces. The two Allies, in case of need, will also make common cause in order to remind France of the obligations she has assumed by the terms of the Franco-Russian treaty of alliance.

Article II: The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude any separate peace with any common adversary.

Article III: The undertaking to help one another also extends to the case where acts committed by one of the two high contracting parties during the war, such as the delivery of coal to a belligerant, should give rise after the war to complaints by a third Power as to pretended violations of the rights of neutrals. Levine, Letters from Kaiser, no. XXXVIII, pp. 128-130.

> . . . As for France, we both know, that the Radicals and anti-christian [sic] parties, which for the moment are the stronger ones, incline towards England, old Crimean traditions, but are opposed to war. . . . I positively know that as far back as December last the French Minister of Finance Rouvier from his own accord told the Financial Agent of another Power, that on no account whatever would France join you in a Russo-Japanese war, even if England should take sides with Japan. . . . This unheard of state of things will change for the better as soon as France finds herself face to face with the necessity of choosing sides and openly declaring herself for Petersburg or London. . . . Thus it evidently lies in the interest of both parties to bring pressure to bear on and warn England to keep the Peace. If you and I stand shoulder to shoulder, the main result will be that France must openly and formally join us both. . . I herewith enclose the draft of the Articles of the Treaty as you wished, may it meet with your approval . . .[53]

William thus sent his treaty off to Nicholas well fortified with insinuations against the bloody British and the fickle French. He received no immediate acknowledgment and acceptance of the alliance, however. Quite the contrary, the Tsar made no commitments during the next three weeks despite William's prodding insistence that the alliance was the only way for Germany and Russia to achieve security against their present dangers. When he could no longer quibble over the wording of the articles, Nicholas revealed the true reason for his procrastination. On November 23, he wrote the Kaiser that he thought it advisable to let the French see the last draft of the treaty before it was signed. He feared that "if already approved by us both it will seem as if we tried to enforce the treaty on France." Under such circumstances, he thought, failure might easily result. He therefore requested William's "agreement to acquaint the government of France with this project."[54]

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[53] Ibid., no. XXXVII, pp. 123-126.

[54] Quoted in Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 61.

The Kaiser was crestfallen. He knew very well that the communication of the draft to the French would mean its instantaneous death at the hands of that Germanophobe, Delcassé. Not one to give up without a fight, William tried to discourage the Tsar from taking this course.

> . . . Should, however, France know that a Russian-German treaty is only projected, but still unsigned, she will immediately give short notice to her friend (if not secret ally) England, with whom she is bound by "entente cordiale" and inform her immediately. The outcome of such information would doubtless be an instantaneous attack by the two allied Powers, England and Japan, on Germany in Europe as well as in Asia. Their enormous maritime superiority would soon make short work of my small fleet and Germany would be temporarily crippled.[55]

Having thus vividly described the consequences of his proposed indiscretion to the Tsar, the Kaiser concluded on a rather pessimistic note.

> Should you, notwithstanding, think it impossible for you to conclude a treaty with me without the previous consent of France, then it would be a far safer alternative to abstain from concluding any treaty at all.[56]

The Tsar continued to delay, however, neither accepting nor rejecting totally the Kaiser's proposals until William finally demanded that he at least guarantee Russian support of Germany in a war arising out of the coaling of the Baltic Fleet or face the discontinuance of that operation by German colliers. This was all the Tsar needed. The Kaiser's letter bearing the ultimatum was dated December 7;[57] on December 12, Count Lamsdorff handed the German ambassador to St. Petersburg the written assurances which William had demanded. It guaranteed nothing, however, other than Russia's firm resolve "fully to stand by the Imperial German Government in the question of the deliveries of

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[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid., p. 62.

[57]Levine, Letters from Kaiser, no. XLI, pp. 141-142.

coal. . . ."[58] There was no resurrection of the Bismarckian reinsurance treaty, no quintuple alliance, not even a small crack in the Dual Alliance.

On December 28, 1904, William wrote Bülow that the Tsar had given him "a decided refusal to enter into any agreement without the knowledge of Gaul." It was "the first failure" which he had personally experienced since ascending the throne.[59] He knew where the problem lay, however, and he described it very well. Count Lamsdorff and M. Witte had "spat in the German soup."[60] The work of Lamsdorff was, indeed, clearly manifested in the Tsar's rejection of the treaty. Left to his own devices, Nicholas would no doubt have signed the first draft of the treaty without hesitation, but Lamsdorff did not relish the prospect of feeling "the heavy weight . . . of the iron bands" of a German alliance.[61] The Tsar had received William's proposals in the Dogger Bank incident; Lamsdorff was not convinced that the British would attack Russia, and was therefore much more hesitant to accept the Germans upon their own terms. Thus, he counseled the Tsar to delay, and he assisted him in amending the draft to a form which would be beneficial to Russia and, as he probably hoped, unacceptable to William and Bülow.[62]

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[58]Quoted in Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 63.

