THE LANSING-ISHII AGREEMENT

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PREFACE

In the preparation of this thesis, a sincere effort has been made to present an unbiased and impartial interpretation of the foreign relations between Japan and the United States from the formulation of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement on November 2, 1917 until its abrogation on March 30, 1923. Only those forces in the background which were essential for the clear orientation of the reader have been included.

No panacea has been offered for the so-called Japanese-American problem. From Secretary Lansing's War Memoirs and testimony before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, together with other well substantiated facts, the conclusion has been drawn that the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was either a diplomatic stratagem directed to hold Japan with the Allies, or an unusual morsel of diplomatic absurdity on the part of the American Government, which at that time was probably not more than two men, President Wilson and Secretary Lansing.

Materials used in this study were found in the libraries of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and the University of Oklahoma. The writer's sincere and deep appreciation to the entire staff of the former, which so generously placed required documents at his disposal, is heartily acknowledged.

To Dr. T. H. Reynolds, the author's major professor, an expression of gratitude for the inspirations and suggestions he so patiently offered is quite in order.

If there be any excellence in the presentation of the data in this problem, credit is due to the training received from the writer's very human instructors rather than to any innate ability of his own.

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Chapter I

"The Japanese Mission"

With the declaration of war against Germany by the United States on April 8, 1917, there emerged from the thoroughly exhausted allied Entente European powers, among the more prominent of which were Great Britain, France, and Italy, the urge to welcome and to express their gratitude to the United States with her wealth of natural resources, financial assistance, and available man power in a concerted effort "to make the world safe for democracy." After having witnessed the activities of these missions, the Japanese Empire conceived of a plan to emulate the manipulations of European powers by championing a Japanese War Mission to America. Ostensibly the purpose of this mission was, as announced by the Japanese Government, to further a more amicable understanding between the United States and Japan, and to augment the closer cooperation in the war against the "Common Enemy."[1] According to the memorandum of the Japanese Ambassador Sato to the Secretary of State, the Japanese understood the proposed commission to be "sentimental" as well as technical, and consequently expected it to discuss matters pertaining to supplies to European allies, naval cooperation, financing China, as well as to exchange views on the Far

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[1] Henry Chung, Oriental Policy of the United States (New York, 1919), p. 83.

Eastern questions and possibly on the so-called Japanese-American problem.[2] One may readily conclude from the results that, in reality, the discussion of cooperation in the war was a very minor object of the Ishii mission. The American government exemplified a tendency to forsee an unrevealed ulterior motive, although the proclaimed motive of the mission was one of expressing to our Government Japan's gratification that the United States had entered the war and to discuss present problems arising from the latter, more particularly (1) the question of the defense of the Pacific including such patrol of Pacific routes by the Japanese Navy as might permit concentration of our own Navy in the Atlantic, and (2) coordination of effort in the supply of munition to Japan's European allies. True, our Navy to be the most effective should have been concentrated in the Atlantic, but Japan was quite anxious for her naval forces to be securely patrolling the Pacific in preparation for an emergency.

American diplomats had ample reason to believe that Viscount Ishii's instructions as to conversation were very general and that he was accredited with instructions to take up any questions affecting the Far East which the United States and Japan might deem expedient to discuss.[3] The Secretary of State assumed the attitude that the Japanese Government might well follow the course of the powers like Great Britain and France and merely ask whether a commission to express apprec-

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[2] Foreign Relations of the United States, (Washington, 1917), Supp. 2, I, p. 63.

[3] Ibid., p. 110.

iation of our entry into the war would be agreeable to our Government and after the completion of that mission, the commision might feel at liberty to discuss other matters.

A closer observation of the accomplishments of this mission in America reveals something more profound than the professed objectives. There were three predominant issues between the United States and Japan that were causing untold friction. They were (1) the "open door" question, (2) the immigratioh question, and (3) the Japanese citizenship question.[4] The "open door" hinders commercial development and political expansion of Japan, and the immigration and citizenship questions are considered by the Japanese as open insults to the honor and integrity of the Empire. In as much as a foreigner cannot become naturalized as a Japanese, except by marriage into a Japanese family and adoption of a Japanese name, nor can a foreigner own land in Japan, it should not be concluded that Japan would be justified in her demands of the United States in regard to citizenship, immigration, and land ownership.[5] A brief survey of what the mission accomplished invariably brings one to the conclusinn that the purpose of this mission was to arrive at a satisfactory agreement concerning the first of these three issues,--- blindly satisfactory to America and selfishly gratifying to Japan.

Japan could not have selected a better man to head this

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4 Henry Chung, op. cit., p. 84.

5 Andrew M. Pooley, Japan's Foreign Policies, (London, 1920), p. 15.

mission than Viscount Ishii, whose knowledge of international etiquette and whose rhetorical perfection in the English language were equal to any in America.[6]

In his speech before the United States Senate on August 30, 1917, the Japanese Ambassador inspired thunderous applause by declaring:

> We of Japan took arms against Germany because a solemn treaty was not to us a scrap of paper. We did not enter into this war because we had any selfish interest to promote or any ill-conceived ambition to gratify. . . . (7)

These statements are ironically amusing to say the least, when it is remembered what Japan has done in Korea despite all her solemn treaty obligations to the Hermit Kingdom. The United States has only herself to blame because of her acquiescence in this and numerous other aggressive exploits. In truth, the policy of the United States in the Far East due to economic interests has been an extremely vacillating one and one for which she has refused to fight in order that it might be respected and defended.

When Japan declared war on Germany, August 15, 1914, Count Okuma, then Premier of Japan, telegraphed to an American magazine assuring the people of America and of the world that Japan

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[6] Albert Shaw, "Japanese Mission", Review of Reviews, October, 1917, LVI, p. 361.

[7] Congressional Record, (Washington, 1917), 65 cong., 1 sess., LV, pt 7, p. 6433.

has no ulterior motive, no desire to secure more territory, no thought of depriving China or other peoples of anything which they now possess.[8] The sincerity of this statement was tested when, in less than a year, Japan made the well-known Twenty-one Demands upon China.[9]

At a public dinner given in honor of the Japanese Mission by Mayor Mitchel, in New York City, September 29, 1917, Viscount Ishii outlined the Japanese policy in China as follows:

> Circumstances for which we were in no sense responsible gave us certain rights in Chinese territory, but at no time in the past and at no time in the future do we or will we seek to take territory from China or to despoil China of her rights. We wish to be and always continue to be the sincere friend and helper of our neighbor, for we are more interested than any one else, except China, in good government there. Only we must at all times for self-protection prevent other nations from doing what we have no right to do. We not only will not seek to assail the integrity or the sovereignty of China, but will eventually be prepared to defend and maintain the integrity and independence of China against any aggressor.... The door is always open. It always has been open; it always must remain open to representatives of these vast commercial kings of commerce. We went to China where the door was open to us as to you, and we always have realized that there nature gave us an advantage. There was no need, there is no need, to close that door to you, because we welcome your fair and honest competition.10

The documents of most of the great nations of the world abound with Japanese pledges, the fundamental principles of

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8 Hamilton Holt, "Telegram of Count Okuma", Independent, August 31, 1914, LXXIX, p. 291.

