Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: ANGLO-JAPANESE RELATIONS 1895-1914
EMERGENCE OF JAPAN AS A WORLD POWER

Japan's Ambitions in the Far East

Japan's decisive and spectacular victory on land and at sea over China in 1894-95 marks the meteoric rise of Japan as a world Power. This was one of the most amazing and stirring developments in the nineteenth century. It awoke the Powers of Europe to a sense of the military and naval strength of Japan and led to those political developments which have kept the Far East in a state of unstable equilibrium ever since. Thus, the year 1895 is of utmost importance in the history of international relations; it marked the transition of the Far Eastern question from a state of quiescence to one of extreme activity.

The success of Japan was due to a variety of factors. The arrival in Japan of Commodore Perry of the US Navy in 1852 and the conclusion of a treaty of commerce with the United States inaugurated an era of great historical importance. It destroyed the bamboo barrier's seclusion of Japan and forced her into the currents of world affairs. She readily accepted what the Western civilization offered and put it to good use. The abolition of the Shogunate, the Restoration of the Emperor, the development of industry and commerce through the building of railways and telegraphs, and educational reforms were but the first steps in the rapid progress Japan was making. The success of Japan in carrying out the reforms was largely due to the Western impact and the determination of the Japanese to make their country an equal to other nations. The chief motive which urged the Japanese to
adopt the many ways of Western civilization was neither so much the desire for increased wealth, nor the desire for blind imitation of Western customs, but was the sense of honour which cannot bear to be looked down upon as an inferior Power. The achievements of Japan within a short period became "the centre of the Orient's liberty and culture" which "not only excited the envy of Asiatic countries but also surpassed Western nations". (1)

The Japanese first expressed themselves in their new role by asking the treaty making Powers to revise the unequal treaties. (2) The Japanese felt that some of the provisions of the treaties like the extra-territorial rights enjoyed by the Powers, placed them in a very humiliating position. But it was not till the beginning of the present century that the Japanese were able to arrest foreign encroachments and Western Powers conceded her well-earned position of equality.

Behind the patriotic motives, there were strong economic and military forces which influenced the foreign relations of Japan.


2. The treaties then made were on the tacit assumption of the unequal status of the two contracting parties, the so-called civilized white men on the one hand and on the other Japan, just emerging from Asiatic semi-barbarism. For example, in making treaties with Oriental (non-Christian) nations, the Occidental (Christian) nations had always insisted that their subjects and citizens should be exempted from the procedure and penalties prescribed by the criminal law of the countries in which they were residing. It soon, however, became evident that the Japanese were very different from other eastern peoples in many respects, and their loyal independent spirit rebelled against even the appearance of being in a subordinate position to a foreign power.

The rapid increase in population and processes of industrialization necessitated Japanese statesmen to look for foreign markets and natural resources. Korea, from her geographical position, her sparsely populated territory and her undeveloped resources was considered the most suitable. Besides, its historical connexion with Japan gave the Japanese a first claim among foreign Powers for close relations and, if necessary, friendly protection. Moreover, Korea being an agricultural country, Japan considered it important to control it so as to ensure a supply of food for those of her people who were engaged in manufacturing industrial goods. Most important of all, however, was the fact that in the minds of Japanese statesmen the possession of Korea by a strong foreign Power would give it a strategical position which could not only dominate Japan but even threaten her national existence (3) as the "dagger pointed at the heart of Japan". (4)

It was natural for China to question the validity of the Japanese claim. Firstly, for China Korea was a vassal state. Secondly, perhaps more important than the first, Korea served as the shelter of Manchuria and the entire coast of northern China. (5) In these divergent claims, Rockhill, with deep knowledge and understanding of the Far East, remarks:

3. An analogy to Japan's policy towards Korea may be found in the attitude of the Western Powers before they acquired colonies in the African or on the Asian Continent.

4. After the outbreak of war, on 25 July 1894, Japanese diplomatic representative in Europe stated: "We are fighting in Korea for our own future - I might also say for our independence. Once let Korea fall into the hands of European power and our independence will be threatened." Quoted in Alfred L.P. Dennis, Adventures in American Diplomacy (1896-1906) (New York, 1928), p. 174.