[59]Bülow, Memoirs, pp. 77-78.

[60]William II to Bülow, November 23, 1904. Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 171.

[61]Ibid., p. 168.

[62]Ibid., pp. 168-169.

Oddly enough, it may be said that it was the Kaiser himself who killed the alliance project, for it was he who forwarded the ultimatum to Nicholas that the coaling operations be guaranteed against a British or Japanese attack. This left no further room for negotiations on the matter, and served to provide Germany with a localized and specific agreement. The indications are that the Kaiser contracted a bad case of "nerves" over the possibility of a British attack upon the German navy. A letter which Bülow wrote to Holstein on December 15, points to the repeated warnings which the military and naval attaches in London were sending regarding the inevitability of such an attack.[63] Undoubtedly the Kaiser was also aware of these reports, and given his excitable nature, one may conclude that they had considerably shaken his confidence.

The attention of the German diplomats was temporarily turned away from the East during the opening months of 1905. With Holstein's return to active duty, he succeeded in reviving once again his policy of negating the importance of the Entente Cordiale by humiliating France and thus demonstrating to Britain the essential worthlessness of any agreement concluded without consideration for Germany's interests.[64] This demonstration, of course, took the form of the confrontation with France over Morocco. The Kaiser lent himself to this endeavor by disembarking at Tangier, exposing himself to no small personal danger in the process, and thus indicating that Germany would block any attempt

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[63]Bernhard von Bülow to Holstein, December 14, 1904, HP, Vol. IV, no. 869, p. 317.

[64]Emil Ludwig, in his biography of William II, incorrectly asserts that Holstein supported the Russian Alliance project in 1904-05. He did not; he tolerated it until such time as he was able to place the emphasis back upon his anti-French policies. See Ludwig, Wilhelm Hohenzollern, The Last of the Kaisers, (trans. by Ethel Colburn Mayne, New York, 1927), pp. 256-257.

by France to establish a protectorate over Morocco. Germany would insist upon the principle of the "Open Door" in Morocco, and to that end the German government called for an international conference to settle the Moroccan question.[65] By June, however, Holstein was becoming disillusioned with the Morocco scheme, and while maintaining that Germany wanted nothing more than out of the mess, placed the blame for the entire matter upon Delcassé.[66] He felt that the Kaiser, too, came in for his share of condemnation in the matter because of his repeated interference in the conduct of foreign policy. Holstein's extremely bad temper at this time is indicated by a rather short-fused letter which he penned to Bülow declaring his willingness to confront the Kaiser personally rather than to continue to suffer "a situation which I regard as undignified."[67]

William had all the while kept the door open for the return of his pet project, a Russo-German alliance. Once more, the course of events in East Asia was favoring him by making Nicholas quite willing to listen to anyone who could promise him release from his predicament. The New Year had been celebrated to the news of the fall of Port Arthur, and with the loss of this fortress, further reverses could be expected in Manchuria. In February Russia had been wracked by internal disturbances, and revolution appeared possible at any moment. March brought

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[65]For an explanation of Holstein's reasoning on the Morocco Crisis and the call for a conference see Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, April 5, 1905, HP, Vol. IV, no. 882, pp. 328-329.

[66]Holstein to Hugo von Radolin, June 14, 1905, HP, Vol. IV, no. 891, pp. 342-343.

[67]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, June 17, 1905, HP, Vol. IV, no. 892, p. 344.

the battle for Mukden and another defeat for Russian arms, but the greatest blow was yet to fall. It must have seemed to the Russians that Pandora had broken off the lid of her box entirely, for on May 27, the Baltic Fleet met its destiny at Tsushima.