9 Arthur W. Page, "Our Feelings Toward Japan", World's Work, (December 31, 1917, XXXV, p. 125.

10 Hamilton Holt, "Japanese Mission", Independent, October 13, 1917, XCII, p. 79.

which are the maintenance of the integrity of China and the preservation of the status quo in the Far East. Those principles constitute the sacred text of Japanese foreign policy, as uttered for public consumption. The elusive "open door" policy with its diverse interpretations simply means the right of any powerful nation to steal and exact from China as much as any of its rivals and more if possible. Before having accepted these altruistic declarations, the facts should be mastered by a critical review of the Japanese promises in regard to the maintenance of the "open door" and integrity of China with which comparatively recent oriental diplomacy is replete. Japan has made many other pledges both oral and written of a similar nature. The first sentence of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 reads:

> The High Contracting Parties, having mutually recognized the independence of China and Korea, declare themselves to be uninfluenced by any aggressive tendencies in either country.[11]

Three years later, when the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed, the preamble declared the alliance to have for its object:

> ... the preservation of the common interests of all powers in China by insuring the independence and integrity of the Chinese Empire and the principle of equal opportunities for the commerce and industries of all nations in China.[12]

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[11] Foreign Relations of the United States, (Washington, 1902), p. 514.

[12] John Van Antwerp MacMurray, Treaties with and Concerning China, (New York, 1921), p. 516.

The preceding clause was repeated in the third treaty of alliance, which was signed in 1911.[13] In the interval between the signing of the second and the third treaty, Korea, one should bear in mind, became a Japanese possession through the channel of annexation.

The first words of the Franco-Japanese agreement, signed in 1907, declares:

> The governments of Japan and France, being agreed to respect the independence and integrity of China, as well as the principle of equal treatment in that country for the commerce and industry of the subjects or citizens of all nations, . . .[14]

The Russo-Japanese agreement, which was signed in 1907, declares:

> The two High Contracting Parties recognize the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the principle of equal opportunity in whatever concerns the commerce and industry of all nations in that Empire, and to engage to sustain and defend the maintenance of the status quo and respect for this principle by all the pacific means within their reach.[15]

One may also observe the pledge given our own government in the Root-Takahira note signed in 1908. This agreement declares:

> They (Japan and the United States) are also determined to preserve the common interests of all powers in China, by supporting, by all pacific means at their disposal, the independence and integrity of China and the principle of equal opportunity for commerce and industry of all nations in that Empire.[16]

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[13] Ibid., p. 900.

[14] Ibid., p. 640.

[15] Ibid., p. 657.

[16] United States Foreign Relations, (Washington, 1908), p. 511

In spite of three consecutive treaties of alliance with Great Britain and similar agreements with such recognized powers as the United States, France, and Russia within less than a decade, neither the independence and territorial integrity nor the status quo and the "open door" were maintained in China.

Japanese aggressiveness has been due in no small measure to the indefiniteness of the Oriental policy of the United States. The orientallmind has long realized that the "open door" and "sphere of interest" doctrines could not thrive in the same environment. Inasmuch as it has been quite apparent that the United States will not defend its oriental policy by force, the Japanese have followed a policy of expediency and opportunism, which has reaped for them success in diverse diplomatic ventures.

The Japanese and American Governments were both apparently deeply impressed by the idea that most of the friction between the two governments was caused by German propaganda,[17] and not a few Americans justified the Lansing-Ishii Agreement on the basis of the rumor that Japanese public opinion and governmental executives were vacillating in their interest in the war and particularly wavering toward a yet undecided plan to desert the Allies for the Prussian cause. It has been suggested by no less a contemporary historian than William E. Dodd, although with no direct documentary evidence to substantiate the hypotheses, that Japan secured recognition of

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17 "Cancellation of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement", New Republic, (April, 1923), XXXIV, p. 172

her "special interests" in China by virtually threatening to change sides in the war if her desires were not granted. This idea is somewhat invalidated if one is justified in placing confidence in the following extract from the speech of Ambassador Ishii delivered before the United States Senate on August 30, 1917:

> We are in the war, we insist on being in it, and we shall stay in it, because earnestly, as a nation and as individuals, we believe in the righteousness of the cause for which we stand.[18]

There were three major reasons for the distasteful attitude of Japanese opinion toward participation in the war, but sufficient friction did not exist to bring about a reversal of Japanese policy and desertion from the Allied cause. These reasons were as follows:

(a) Japanese military opinion was largely dominated by German thought, the Japanese army being as much a product of Germany as the navy is of Great Britain.

(b) Japanese official circles were, and had been since 1912, displeased at the tacit support given by Great Britain to the Chinese Republic.

(c) The Anglo-Japanese Alliance had been, especially since its emasculation in 1911, regarded in Japan as "unilateral", its only benefits accruing to Great Britain.

Even in the light of the moral obligations vividly portrayed by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, it is yet uncertain whether Japan volunteered to join in the war, or whether she had to be asked, and what limitation existed on her actions. Japan had

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[18] Congressional Record, 65 cong., 1 sess., LV, pt. 7, (Washington, 1917), p. 6438.

never considered the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of much intrinsic value within itself, but surely realized the moral support and prestige that were allocated to her by having as an ally in a defensive alliance a nation second to none in naval power. True, the United States had always considered the agreement as directed against her and a detriment to the maintenance of the open door in China.[19]

The professional Japanese hater may quite easily interpret the recognition of Japan's special interests in China as the withdrawal or retreat of the United States in behalf of the establishment of Japanese predominance in that area. The implicit reality of the danger is distinctly in proportion to the promptitude in anticipating it. The agreement possessed at least the semblance of a reciprocal arrangement. In the reaffirmation of the territorial integrity and independence of China and of the policy of the open door, coupled with the adknowledgment of special Japanese interests in those parts of China contiguous to Japanese possessions, are found simultaneously the restatement of a basic principle and the frank recognition of a concrete fact. This basic principle is equality of opportunity for all nations in China, grounded upon the independence and integrity of the Chinese Republic.

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[19] Alford L. P. Dennis, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, (University of California, 1923), p. 56.

The Lansing-Ishii Agreement was not a secluded and unrelated event in the diplomatic history of the oriental policy of the United States and Japan, but the culmination of the carefully concealed plan of Japan to strengthen her position in the Far East. In order to fully understand the significant forces in the background, it is obligatory that the maelstrom of events affecting the vital interests of China be viewed. The chief elements in the Chinese situation may be briefly enumerated as follows: Japan, after having forsaken the most extreme of the "twenty-one demands" which would have conferred upon her a protectorate over China, had assumed a rather less aggressive policy under the Terauchi Ministry, but since this Ministry maintained power by a quite meager majority, it could not, without fear of defeat, follow a course that would apparently weaken materially Japan's grip upon China.

The Entente Allies, and principally France, had been anxious for China to enter the war against Germany. Acting in her own behalf, Japan opposed this plan, because a menacing Chinese army might thus be created. To alleviate these contrasting desires, Japan concluded a secret treaty with France in February, 1917, whereby France agreed to support Japan's claims in the Shantung peninsula, while Japan in return would relinquish her opposition to China's entrance in the war.[20] Near the first of March, then, Japan reversed

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[20] MacMurray Treaties, II, p. 1169.

her former policy and endeavored to bring China into the war under Japanese guardianship. China was in a vexatious predicament. There were two alternatives open to her. She might enter the war and be forced to deliver control of her arsenals and military establishment to Japan as the representative of the Allied interests, or remain neutral and thus obtain no part in the peace negotiations, but rather see her sacred rights and even territory bartered about as "compensations" to predatory powers.

The representative of the United States in China was Minister Paul S. Reinsch, whose inclination toward China and distrust of Japan were equally obvious. His major plan was that of influencing China to accept the financial assistance and political guidance of the United States rather than that of the Japanese Government. Soon it was observed that Japan was now pressing China to enter the war. The American policy immediately performed an "about-face". As early as March 2, 1917, Lansing cabled Reinsch that should China enter the war, the Allies "might yield to Japan control of the military situation in the Far East" and that "this would probably lead to Japanese control of China's military establishment".[21] When China, on March 12, severed relations with Germany, Reinsch ascribed the action to Japanese conspiracy, and was immediately instructed by Lansing to use all of his influence in an effort to persuade

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21 United States Foreign Relations, (Washington, 1917) supp. I, p. 412.