In the last years of the 19th century some of these neighbouring states on which China had either exercised, or claimed to exercise, at one time or another her domination, had recovered their independence, which, however, was not always recognised by China, and in some cases, Korea for instance, the suzerainty of China had become almost nominal. (6)

The same view, more or less, has been maintained by many other writers of significance. Thus the responsibility for causing the Sino-Japanese war (1894-95) lay on Japan for having twisted the treaty of 1876 with Korea (7) and Convention of 1885 (8) with Li Hung-Cheng in her favour. Having said that, it might be added that the conflict of 1894-95 was inevitable in the sense that after the annexation of Liuchiu island by Japan, China became aware of Japan's ambitions. (9) The Ch'ing government began to take precautionary measures in view of the continued bellicose attitude of Japan towards Korea. The year 1879 witnessed a change in the Chinese attitude towards Japan. (10) Moreover, the incident of 1882 shows the non-conciliatory policy adopted by the Meiji regime.


7. The Korean Treaty of 1876 was modelled on the Perry Treaty which Japan had negotiated with the United States.

8. The Tientsin Convention signed at Tientsin on 13 April 1885.

For details see Treaties between China and Foreign States (Shanghai, 1917), vol. 2, p. 588.

9. Japan attempted to wrest Formosa in 1874, acquired Liuchiu islands in 1879 and had been seeking to detach Korea, the vassal State of China.

On the other hand, there is the view that the struggle was between Civilization, representing Japan, and Barbarian China to which the former was impelled by a challenge which it would not honourably resist. (11) But this view does not hold good, inasmuch as the war, nay the Japanese action, was the historical corollary of events of 1592–98 when Japan had suffered humiliation at the hand of China on the Korean soil. For three centuries Là Renanché had been a fixed idea in the bosom of the Japanese patriots. In view of this, Chinese conservatism in Korea towards the close of the nineteenth century, based though it was on technically indisputable suzerainty, may be regarded as exasperating to the already-wounded susceptibilities of Japan.

Nevertheless, the chain of events immediately preceding the first Sino-Japanese war (12) proves beyond doubt that Japan had long before made up her mind to strike at the first convenient opportunity, and she did. In the actual outbreak of hostilities, she was pointedly the aggressor.

Once war was declared, the national spirit in Japan was easily aroused in its favour. Before the declaration of the war, Japan had satisfied herself with the knowledge that China suffered from lack of internal unity, and corruption was rampant in China's poor defence organization. (13) Japan had, therefore, been quietly


12. See n. 9.

13. The depravity and corruption of society affected all strata of officials from empress Dowager Tsu-hsi down to minor clerks. In the armed forces there was no unification of authority nor any single policy.

preparing to deal with a decadent empire. In 1894, she acted with Machiavellian logic and confronted the European Powers with a new situation in world affairs.

In the course of war, Japan is said to have over-reached itself in failing to heed friendly warnings from some of the Powers. For instance, the President of the United States had, in November 1894 offered his good offices in the interests of peace alike honourable to both nations - Japan and China - but Japan declined on the ground that China had not "as yet approached her directly" (14) and the war continued. This led one writer to charge Japan with the intention of continuing the war in order to exhibit her military and naval strength. (15)

A close study of the internal history of Japan makes it easy to understand that the logic applied by Japan in 1894 was the result of a carefully formed militant policy. There were instances when the Japanese actively engaged themselves in an ambitious plan of expansion and tried to carve out an empire for themselves. This is not to minimise the effort of the people engaged in commercial and economic endeavours. However, the Japanese action in 1894 was in no way different from what the Western Powers had been doing throughout the nineteenth century.

Writing in the Nineteenth Century and After in March 1904, C.A.W. Pownall observed:

That the control of China ... was for long an objective to the Japanese is proved by the existence of a detailed map covering the whole

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United States,


region of Korea, Manchuria, and the coast of the Gulf of Pechili, with the roads all marked the contours of the hills given, and an amount of detail shown which must have occupied the clandestine surveys of the most inquisitive race on earth for many years until it came into use by the Japanese staff in the war of 1895. A copy of that map was given to the present writer at that time and is now in his possession. It in itself furnishes evidence of the long-cherished design to invade China, and disproves the assertion, then made, that Japan was forced into the war on that occasion. On the contrary it was a deliberate and carefully planned invasion.... (16)

Taking a cue from the utterances of her statesmen, as well as from the opinion expressed in the Press, the Japanese fostered the high ambition that their country should become the Britain of the East. (17) They were determined to realize their goal in every way possible. They contended that geographically Japan's advantageous maritime position was analogous to that occupied by Great Britain in Europe. Not that there was an absence of moderate people who considered it more prudent to develop Japan through commerce, industry and education, but there were forces inherent in Japanese politics which even after the event of 1894-95 continued to govern the shaping of the nation's foreign policy. Takahira Kogoro emphasized that Japan had never any intention to take advantage of the misfortune of her neighbours or to seek territorial aggrandisement. (18) But one should not lose sight of the fundamental

16. C.A.W. Pownall, "Russia, Japan and Ourselves", Nineteenth Century and After (New York), March 1904.

17. Henry Dyer, n. 2, pp. 342-4. The author lived in Japan for a number of years and in his book he narrates his own experience. During the course of his stay he must have read the mind of the Japanese closely and intimately.