Through all of these misfortunes, William had kept his letters flowing to Nicholas, despite a warning about how they were read in Paris the day after they arrived in St. Petersburg.[68] On February 21, he had written the Tsar a long letter advising him on how best to deal with the revolutionary unrest then sweeping Russia. Of course he did not fail to note that of the unpleasant facts which he felt obliged to relate to "Nicky," the ones "forming the base . . . mostly are supplied by France, who as 'amie et Alliee;' is allways [sic] best informed about Russia." He proceeded to encourage the Tsar to concede as little to popular democracy as possible, take the Cross, go to Moscow and preach a holy war against the Japanese. By thus placing himself at the head of his people he would regain their confidence and unite the empire against a common foe.[69]

In his letter of June 3, however, William painted a gloomy picture to Nicholas and advised him to end the war as soon as honorably possible. The Kaiser wrote in his Teutonized English:

> . . . How I have been feeling for and thinking of you all these last months I need not say! Also of every phase of Admiral Roshestwensky's [sic] progress' The great stake which he represented in your hand has been played and honourably lossed [sic]. He did everything in his powers to come up to your wishes, but Providence willed it otherwise

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[68]William's marginal comment on the report was: "A lie, like the rest." Metternich to Bülow, December 25, 1904, GDD, Vol. III, no. 367, p. 212.

[69]Levine, Letters from Kaiser, no. XLVI, pp. 156-169.

> and he met defeat bravely serving his master to the last! My fullest sympathy is with him and you.
>
> From the purely military strategical point of view the defeat in the straits of Corea ends the chances for a decided turn of the scales in your favor; . . . Now as I wrote you in my last letter--Febr. 6th.--the war is very unpopular. . . . Is it compatible with the responsibility of a Ruler to continue to force a whole nation against its declared will to send its sons to be killed by hecatombs only for his sake?
>
> It must be looked upon as Gods [sic] will that things have taken this course! God has imposed this burthen [sic] on you, and it must be bourne, but perhaps by His intentions and with His help, lasting good may come out of all this in the end. . . .[70]

If the Tsar's view coincided with his, William remarked in closing, he should remember in what high esteem the Japanese held the Americans. "If anybody in the world is able to influence the Japanese and to induce them to be reasonable in their proposals, it is President Rooseveldt [sic]." Of course, if the Tsar wished, the Kaiser "could easily place myself--privately--en rapport with him, as we are very intimate; . . ."[71]

It is probable that at the time he wrote these words William was already planning his second attempt at concluding a Russo-German alliance. Bülow notes that William told him in June that he did not plan to visit the Norwegian fjords on his usual summer cruise, ostensibly because of the dispute then occurring between Norway and Sweden, but would remain in the Baltic Sea. The chancellor "soon saw that the Kaiser wished to meet the Tsar in the Baltic," and William had several conversations with Bülow on the advisability of such a meeting.[72] Bülow was

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[70] Ibid., no. XLVII, pp. 171-176.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Bülow, Memoirs, p. 151.

favorably inclined toward the idea, but he also thought it possible that Nicholas might not react favorably in view of the repeated disasters which Russia had suffered in the war. If the meeting were arranged, however, he thought Lamsdorff should be present so he could be forced to express his views openly, "instead of playing the part of Penelope, who worked by day and unravelled her thread by night, after the return of the Tsar to St. Petersburg."[73] Bülow cautioned William that a treaty signed only by Nicholas was unlikely to be of much value.[74]

Before the Kaiser boarded his yacht at Swinemünde on July 10, Bülow once more cautioned him "to make no unconsidered agreement about Denmark and the Baltic, as . . . this might lead to an English attack. . . . [I]t would be advisable to get from the Tsar only the promise . . . that he would recommend to Lambsdorff the conclusion of a German-Russian peace and defensive treaty . . ." William "should leave everything concerning the working out of this to Lambsdorff and [Bülow]."[75] Bülow's closing observation was prescient indeed, if we do not credit it to hindsight. "A slight shadow crossed the alert, volatile countenance of His Majesty and showed me that the exalted gentleman was this time particularly confident of achieving everything through the compelling power of his own personality."[76]

The Kaiser undertook his cruise with the intention of doing exactly what the chancellor had suspected. After visiting with the

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Bülow's consistent ability to predict the result of the Kaiser's projects is nothing short of amazing.

[75] Bülow, Memoirs, p. 152.

[76] Ibid.