China from declaring war at the time.[22] In the same dispatch, Lansing expressed anxiety over the popular report of an intrigue to divide China into two factions, a southern republic and a northern monarchy and stated that the United States would disdainfully witness any attempt to restore the monarchy or to separate Chinese territory and sovereignty.

The political leaders of China assembled into two diametrically opposing factions. Premier Tuan and the military governors of the northern provinces favored war. While the majority of Parliament did not actually oppose entering the war, it feared that Tuan and his constituents would use the war powers to override and perhaps destroy Parliament. They demanded a reorganization of the Cabinet before they would vote for war.[23] Finally President Li Yuan-Hung supported Parliament and on May 23 dismissed Tuan. With this slap in the face, seven northern provinces announced their secession and soon the entire northern military party united against the President. Should the President be overthrown, Reinsch announced on June 2, the south would undoubtedly fight and a division of China into north and south would follow. "There is no basis of compromise in sight although a united mediation of powers might save the situation."[24]

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[22] Ibid., p. 419

[23] Ibid., p. 432

[24] United States Foreign Relations, (Washington, 1917), p. 48.

In response to the Reinsch report that no compromise prevailed, Secretary Lansing sent out, on June 4, 1917, to London, Paris, and Tokyo a proposal for identical representations from those governments and the United States, urging upon China a settlement of factional differences and the preservation of national unity.[25] Lansing did not wait for answers to these proposals but cabled Reinsch to communicate to the Chinese Foreign Office a statement containing the following elements: (1) regret that dissension existed, (2) that the preservation of China's national unity was of, by far, more importance than the question of her entering the war against Germany, and (3) that the United States was deeply interested in the "maintenance" by China of one united and responsible government.[26]

The presentation of this note to the Chinese Government, on June 5, created the occasion for an outburst of wrath in the Japanese press against American interference in China. It assumed the attitude that since Japan refrained from giving any direct advice to the government of Mexico, the United States was not justified in giving political advice to China, a country over which Japan had as much tutelage as the United States had over Mexico.[27] Further complications arose as a

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[25] Ibid., p. 49

[26] Ibid., p. 48

[27] Chung, op. cit., p. 80

result of the activities of the political bureau of the Japanese Foreign Office in the press agitation. The official comment of Japan assumed a milder form. It merely expressed surprise that the State Department had sent its note to China without awaiting a reply to its proposal for identic representations.[28] Chargé Wheeler in Japan informed the Secretary of State that circumstances obtained which led one to believe that the Japanese Government was ready to take advantage of the incident to force a showdown with the United States in its Chinese policy.[29]

In the midst of this maelstrom of events, the plan for the Ishii mission was announced. Japan seemed to take time by the forelock in striking at the most opportune time in order to successfully carve out her destiny.

Japan's appetite must be appeased. An official report from Wheeler, who was the American Chargé at Tokio, on June 12, created in no uncertain terms the substantiated impression that pressure was being brought to bear upon the Foreign Office to utilize the incident to press the United States for an assurance which would virtually admit Japan's special and paramount position relative to China.[30]

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[28] United States Foreign Relations, (Washington, 1917) p. 58

[29] Ibid., pp. 68-71

[30] Ibid., pp. 61-62

The appointment of Viscount Ishii as head of the mission was announced on June 14, and on June 17, Wheeler again reported that it was believed in official quarters that Viscount Ishii would be instructed to undertake conversations at Washington on the whole Chinese situation.[31]

Ambassador Ishii did not reach Washington until early in September.

On June 15 Ambassador Sato presented Secretary Lansing with a memorandum in which Japan declined the American proposal for identic representations to China. Japan asserted that there was a chance that the Chinese factions might settle their own difficulties. Did Japan want the unselfish cooperation of the United States in the establishment of a firm and reliable government in China? Perhaps this task should have been left solely to Japan because of her "special interests" in that region? In this same note, Japan declared definitely that notwithstanding the fact that she possessed paramount interests both political and economic in China, the Japanese Government would adhere explicitly to its avowed policy of non-interference in the essentially domestic affairs of China.[32]

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[31] Ibid., pp. 72-73

[32] Ibid., pp. 71-72

During the same interview the Ambassador read to Lansing a statement pertaining to Secretary Bryan's note of March 13, 1915, to Viscount Chinda, in which Mr. Bryan had "declared that the activity of Americans in China had never been political." Sato assured Lansing that in view of Bryan's declaration, the Japanese Government had attached little validity to tidings of the political activities of the American Minister at Peking and did not doubt the fair altruistic motive of the United States in its recent note to China, sent without previous discussion with Japan, but since Japanese public opinion was ill at ease because of the occurrences, the United States could alleviate this distrust and contribute materially to the cementing of more friendly relations between the two nations if it should see its way by some appropriate means to confirm the statement made by Mr. Bryan and clearly to reassert its friendly attitude toward Japan in respect to Chinese problems.[33]

In the oral communication it was made to appear that Mr. Bryan had recognized that "Japan has special and close relations, political as well as economic, with China". In the formal memorandum it was asserted that Japan possessed "paramount interests, both political and economic, in China". In three days after the interview, Wheeler cabled from Tokyo that Viscount Sato had reported that the Secretary of State

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[33] Ibid., pp. 259

"expressed himself as quite in accord with the deep sense of the memorandum", thus leaving the impression that the Secretary of State had virtually recognized the Japanese claim to "paramount interest" in China.[34]

Here was an attempt, by a piece of shrewd but shady diplomacy, to make it appear that the United States was committed to a surrender of its traditional "open-door" policy in China. Lansing promptly proceeded to set the Japanese right. In a note,[35] of July, 6, 1917, to the Japanese Ambassador, Lansing stated, in an effort to exemplify the friendly attitude towards Japan, that the United States would unreluctantly reaffirm the position taken in Bryan's note, but pointed out that in that note Bryan had oppoeed military, political, or economic domination over China by any foreign power and had no recognized that Japan had close and special relations with China as a whole, but only that territorial contiguity created special relations between Japan and the districts of Shantung, Southern Manchuria, and East Mongolia.[36] Mr. Bryan had notrenounced for the United States its rights of expressing its views in regard to Sino-Japanese relations even in those districts. Mr. Lansing denied that he had any intention of recognizing any paramount interest of Japan in China. He said that he had spoken, not of "paramount", but of "special" interest, in the same sense in which the term was used in the note of March 13, 1915.

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[34] Ibid., p. 73
[35] Ibid., pp. 260-262

In the meanwhile the abortive attempt to restore the Manchu monarchy failed and Feng Kwo-chang became president. The new Chinese government declared war against Germany on August 14, 1917. Falling in line with her declaration of war, the Allied governments and the United States gave China assurances of "solidarity, friendship, and support," but declined her request for recognition of her "equality among the Powers."[37] The Chinese government anticipated any outside interference by assuring Reinsch that it would retain complete control of its military forces and munition factories, and that any arrangements for giving military assistance to the common cause would be carried out by the Chinese government itself.[38]

The initial conference between Lansing and Ishii was held in Washington on September 6, 1917.[39] After a rather superficial conversation pertaining to the possibility of Japan's furnishing tonnage for ocean transportation in return for the privilege of importing iron and steel from the United States, the diplomats cautiously approached the question in the minds of both. The Ambassador

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36 United States Foreign Relations, Washington 1915, p. 108

37 United States Foreign Relations, Washington 1917, p. 457

38 Ibid., 696

39 Senate Document No. 106, Washington 1919, 66 cong., 1 sess., p. 217

made an acknowledgment in regard to the agreement of 1915 with Great Britain as to the division of the German islands in the Pacific, but revealed nothing of the secret understanding with England and France of February and March, 1917, by which Japan was to obtain support of her claims to Kiaochow.[40] The facts indicate that the shrewd oriental diplomat left Lansing with the impression that Japan yet intended to restore Kiaochow to China.[41] In an answer to Ishii's question whether he had any proposal with reference to China, Mr. Lansing urged that a reaffirmation of the "open door"policy by the co-belligerents against Germany would have an excellent effect upon China and the world in general.