King and Crown Prince of Sweden on July 13, William started a leisurely return voyage. Then on July 19, from a port north of Stockholm, the Kaiser cast his bread upon the waters. He telegraphed Nicholas:

> I shall shortly be on my return journey and cannot pass across entrance of the Finnish Sea without sending you best love and wishes. Should it give you any pleasure to see me--either on shore or on your yacht--of course am always at your disposal.[77]

The Kaiser's bread returned even more quickly than the preacher in Ecclesiastes had anticipated, for the Tsar replied immediately:

> Delighted with your proposal. Would it suit you to meet me at Bjoerkesund, near Viborg, a pleasant, quiet place, living on board our yachts?[78]

William's delight at his success could hardly be contained. It is quite obvious in the telegram in which he replied to the Tsar:

> Nobody has the slightest idea of meeting. The faces of my guests will be worth seeing when they suddenly behold your yacht. A fine lark. Tableaux. Which dress for the meeting?[79]

Surely it was quite unintentional, but the Kaiser had hit upon a most appropriate description of what was to follow: "A fine lark." Shortly before sunset on the evening of Sunday, July 23, 1905, the imperial yacht Hohenzollern steamed into Björkö Bay and dropped anchor alongside the imperial yacht Polar Star. As he had anticipated, William found Nicholas in a most despondent and pliant mood, and after two days of sharing fond memories, old wine, and mutual grievances against the British and the French, the Kaiser worked his will upon the Tsar.

In recounting the scene as Nicholas signed the draft of the treaty which William "happened" to have in his pocket during the second

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[77]Quoted in Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 65.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid., p. 48.

day of their visit, the Kaiser remembered that he "thought of Frederick William III, Queen Louise, Grandfather and Nicholas I. Were they near at that moment? At any rate they saw it all and were overjoyed."[80] One almost hopes that the Kaiser's ancestors did share his joy at this moment, for it was to be but momentary. In obtaining the Tsar's signature on the treaty, William violated every instruction which his chancellor had given him. Not only did he persist in concluding the agreement without the countersignature of the Tsar's first minister, but he altered the text in a manner which made the alliance of much less value to Germany. By inserting the words "en Europe" in the first article, William restructed the scope of Russia's obligations to Europe proper. If the treaty had any value at all to Bülow and Holstein, it was because it offered the prospect of applying pressure to the British through a Russian threat on the Indo-Persian frontiers.[81] It was only with the greatest reluctance, and then only because they decided that the Kaiser's version was better than nothing, that Bülow and Holstein agreed to accept the treaty. Their acquiescence made very little difference, however, for back in St. Petersburg "Penelope" was busily unwinding threads.

Nicholas had kept the treaty secret from his ministers until the conclusion of peace with Japan in September. As this was the prerequisite which brought the treaty into force, he then felt that he was obliged to inform them of its existence. Lamsdorff's reaction was predictable. He wrote to a friend that

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[80]Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 284.

[81]Bülow wrote to the Kaiser that "As far as I am able to foresee, the Treaty in its present form with the addition of "en Europe," will, if it becomes known, bring a great sense of relief in England." Bülow, Memoirs, p. 157.

> . . . the Emperor William was able with the aid of base flattery to convince our dear Emperor that he alone was his true friend and his support, and that the only salvation for Russia and Europe lay in a new Triple Alliance which in his opinion France would gladly join.[82]

Lamsdorff had no illusions about the consequences of the Tsar's act, for he knew full well the value of the French alliance.

> From long experience I have become convinced that the alliance with France is necessary in order to have really good relations with Germany. Otherwise we lose our independence; for I know nothing heavier than the German yoke. Without sacrificing the most intimate relations with Berlin, we have very tactfully repulsed all attempts to compromise us.[83]

After much argumentation, Lamsdorff, with the assistance of Count Witte and the Grand Duke Nicholas, convinced the Tsar that the treaty was inconsistent with the terms of the Dual Alliance. It was decided that before the Björkö treaty could become operative either Germany must be persuaded to make it compatible with the terms of the Dual Alliance, or France must be persuaded to reinterpret the terms of the Dual Alliance in such a manner as to make it compatible with the Björkö agreement.[84] Lamsdorff knew, of course, that neither the French nor the Germans would be willing to surrender the point. In that case, the Tsar had already agreed that the Treaty of Björkö would remain a dead letter.

The Kaiser, however, refused to accept this interpretation of the situation. He saw no such conflict between the Treaty of Björkö and the Dual Alliance. In fact, he became quite blunt with his repentant cousin. "We joined hands before God, who heard our vows. I

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[82]Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, p. 284.

[83]Ibid., p. 297.