This suggestion stunned the Ambassador temporarily, but in retaliation he argued that while the principle of the "open door" was in complete accord with Japanese policy, he feared there might be criticism in Japan of a bare assertion of that doctrine unless it were accompanied by some declaration of Japan's special interests in China. In this argument Lansing might have resisted the use of the words "special interests" even though to do so would have jeopardized the reaffirmation of the "open door" policy, but he labored under

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[40] Ibid., p. 217
[41] Ibid., p. 217

the embarrassment that Secretary Bryan in his note of March 13, 1915, regarding the Twenty-one Demands, had stated that the United States frankly recognized that territorial contiguity created "special relations" between Japan and the districts, Shantung, South Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia. While Secretary Bryan probably made the admission without thought, it was none the less open to an invidious interpretation. The Japanese Government remembered it and in June, 1917, had sought to have the United States Government confirm Mr. Bryan's words and give to them a broader meaning. Although the Japanese request was not granted, the admission of March, 1915, remained an obstacle to the State Department. It could not be bluntly repudiated for that would be taken as bad faith on the part of the Administration, but it was possible to give it an interpretation which would deprive it of the meaning of "paramount interest", or of "special and close interests, political as well as economic", either of which the Japanese were anxious to have the United States admit as correct. Secretary Lansing did not like the word "relations" used by Mr. Bryan since it seemed to convey the idea of political influence, so he saw it interpreted as "interest" with satisfaction. In the Secretary's judgment, the word "interest" was a broader word

and was less used in matters political than "relations."

The important amendments proposed by the Japanese government were the change of the phrase "that Japan has a special interest in China" into "that Japan has special interest and influence in China," and the omission of the words "The territorial sovereignty of China, nevertheless, remains unimpaired." To the proposals Lansing declined to accede, definitely rejecting the words "and influence" and taking under consideration the proposed omission.[42] The paragraphs which the United States had proposed and was especially desirous of having in the note read as follows:[43]

> The governments of the United States and Japan deny that they have any purpose to infringe in any way the independence or territorial integrity of China and they declare furthermore that they always adhere to the principle of the so-called "open door" or equal opportunity for commerce and industry in China, and that they will not take advantage of present conditions to seek special rights or privileges in China which would abridge the rights of the citizens or subjects of other friendly states. Moreover, they mutually declare that they are opposed to the acquisition by any other government of any special rights or privileges that would affect the independence or territorial integrity of China, or that would deny to the subjects or citizens of any country the full enjoyment of equal opportunity in the commerce and industry of China.

The underlined phrase was stricken out in the Japanese counterdraft. The Japanese government wished to eliminate this declaration because it had already taken advantage of

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42 Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, New York, 1935, p. 298

43 Ibid., p. 298

present conditions in the case of Kiaochow and might find opportunity to obtain other advantages in the future. It did not desire to tie its own hands or place obstacles in the way of pursuing its policy of encroachment.

The Special Ambassador insisted that there were political reasons at home which he felt embarrassed his government in accepting the phrase as it stood, to which Lansing replied that the direct declaration that neither of the governments would seek advantage during the war would receive the greatest applause in the allied countries, that those countries were in difficult financial condition; that they were on the verge of bankruptcy; that Japan and the United States were the only countries who could use their resources in the development of China; and that it would be a noble and generous act to say to these countries--

> You have been fighting our battles and we will not take advantage of your condition, but will hold your rights sacred and give you every opportunity to recover from the war along commercial and industrial lines in the Far East.[44]

The Viscount replied that he was in full accord with the Secretary's motives, but in view of his government's desires he could not commit them to an acceptance of the phrase. The Secretary admitted that it might be politically impossible

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[44] Ibid., p. 299

to concede to his request, although it affected both nations equally, but saw only one other way of making the document complete in case that phrase was rejected and that was to strike out the word "other."

The explanation of the alternative proposal to strike out the word "other" in the last sentence of the paragraph is this: With the word "other" included, the declaration against the acquisition of special rights and privileges did not apply to the United States and Japan, but if "other" were stricken out, then, it applied to all governments including the United States and Japan.[45] In some ways this compromise was desirable, because the phrase to which the Japanese government objected was temporary, while the other declaration was continuing and bound Japan, as a formally declared policy, not to impair the independence or territorial integrity of China. While Lansing desired to retain the eliminated phrase, he considered that to exchange it for the elimination of the word "other" was a good bargain. Sufficient proof is given that there was an ulterior motive, and that Ishii had a definite role to play with caution. Japan desired a declaration from the United States that the former had "special interests" in China, perhaps even paramount interests, since she had already successfully obtained

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45 Ibid., p. 300

promises of support of her Shantung claims in the discussion of peace from Great Britain and France. This counter-attack caused Secretary Lansing to demur. The Secretary unequivocally admitted that, due to geographical factors, Japan possessed a peculiar interest in China, but stated that a formal declaration might be interpreted as recognition of a special political interest, the existence of which the United States could not admit to be true. We find the diplomats confronted in the first conference with two diametrically opposing issues, the "open door" and "special interests". Any agreement necessitated a reconciliation of these two issues.

After nine more conferences consuming more than a month of time, in order to reach entire accord, a formal exchange of identic notes was made on November 2, 1917, as follows:[46]

(Secretary of State to the Ambassador Extra-ordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan, on Special Mission)

Excellency:

I have the honor to communicate herein my understanding of the agreement reached by us in our recent conversation touching the questions of mutual interest to our Governments relating to the Republic of China.

In order to silence mischievous reports that have from time to time been circulated, it is believed by us that a public announcement once more of the desires and intentions shared by our two Governments with regard to China is advisable.

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[46] Foreign Relations of the United States, (Washington, 1917) pp. 264-265

The Governments of the United States and Japan recognize that territorial propinquity creates special relations between countries, and, consequently, the Government of the United States recognizes that Japan has special interests in China, particularly in the part to which her possessions are contiguous.

The territorial sovereignty of China, nevertheless, remains unimpaired, and the Government of the United States has every confidence in the repeated assurances of the Imperial Japanese Government, that while geographical position gives Japan such special interests they have no desire to discriminate against the trade of other nations or to disregard the commercial rights heretofore granted by China in treaties with other powers.

The Governments of the United States and Japan deny that they have any purpose to infringe in any way the independence or territorial integrity of China and they declare, furthermore, that they always adhere to the principle of the so-called "Open-Door" or equal opportunity for commerce and industry in China.

Moreover, they mutually declare that they are opposed to the acquisition by any Governmeny of any special rights or privileges that would effect the independence or territorial integrity of China or that would deny to the subjects or citizens of any country the full enjoyment of equal opportunity in the commerce and industry of China.

I shall be glad to have Your Excellency confirm this understanding of the agreement reached by us.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration.

Robert Lansing

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Chapter II

"Interpretation of the Agreement"

It is astonishing to know that the agreement was entered into without the knowledge of the Chinese government since its provisions were so vital to Chinese interests. Anticipating the misinterpretations that might arise in the future from the recognition by the United States of Japan's special interests in China, the Chinese dispatched a declaration to the governments of the United States and Japan, announcing that China would not be bound by an agreement entered into by other countries, that she would respect special interests of another nation due to territorial propinquity only in so far as said interests were provided in existing treaties, and that inasmuch as China was an independent nation, foreign nations lacked justification in making her the subject of negotiations.[1]

The Chinese term used in the translation of the expression "special interests" made the expression much stronger than the accepted meaning in the English language.[2] The Chinese term gave the idea of paramountcy. This had the effect of establishing a popular conception, even among governmental personages, that the United States had agreed to give Japan a free hand in all Chinese relations. While a different view concerning the note was held by a few

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1 Foreign Relations of the United States, Washington, 1917, p. 270

2 Foreign Relations of the United States, Washington, 1918, p. 93

public men who were adept in the interpretation of foreign diplomacy, the impression produced upon the majority, which was augmented by the fact that the Japanese legation lost no time acquainting the Chinese government with the existence of the note before its publication,[3] was that the American government would abstain from interesting itself in Chinese affairs, and that the Chinese would be guided by wisdom in looking elsewhere for support.

Chinese students in Tokyo drew up resolutions condemning the altruistic utterances of Viscount Ishii in America as hypocritical confessions to camouflage the real aspirations of Japan toward China.[4] The Peking Gazette sketched composite Chinese public opinion in declaring that China was surprised that America should have taken this step and lent herself to Japanese imperial designs.[5] Many American journals interpreted this protest from China as being inspired by an injured pride from the fact that sovereign China was about to be "protected" by Japan. In reality, this protest was due to Chinese fear of Japan and her conviction that Japanese designs were unwholesome to the well-being of Chinese independence. Chinese sentiment regarding the agreement is present in the statements of Dr. Ng. Poon Chew, a renowned scholar. He declares:

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3 Senate Document No. 106 Washington, 1919, cong. 66, 1 sess., p. 231

4 Chung, op. cit., p. 91

5 Ibid., p. 92

> ... Japan declared to the world that the motives which impelled her to take arms against Russia were to drive Russia from Manchuria and restore Manchuria to its rightful owner, China. ... To-day, Japan occupies a larger sphere of Manchuria than Russia ever occupied. ... Japan is the Prussia of Asia. ... It is not to the interest of the world to permit Japan a free hand in China. 6

Minister Reinsch's telegram to the Secretary of State of November 4, 1917, after having first viewed the text of the agreement, illustrates the typical Chinese attitude.

> While I understand that the reasons which prompted this momentous decision are confidential, I have the honor to ask whether at the time of publication of this note, you desire me to present to the Chinese officials any explanation of this action which so profoundly affects their interests and which at first sight appears a reversal of American policy in China. 7

Reinsch anticipated trouble in explaining the note to the Chinese Government. To him at first signt or at last sight, it was a reversal of traditional American policy. A Chinese declaration came in due time. There was an agreement between Secretary Lansing and Ambassador Ishii that the notes should be published and made known to the world on November 6, 1917, four days after they were signed.[8] In view of the fact that the Japanese Minister hastened to inform Reinsch and prominent Chinese officials of the existence of

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6 Chung, op. cit., pp. 92-93

7 Foreign Relations of the United States, (Washington, 1917) pp. 265-266

the notes on November 4, it can only reasonably be concluded that the motive was that of placing Reinsch in an embarrassing position by having perhaps to explain the meaning of the notes to Chinese officials before adequate instructions had been forwarded to him by the Secretary of State.

Japan, with her insatiable ambition to be on parity with the first class powers of the world, naturally considered the pact a decided victory for herself and conversely, a camouflaged defeat for the United States. From the Japanese publicity channels and officially manipulated press came the report that the agreement was heralded throughout the Empire as a new bond of the time-honored friendship between America and Japan, and that in the Japanese mind this new agreement signalized the permanent peace in the Pacific basin and expressed the cordial friendship of America and Japan toward China in a genuine spirit of helpfulness.[9]

Diverse comments came from the American press in regard to this agreement.

Surely the secret treaties of Japan with leading European powers were not known when a Leading American magazine in November, 1917, declared:

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[8] Senate Document No. 106, (Washington, 1919) 66 cong., 1 sess., p. 231

[9] Chung, op. cit., p. 89

> Here we have been greatly concerned with putting an end to the reign of secret diplomacy in the world, ... Primarily, the new understanding is not a regulation of Chinese affairs, but a regulation of American-Japanese affairs. 10

A somewhat contrasting viewpoint appeared during the same month in the above mentioned magazine:

> The Lansing-Ishii Agreement concluded is one of the last steps necessary for the consolidation of the new Japanese position in the Far East. . . . Each advance of her special interests seems to demand a further advance to protect what has already been secured. 11

The New York World expressed the idea that the new compact would prove even more momentous for Asia than the Monroe Doctrine had proved for America. It went on to say that in this matter the United States had done more than reassure and regain a friend. A powerful and unscrupulous enemy who with money and falsehood had exhausted every means to embroil the United States and Japan had been defeated.

The New York Tribune anticipated a great decline eventually of our prestige and influence in China as a result of the agreement, but predicted that there would be compensatory results in the creation of far more logical and workable relations with China. 12

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10 "The Agreement with Japan," Nation, Nov. 15, 1917, CV. p.527

11 H. M. Vinacke, "Proper Interpretation of the Agreement," Nation, Nov. 22, 1917, CV, p. 563-565

12 Edward J. Wheeler, "The United States and Japan Mutually Declare Certain Things," Current Opinion, Dec., 1917, XXXVI, p. 365

It was indeed unfortunate that a clear definition of "special interests" was not incorporated in the agreement. The second paragraph provided the opportunity for a succession of lengthy debates. In the original draft, the expression "special relations to China" was used, but Viscount Ishii successfully manipulated the wording so that "relations to" was changed to "interests in". Although the Japanese diplomat obviously desired to proceed further in the complete changing of the expression to "special interests and influence", Secretary Lansing thwarted his plans by making serious and uncompromising objections.[13]

The attempt of the Japanese to substitute the phrase "special interests and influence" for "special interest" has a deep significance, since a sphere of influence denotes a region peopled by races of inferior civilization, over which a State attempts, by compact with some other State or States that might otherwise compete with it, to obtain for itself an exclusive right of making future acquisitions of territory whether by annexation or by the establishment of protectorates. Jurisdiction over the native inhabitants may even be sought.[14]

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13 Senate Document No. 106, 66 cong., 1 sess., p. 233 (Washington, 1919)

14 Westel W. Willoughby, Foreign Rights and Interests in China, I, p. 131

Secretary Lansing apparently won another major point in the last paragraph, where the two governments declared their opposition "to the acquisition by any Government of any special rights or privileges that would affect the independence or territorial integrity of China," instead of the former arrangement, which had read "by any other Government".

When the agreement was published on November 6, 1917, Secretary Lansing gave a statement to the press in which he asserted that the Ishii mission, by clearing the air of growing suspicion between the two countries, had "accomplished a great change of opinion in this country" and as a result a valuable service had been performed for both nations. The Secretary placed special emphasis upon the reaffirmation of the open-door policy and the prindple of non-interference with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, and the accomplishment of the mission "expressing Japan's earnest desire to cooperate with this country in waging war against the German Government".[15]

When on November 5, 1917, Reinsch informed the Department of State that the Japanese Legation had informed the Foreign Office of the existence of the notes and that the Foreign Office was making inquiry,[16] Secretary Lansing replied that he should tell the Foreign Office that the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was merely a reaffirmation of the 'open-door' policy.[17] The importance of the recognition of the special interests of Japan in China was minimized!