[84]Ibid., p. 301.

therefore think that the treaty can well come into existance. . . . What is signed is signed, and God is our testator."[85]

William's protests notwithstanding, the Tsar wrote to him on November 23 that to fulfill the requirements of both the Dual Alliance and the Treaty of Björkö it would be necessary to add the following declaration to the latter:

> In view of the difficulties in the way of an immediate adhesion by the French Government to the treaty of defensive alliance signed at Björköe. . . . it is understood that Article I of that act shall not have any application in the eventuality of a war with France and that the mutual engagements which unite the latter to Russia will be maintained in full until the establishment of an accord à trois.

The Kaiser replied to Nicholas again on November 28, stating that the Germans considered the treaty binding despite the Tsar's protests. Nicholas replied on December 2 that without the proposed additional declaration, the treaty was unacceptable. William II had suffered the second personal failure of his reign.

In a letter to Nicholas on July 27, William had written: "The 24th of July 1905 is a cornerstone in European politics and turns over a new leaf in the history of the world. . . ."[87] He was correct, but not in the sense in which he had meant the statement. The failure of the attempt to secure a Russo-German alliance and the equally unsuccessful attempt to disrupt the solidarity of the Entente Cordiale meant diplomatic isolation for Germany. Even Holstein recognized the totality of this failure. A few months later he would write to a friend:

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[85]Quoted in Fay, "Kaiser and Tsar, 1904-1905," p. 71.

[86]Quoted in Anderson, First Moroccan Crisis, pp. 303-304.

[87]Levine, Letters from Kaiser, no. XLVIII, p. 179.

> Of course we are isolated, and we will remain isolated as long as France and England co-operate. . . . In short, in the present international atmosphere it seems to me that the correct and dignified thing to do would be to act like Russia after the Crimean War (la Russie se recueille) and calmly to withdraw into ourselves. . . .[88]

For once he was, perhaps, correct.

During the eighteen months which passed between the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War and the conclusion of the Treaty of Björkö, Germany's international position slipped drastically, and, as the next nine years would prove, the consequences were to be catastrophic. The disorderly, almost frantic conduct of Germany's foreign policy during the Russo-Japanese War was but a sampling of the chaos which would infect the Auswartiges Amt in 1914. Such inconsistency in a nation as powerful as the Germany of 1905 could not but create a disturbed attitude among her neighbors. Furthermore, as the number and scale of Japanese successes continued to multiply throughout 1904-05, it appeared likely that the East Asian war might become a world war. These fears moved Britain and France to adjust their differences in 1904, and when the Germans failed to disrupt this entente, the way was cleared for the conclusion of that alliance which William, Bülow, and Holstein had feared most. Although the Triple Entente was not effected until 1907, it owed much to the drama enacted at Björkö in 1905.

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[88]Holstein to Otto Rose, June 18, 1906, HP, Vol. IV, no. 986, p. 429.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Diplomatic historians have called the first decade of the twentieth century the "Diplomatic Revolution of the Twentieth Century." It is a very apt description. European diplomacy after 1898 was in a state of turmoil which even contemporaries recognized as being rather unusual. The race for concessions in China and imperial competition in other parts of the world added emphasis to the tension which appeared to be building among the European powers. The relatively stable balance which the Bismarckian system had imposed had begun to crumble almost as soon as its architect had departed.

The failure of Germany to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia now appears to have been the catalyst which started the European pot boiling. France exploited the situation and emerged with the Dual Alliance, which proved to be the cornerstone of a new diplomatic edifice. But it was not until 1898 that events began to move with purpose and a considerable velocity. That year Théophile Delcassé became the Minister of Foreign Affairs for France, Britain and France faced each other at Fashoda, and the "partition" of China began in earnest.

The advent of the Delcassè Foreign Ministry heralded a period of international disturbance within itself. France now had a man after the cut of Gambetta, who knew what he wanted and had the intelligence and the patience to get it. Delcassé was determined that France should

be freed from the diplomatic isolation to which the Bismarckian system had confined her. The Russian Alliance was basic to this, and he was careful to maintain the lines of communication with St. Petersburg, but the prize which he sought most was an Anglo-French entente. Fashoda was ample testimony to Delcassé's determination to adjust Anglo-French differences. Wars have been fought between Britain and France over circumstances which were by far less crucial. But even his concessions to Britain at Fashoda and a persistant courting of British opinion were not enough to secure the desired change of attitude at London.

The greatly increased scale of foreign intrusion into China reaped its bitter harvest in the summer of 1900. The Boxer Rebellion, in one respect, marks a point of demarcation in the process of change which European diplomatic relationships were undergoing. It clearly demonstrated the modernity and the efficiency of Japan's military and naval forces, a fact which had been successfully concealed during the greater part of its accomplishment. The British, in particular, were impressed by the Japanese performance. In very difficult circumstances because of the Boer War, the British were only too happy to have the Japanese pull their Asian chestnuts from the fire. The Japanese thus introduced Europeans to something new and unique--a first rate Asian military power.