15 Foreign Relations of the United States? Wash. 1917, p. 266-267
16 Ibid., p. 266
17 Ibid., p. 268

The extent of cooperation to which Japan agreed was indeed meager. Compensatory for the lifting of the embargo on shipments of iron and steel to Japan, the Japanese Government merely agreed to furnish a certain amount of shipping for the transport service. Although Secretary Lansing heartily praised the naval cooperation in the Pacific, this cooperation consisted in the substitution of one Japanese for one American cruiser in patrol duty about the Hawaiian Islands! Viscount Ishii ignored suggestions to the effect that Japan send troops to Europe, and appeared quite nearly as antagonistic toward plans that Chinese troops even be sent to European war fronts. Such impressions substantiate the conclusion that Japan's sole motive was the obtaining of the understanding of Japanese status in China.

The principal opposition to the Lansing-Ishii Agreement is centered about the question: How can the recognition of Japan's special interest in China be reconciled to the open-door doctrine?

In actuality, there are two conceptions of Japanese special interest in China. First, her special claim to only that portion of China comprising South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia, and second, her special position in relation to China in its entirety.[18]

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[18] Senate Document No. 106, Washington 1919, 66 cong. 1 sess., p. 151

The world first became aware of Japan's claim to special interests in South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia when the formation of the Old Sextuple Consortium was conceived. During the progress in signing this agreement on June 18, 1912, which involved the reorganization loan to China, the Japanese representative made the following declaration:

> ... the Japanese bank takes part in the loan on the understanding that nothing connected with the projected loan should operate to the prejudice of the special rights and interests of Japan in the regions of South Manchuria and of the eastern portion of inner Mongolia ... (19)

In response to this declaration, the Department of State expressed the following viewpoint:

> The Department understands that this reservation refers only to such special interests and rights as arise out of treaties and agreements with China. (20)

From this expression in response to the Japanese assertion of special interests in this area, the Department of State gave the interpretation that the reservation was wholly in accord with the principle of the "open door."

From a surface survey of the "open door" and "special interests" doctrines, it may be too readily concluded that the recognition of such interests as embodied in the Lansing-Ishii Agreement is diametrically opposed to the "open door" policy, for special rights obviously signify exclusive rights accruing only to Japan, and the "open door" policy has for its foundation equality of opportunity.

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19 Foreign Relations of the United States, Washington 1912, p. 137

20 Ibid., p. 124

From a minute inspection of the pact, nevertheless, and of the testimony of Secretary Lansing before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate in 1919, the impression of incompatibility yields to a more congenial conclusion that the recognition of Japan's special interests was not inconsistent, but rather in harmony, with the open-door doctrine. The Secretary of State recognized Japan's special interest in China as of the same character as the special interests of the United States in Canada, Mexico, or the Latin-American Republics. Lansing's own testimony in the Senate in reference to his discussion with Ishii in regard to a meaning of special interests clearly reveals his intention and interpretation:

> ... I told him that if it meant 'paramount interest', I could not discuss it further; but if he meant special interest based upon geographical position, I would consider the insertion of it in the note. Then it was, during that same interview, that he mentioned 'paramount interest' and he made a reference to the Monroe Doctrine and rather a suggestion that there should be a Monroe Doctrine for the Far East. [21]

Secretary Lansing informed Viscount Ishii that there seemed to be a misconception as to the underlying principle of the Monroe Doctrine; that it was not an assertion of primacy or paramount interest by the United States in its relation to other American Republics; that its purpose was

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21 Senate Document No. 106, (Washington 1919) 66 cong., 1 sess., p. 224

to prevent foreign powers from interfering with the separate rights of any nation in this hemisphere; that the whole aim was to preserve to each Republic the power of self-development; that so far as aiding in this development, the United States claimed no special privileges over other countries; that the same principle might be applied to China, but that no special privileges, and certainly no paramount interest, should be claimed in that country by any foreign power.[22]

Similarly in his statement of November 6, 1917, in explanation of the agreement, Secretary Lansing said:

> The statements in the notes require no explanation. They not only contain a reaffirmation of the 'open-door' policy, but introduce a principle of non-interference with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, ... which is the very foundation of Pan Americanism as interpreted by this Government. [23]

In recognizing Japan's "special interests", Secretary Lansing recognized Japan's professed Monroe Doctrine in China, or at least its leading principle --- Japan's right to enforce, both on herself and the other powers, the obligation of non-interference with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. Although numerous misinterpretations have proved it quite regrettable that no exact definition of "special interests" was given in the original draft of the pact, the interpretation of Mr. Lansing stamps the expression "special interests" with the indelible meaning of non-interference

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22 Ibid., p. 224

23 Foreign Relations of the United States, (Washington 1917) p. 267

with China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since the open door policy likewise proposes to maintain the same sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, the recognition of the special interests of Japan was not inconsistent but rather in harmony with the principle of the open door doctrine.

To further substantiate this conclusion, the statement of Baron Shidehara at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Washington Conference, February 4, 1922, supported the fact that Japan's special interest in China was not inconsistent with the open door doctrine; that is, it did not suggest special privileges, exclusive preferences, political domination, or territorial aggression, but that it expressed a special relation of Japan to China in that her own national existence depended largely upon that of her neighbor:

> To say that Japan has special interests in China is simply to state a plain and actual fact. It intimates no claim or pretension of any kind prejudicial to China or to any other foreign nation.
>
> Nor are we actuated by any intention of securing preferential or exclusive economic rights in /China ...
>
> We do not seek any territory in China, but we do seek a field of economic activity beneficial as much to China as to Japan, based always on the principle of the open door and equal opportunity. 24

Before magnifying the folly in the formulation of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement in that it opposes the open door policy maintained by the Department of State, it should be realized that there were at least three fundamental reasons for its formulation.

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[24] Senate Document No. 126,(Washington, 1922) 67 cong., 2nd sess., p. 223

The first was the conception of the United States and the world in general concerning Japanese aspirations in China. The second, although one not so universally acknowledged, was Japan's conception of America's intentions in China. This factor has been consistently ignored by Americans, as an aspiration with no foundation in fact! Perhaps the Japanese aspirations concerning the United States and Chinas, as interpreted by the typical American Japanese-hater lack similar validity. Japan had long nurtured with tenderness and affection the hope of becoming the recognized leader of the Orient, with special emphasis placed upon undisputed supremacy in its tutelage over China. Activities of the United States during the two years preceding the consummation of the agreement seemed to infer that Japan's leadership in China was by no means unquestioned or paramount. America was the only nation to protest against any encroachment of China's rights when the Twenty-one Demands were presented. During the turbulence which obtained in the summer of 1917, when attempts were made to overthrow the Republic and restore the Manchus to power, the United States had sent definite advice to China in reference to the critical situation. As has been previously stated, Japan looked upon this act by the United States with aversion and antipathy. The third factor was the need of the Allies for closer cooperation as a result of the loss of Russia from their ranks. It may be reasonably concluded that a certain amount of pressure was brough to bear on the United States to

recognize the aspirations of Japan in China, but that America in turn obviously exerted all her efforts to render justice to China in the acquiescence to Japan's imperialistic designs.

To the typical Japanese, the pact implied that in the future the American policy in regard to the Japanese political and economic expansion in China would be much more reconciling and less antagonistic. To the State Department, the pact implied the recognition only that due to the proximity of Japan to China and the inevitable economic and political dependence of the two countries, Japan's interests in China were clearly distinguishable from those of an American or European country.

The abortive attempt of Germany to Embroil Japan with the United States by means of Mexico lingered in the minds of the American people, and the impression that Japan was not as zealously in the war as the Allies existed with some measure of verification. Animosity and distrust were aggravated by the presentation of the Twenty-one Demands which even pro-Japanese nations considered exorbitant and insolent. Although the protest which the United States had made against the demands still stood, the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, to place it mildly, appeared ambiguous, and was never quite acceptable to Americans as a statement of permanent policy.

Minister Reinsch telegraphed the State Department October 23, 1917, of "indications that Japan is lukewarm toward the cause of the Allies, if not actually disloyal."[25] Three days later, he sent by letter, although it did not reach Washington until the notes had been published, a report from the American Naval Attaché in China, which inferred that any interference with Japan's program in China might lead her to change sides.[26] Inasmuch as Minister Reinsch was prone to distrust Japan, these reports might well be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. More validity is found in the fact that in his first conference with Secretary Lansing, Viscount Ishii remarked that Germany had upon three occasions attempted to persuade Japan to desert the Allied Cause, but that his government had "firmly rejected the suggestion" each time. Secretary Lansing very tactfully replied that considering Japan's unreproachable reputation for loyalty and good faith, such German acts of conspiracy gave the United States little, if any, concern.[27] Notwithstanding this was the unavoidable diplomatic reply, the writer is anxious to know whether the Ambassador's prudent disclosure may not have had its bearing in carving the agreement nearer to Japan's aspirations.

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25 Bemis, Samuel Flagg, The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy, X, p. 138

26 Ibid., p. 138

27 Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, p. 293

It is amusing to observe how the Japanese government, when the occasion presented itself for the obtaining of some concession in its favor from one of the Allies or co-belligerents, almost invariably would leave the impression of how Japan might realize her fullest desires from Germany!

Secretary Lansing was of the opinion that the understanding had limited the scope of the Bryan note, and had, moreover, obtained for China's protection important declarations of policy on the part of the United States and Japan.[23]

In view of the misunderstanding of the proper interpretation of both the Bryan note and the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, it seems quite unfortunate that Bryan saw fit to employ the term "special interests" in regard to Japanese relations with China, without including a clear definition of the same. Surely, Bryan's note aided materially in placing Secretary Lansing on the "spot."

In the peace treaty hearings in the Senate before the Committee on Foreign Relations, Secretary Lansing testified that he knew of the Twenty-one Demands when the agreement was made, that discussion did not enter upon the demands, that the agreement was not in any sense an endorsement of the Twenty-one Demands, that he would probably have entered

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[23] Lester H. Woolsey, "Lansing's Work as Secretary of State," Current History, December, 1928, Vol. 29, p. 393

into the agreement even had he known of the secret treaties of Japan with Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia, although the agreement was not an endorsement of the plan under the secret treaties, and that one of the very reasons why the Lansing-Ishii agreement was entered into was on account of the Twenty-one Demands and the attitude that Japan was taking toward China, in order to secure from Japan a redeclaration of the open door policy.[29]

Secretary Lansing knew that as soon as the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was drawn up that it was construed in Japan as a tacit endorsement of Japan's plans under the secret treaties. He did not know of the secret treaties made by Japan, when the agreement was formulated,[30] since his first official knowledge of their existence came in February, 1919, as transmitted to the State Department by the Peace Commission.[31]

Viscount Ishii told Secretary Lansing on September 6, 1917, that in 1915 he was in London and told Sir Edward Gray Japan intended to return the Kiaochow regions to China, but no Japanese Government could stand without retaining them and that as far as Japan and England were concerned, the equator

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[29] Senate Document No. 106, (Washington, 1919), 66 cong., 1 sess., pp. 147-148.

[30] Ibid., p. 193.

[31] Ibid., p. 216

practically divided the islands in the Pacific.[32] Thus it is seen that Ambassador Ishii either affirmatively or by his silence concealed the fact from Secretary Lansing that Japan had secret treaties with Great Britain and these other powers.

Secretary Lansing testified that the Lansing-Ishii Agreement had no binding force on this country. It was simply a declaration of the policy of the Government as long as the President and Secretary of State wanted to continue on the policy.[33]

It seems reasonable to infer that Lansing knew at least unofficially of the existence of the secret treaties, because he stated that at the beginning of the war, Great Britain and the Allies were under peculiar conditions in endeavoring to get Japan into the war in order to control the Pacific and Indian oceans against German raids.[34] This would more or less justify the Allies in making promises to Japan in regard to the disposition of German possession in the Shantung and Pacific areas.

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[32] Ibid., p. 218
[33] Ibid., p. 218
[34] Ibid., p. 154

The apparent disagreement between the accepted American interpretation of "special interests" in China and the coveted interpretation by Japan places special importance to certain statements contained in diplomatic correspondence in 1917 of the Russian Ambassador at Tokyo to his own government. The correspondence implied that should the United States think that the recognition of Japan's special position in China is of no practical consequence, such a view would inevitably lead in the future to serious misunderstandings between Russia and Japan. The note inferred that Japan was showing clearly a tendency to interpret the special position of Japan in China in the sense that other powers must not undertake in China any political steps without previously exchanging views with Japan on the subject, a condition that would to some extent establish Japanese control over the foreign affairs of China. The Japanese government was not attaching great importance to its recognition of the principle of the "open door" and the integrity of China, regarding it as merely a repetition of the assurances repeatedly given by it earlier to other powers and implying no new restriction of the Japanese policy in China. The note declared that there might arise in this connection misunderstandings between the United States and Japan, and that in negotiations by Viscount Ishii the question at issue was not some special concession in China but Japan's special position in China in its entirety.[35]

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[35] Willoughby, op. cit., p. 379

Upon being asked by Senator Borah before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate, in August, 1919, what construction should be placed upon the term "special interest", in view of Japan's Twenty-one Demands, Secretary Lansing replied: "Only the special interest that comes from being contiguous to another country whose peace and prosperity were involved."[36] When asked if these interests differed from those which the United States had in Canada or Mexico, he replied, "No".[37] Asked if it was understood by the State Department that the agreement operated in any way to endorse Japan's Twenty-one Demands, the Secretary replied: "Absolutely not. We were opposed to the Twenty-one Demands."[38] It was also declared that the agreement could not be held to approve anything which had since developed under the secret treaties of 1917 entered into by Japan with Great Britain, Russia, France, and Italy.[39] The Secretary also revealed that Viscount Ishii had given him no intimation that such agreements were in existence, but that had he known of them, he would not have been deterred from signing the agreement.[40]

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[36] Senate Document No. 106, (Washington, 1919), 66 cong., 1 sess., p. 147.

[37] Ibid., p. 147

[38] Ibid., p. 147

[39] Ibid., p. 147

[40] Ibid., p. 147

Concerning this statement, if the construction is given to the agreement which the Secretary has given to it, there would, in fact, appear no reason why, upon the part of the United States, it should not have been signed.

Mr. Lansing's testimony to the Senate, together with other substantiated facts, shows that when it made the Lansing-Ishii Agreement the American Government, which in that case, probably was not more than two men, the President and Secretary of State, realized unquestionably that Viscount Ishii was trying to "put something over," and knew that the agreement in the form in which it was signed was ambiguous and susceptible to diverse interpretations. The Lansing-Ishii Agreement was either a diplomatic stratagem directed to an emergency war situation and designed to hold Japan with the Allies, or an unusual morsel of diplomatic absurdity on the part of the American Government.

Chapter III

"Abrogation of the Agreement"

This was the situation when the Peace Conference assembled in Paris. Germany had compelled China through force in 1898 to cede to her certain rights in Shantung. Japan, in turn, had seized these rights through force in 1914 and had by threats forced China in 1915 to agree to accept her disposition of them when they were legally transferred by treaty at the close of the war. Upon her entrance into the war against Germany in 1917, China denounced all treaties and agreements with Germany, so that the ceded rights no longer existed and could not legally be transferred by Germany to Japan by the treaty of peace, since the title was now held by China.