The British were the first to recognize the value of Japan as an Asian power in readjusting European relationships to their advantage. They concluded their alliance with Japan in 1902 primarily as a counter in East Asia to Russian threats to British interests in Central Asia, but the importance and the consequences of their act proved to be much more far-reaching than that. Intended as a means of decreasing the

rapidly growing tensions between Russia and Japan in Korea and Manchuria, the alliance was an immediate success. Russia, in the ensuing twelve to fifteen months, was considerably chastened by the spectre of the Japanese army and the British navy working together. This was only a temperary check, however, and by mid-1903 the two antagonists appeared headed for an imminent conflict.

To the British the prospect of becoming involved in a war with France as a result of the trouble between their respective allies, Japan and Russia, was reason enough for an honest attempt to reach an Anglo-French understanding. The centrality of Japan's changed status in the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale appears conclusive. The British had resisted such an adjustment for six years because they knew the price for such an understanding would not be cheap. Only under the threat of an unjustifiable catastrophy--an Anglo-French war in which no vital interest was at stake--did they meet the French halfway and conclude an accord. The threat of a Russo-Japanese war encouraged the inception of Anglo-French negotiations, and the actual outbreak of the war hastened the conclusion of the Entente, but the real proof of the understanding was its ability to withstand the intense pressure which Germany applied in 1905-1906. Oddly enough, the circumstance which provided the impetus for the Entente--the Russo-Japanese War--also provided the opportunity for Germany to put it to its severest test.

The war offered Germany an excellent opportunity to avert the encirclement which appeared to be imminent. While Russia was occupied with Japan, her ability to interfere in Europe and thus her value to France would be greatly diminished. If she could be brought to terms while her defenses were thus weakened, Germany's eastern frontier would

be secured as in the days of Bismarck, and France could be put in her place--the Entente Cordiale notwithstanding. It is unthinkable that under other than the most unusual circumstances one nation would attempt to force the ties of an alliance upon another. Such escapades as the Björkö meeting would not have been possible in 1903 or even as late as mid-1904. But the frantic efforts of the Germans in their attempt to disrupt either the Entente or the Dual Alliance did nothing more than to strengthen the bonds of both. Germany was isolated by the end of the war, and the groundwork was laid for the future conclusion of the Triple Entente.

The totality of Russia's defeat was most important to the success with which she and Britain adjusted their longstanding differences in 1907. But it also contributed to another development which Bülow and Holstein, in particular, had feared. Checkmated in East Asia, Russia once more turned her expansionist activities toward Europe. The post-war period saw a revival of interest in the Balkans, and the following eight years were punctuated with numerous crises and war scares. The holocaust finally came, of course, in 1914.

In one of his numerous letters of resignation, Holstein summarized the situation beautifully in January, 1906.

> . . . A war à trois against Germany is therefore one of the possibilities of the future.
>
> During the next few years Russia will be primarily occupied with her own affairs. If our relations to England do not improve during this period of grace, if in the meantime England's connection with the Dual Alliance becomes even closer, then the German Reich faces a serious future. Three against one are heavy odds.[1]

Holstein could not have realized the prescience of his observations.

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[1]Holstein to Bernhard von Bülow, (Draft) January, 1906, HP Vol. IV, no. 919, p. 381.

It must be acknowledged, then, that one of the most significant factors which initiated the Diplomatic Revolution of the Twentieth Century was the return of an Asian power to the world scene. In centuries past Asian nations had at least been as strong as those of the West. In the thirteenth century, Mongol invaders came as far as the Adriatic, the campfires of the Turks burned around Vienna in 1683, and the Chinese had sent naval expeditions to the East African Coast in the fifteenth century. But from the period of the Renaissance until the twentieth century, the European continent has held the predominant balance of power in the world.

In some ways the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 may be viewed simply as a redress of balance in the world power structure. Indeed, as the twentieth century moves toward its conclusion it would appear that the shift, of which Port Arthur signaled the beginning, is far from complete. Increasingly, Hiroshima appears to have been only a temporary check, and as Japan's neighbor on the continent gradually returns to a semblance of normalcy this trend can only be accentuated. If this is so, then the importance of the years from 1902 to 1905 will be increasingly recognized.

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