The governments of the Allied powers had, early in 1917, and prior to the severance of diplomatic relations between China and Germany, acceded to the request of Japan to support "on the occasion of the Peace Conference" her claims in regard to these rights which then existed.[1]

Through this secret arrangement, one finds that the representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy were restricted, or at least embarrassed, by the promises which their governments had made at a time when they were in no position to refuse Japan's request.

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[1] Robert Lansing, The Peace Negotiations, New York, 1921, p. 252

The only country which had not yet agreed to Japan collaring Shantung and the northern South Sea Islands was the United States. President Wilson and the American Commissioners, unhampered by previous commitments, were strongly opposed to acceding to the demands of the Japanese Government, but Wilson's insatiable passion for the acceptance of the League of Nations seemed to justify compromise irrespective of justice or price. It was unfortunate that President Wilson was convinced that the Japanese delegates would decline to accept the Covenant of the League of Nations if the claims of Japan to the German rights were denied. Equally unfortunate it was that the President felt that without Japan's adherence to the Covenant the formation of the League would be endangered if not actually prevented. Especially unfortunate it was that the President considered the formation of the League in accordance with the provisions of the Covenant to be superior to every other consideration and that to accomplish this end almost any sacrifice would be profitable.

Secretary Lansing entertained the convictions that it would be far better to do strict justice to China than to go to any limits to insure the acceptance of the Covenant of the League of Nations; that the Japanese withdrawal from the Conference would not prevent the formation of the League; and that Japan would not have withdrawn if her claims had been denied.[2]

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[2] Ibid., p. 263.

In spite of repeated declarations of altruism, Japan virtually dominated the Far East. Her position was further enhanced because she had the consent of England through the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In the twenty-one years of its existence, in its three forms as of 1902, 1905, and 1911, this alliance was directly or indirectly responsible for the following: The Russo-Japanese War; the absorption of Korea; the establishment and development of Japan's five-fold policy in China --- economic exploitation, territorial expansion, paramount influence, political control, and the "Asiatic" Monroe Doctrine.[3]

Although by joint declaration, made to the League of Nations in July, 1921, Great Britain and Japan promised that the procedure of the League would take precedence over that of the Alliance, it was yet the basis for a naval combination of England and Japan against the United States. By it Japanese imperialism was encouraged and protected, since England remained a silent partner in Japan's foreign policy. The Alliance was still used to support whatever commercial designs Japan and England had in the Far East in direct opposition to the "open door." Since alliances of whatever nature mean the balance of power, that is, one group of nations pitted against another group, America assumed the attitude that the success of the proposed Washington Conference

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[3] Chung Fu Chang, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Baltimore, 1931, p. 231

would depend largely on the cancelation of this Alliance.

The United States formally invited Great Britain, France, Japan, Italy, China, Holland, Belgium and Portugal, on August 11, 1921, to attend a conference at Washington on the subject of the limitation of armaments, together with a discussion of the solution of problems involving the Far East.

There were four definitely stated purposes for the invitation of these Powers to the Washington Conference. They were the following:

1. Limitation of land and naval armament.
2. Cancelation of Anglo-Japanese Alliance.
3. Settlement of Pacific Islands controversy.
4. Obstruction of Japanese imperialism in China.

Not a few American officials and diplomatic agents believed that an understanding with other nations regarding the Far East could best be accomplished through the medium of the cancelation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. This alliance was first contemplated as a defensive alliance against Russia and Germany, but in spite of the elimination of these apparent aggressors by the results of the World War, the alliance was still in force. Inasmuch as the alliance had been made with the provision that it would continue in force until canceled by one of the two contracting parties, it would have been a serious undertaking for either one to request its termination. About the only alternative in regard to its successful abrogation was the

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[4]Raymond Leslie Buell, The Washington Conference, (New York, 1922), p. 150.

process of emerging it into another treaty. The successful formulation of the Four-Power Treaty accomplished this feat.

The terms of the Four-Power Treaty, signed December 13, 1922 by delegates for the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan, are as follows:[5]

Article I. The High Contracting Parties agree as between themselves to respect their rights in relation to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the region of the Pacific Ocean.

If there should develop between any of the High Contracting Parties, a controversy arising out of any Pacific question and involving their said rights which is not satisfactorily settled by diplomacy and is likely to affect the harmonious accord now happily subsisting between them, they shall invite the other High Contracting Parties to joint conference to which the whole subject will be referred for consideration and adjustment.

Article II. If said rights are threatened by the aggressive action of any other Power, the High Contracting Parties shall communicate with one another fully and frankly in order to arrive at an understanding as to the most efficient measures to be taken, jointly or separately, to meet the exigencies of the particular situation.

Article III. This Treaty shall remain in force for ten years from the time it shall take effect, and after the expiration of said period it shall continue to be in force subject to the right of any of the High Contracting Parties to terminate it upon twelve months' notice.

Article IV. This Treaty shall be ratified as soon as possible in accordance with the constitutional methods of the High Contracting Parties and shall take effect on the deposit of ratifications, which shall take place at Washington, and thereupon the agreement between the Governments of Great Britain and Japan, which were concluded at London on July 13, 1911, shall terminate. The Government of the United States will transmit to all the Signatory Powers a certified copy of the proces-verbal of the deposit of ratifications.

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[5] Senate Document No. 126, (Washington, 1922,) 67 cong., 2 sess., pp. 822-823.

The Four-Power Treaty met violent opposition in the United States Senate. Some proclaimed that it was merely an enlargement of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Senator Lodge aptly answered this opposition by contrasting the two documents. He stated that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance anticipated war, whereas, the Four-Power Treaty provided for peace on the basis of mutual respect as recognized by the signatories.[6]

In order to further stabilize the condition of the Far East, to safeguard the rights and interests of China, and to give equality of opportunity to all powers, the Nine-Power Treaty was signed February 6, 1922, by the delegates for the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, China, Belgium, Holland, and Portugal. For this study Articles II, III, and Iv are particularly important. Article II attempted to prevent the negotiation in the future of such agreements as the Lansing-Ishii Agreement or the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Article III reembodied the open door doctrine of which the United States has been the most consistent champion. Article IV abolished the Sphere of Influence idea in China.[7]

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[6] Senate Document, No. 101, (Washington, 1922), 56 cong., 2 sess., p. 4.

[7] International Conciliation, No. 281, (Worcester, Mass. 1932), pp. 308-311.

By this Nine-Power Treaty (Open Door Treaty), the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was terminated because the negotiation of this Treaty was in itself the most formal declaration of the policy of the Executive in relation to China and supercedes any Executive understanding or declaration that could possibly be asserted to have contrary import.

After a thorough scrutiny of the negotiations at the Washington Conference in regard to the Far East, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the policy of the Japanese Delegates was invariably successful. That policy was first to make impossible the military intervention of any Western power in the Orient. This was accomplished by the Naval Agreement (5:5:3 Treaty), by the provision in regard to the non-fortification of the Pacific Islands, and by the Four-Power Treaty. The second feature of that policy was to prevent the diplomatic intervention of the Western world in the sovereignty Japan has attempted to set up in the Asiatic mainland. This second aim was achieved as shown by the failure of China to secure tariff autonomy and tariff increases sufficient to make the creation of a strong central government possible, by the failure of China to regain economic control over Shantung, by the failure to make in any material manner the position of Japan throughout Manchuria, and by the failure of the Conference to define existing concessions in China.

There is little reason to believe that a mere reiteration of a long line of promises will have a very pronounced effect on the future imperialistic designs of Japan in the Far East. Since the conclusion of the Washington Conference, current developments in the Orient point to the undeniable conclusion that in that region Japan is supreme. Her often proclaimed "special interest" has in reality developed into an interest of paramountcy.

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