18. Takahira Kogoro then Japanese representative at Washington said these words during the course of reading a paper before the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences on 7 March 1903. Quoted in ibid.
point in the Japanese policy which was to control China and to lead the myriads against the rest of the world. (19)

Besides, the Army and Navy had also, by making use of their position, exerted great pressure upon the national policy, which led Japan along a chauvinistic path. The influence of feudalism, Bushido and Shinto, and the impact of Western nations were significant in this regard. The task was much simplified by the failure of democratic institutions to gain control over the machinery of the state. This was partly due to the undemocratic nature of the Meiji constitution, and party as a result of the actions of the political parties. The Army and the Navy were advantageously placed to effectively influence the national policy of Japan. Therefore, if there was a chauvinistic group which desired to launch the country upon the course it advocated, there were background forces to which it could appeal.

Although there is the danger of becoming too involved in the internal history of Japan in order to discover that the nation has always been bellicose, one cannot avoid pointing out the deep impression upon the life, the character and the organization of Japan made by the feudal system from 1185 to 1868. It was responsible for the predominance of militant spirit in Japan.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki ended the war with China. China recognized the independence of Korea, ceded Formosa and Pescadores

19. On the outbreak of disorders in Korea, Count Okuma said in June 1894: "By making a judicious use of the present unique opportunity, it will be possible for the Japanese Government to retrieve all past errors, and make the (Japanese) empire respected and feared, not only by Korea, but also by the rest of the world."

Quoted in Dennis, n. 4, p. 174.
Islands and the Liaotung Peninsula in Manchuria, besides conceding an indemnity of 200 million taels. Japan also insisted on being given, and obtained, the privileges, including extra-territoriality, which the European Powers enjoyed. (20)

The importance of the Shimonoseki Convention lies in the fact that it reversed China-Japan relations. It acknowledged the power of Japan. She was accepted as a full member of the society of nations. The Western Powers, before the war, had not cared or dared to arouse the wrath of the "Sleeping Dragon". But now they were confronted with an entirely new situation - a powerful Japan and an impotent China. As for Korea, the war made it, even to a greater degree than before, "the powder magazine of the Far East". Above all, it marked the first fulfilment of Japanese national ambitions.

Japan's ambitions in the Far East - Aftermath of the first Sino-Japanese War

The Sino-Japanese war had also its repercussions in European capitals. It belied the calculations of the European Powers regarding the comparative strength of China and Japan. (21) In England, public opinion completely changed on the issue. Uptil the war, she was decidedly pro-Chinese but favouring independence of Korea and was opposed to any Japanese annexation on the continent. After the war, there was general disgust over the incompetence of China because for years Britain had fancied her as a "natural ally" against Russia. Now, she became apprehensive lest China's weakness

20. For complete details see M.V.A. MacMurray, Treaties and Agreements with and Concerning China, 1824-1919 (New York, 1921), vol. 1, p. 18. The treaty was signed on 17 April 1895.

21. The war marked the reception of Japan as an adult member of the society of nations.
result in a break-up of the empire and in anarchy all round. On the other hand, there was a good deal of praise for Japan and the press advocated an understanding with Japan, foreseeing the future position of Japan as a counter force against Russian interests in the Far East. (22) To England, therefore, it was not the victory of Japan that was menacing, although it had come as a surprise. She was concerned with the Japanese demands on China which would disturb the balance of power in the Far East. Secondly, Britain was concerned with how to replace her "natural ally". (23)

With Russia, the case was different, and she was, perhaps, the next Power most concerned with the changes wrought by the war. But she could not, due to divergence of views at home, adopt a definite policy. (24) In any case, the general feeling was to work in co-operation with England. Their main idea was to restrict Japan from making further acquisition of territory and to secure the independence of Korea. (25) The major Powers in the Far East agreed on two points, viz., maintenance of the territorial integrity of

22. This change of opinion was perhaps, best reflected in the St. James Gazette (London) of 18 March 1895, when it said "...we need not object to her (Japan's) naval strength in the Pacific. No doubt she would menace and alarm Russia; but that is no affair of ours. Let Japan and Russia fight it out if they please."

23. Shuhsii Hsu, n. 5, pp. 190-1.

24. William L. Langer. The Diplomacy of Imperialism (New York, 1925), vol. 1, p. 176. His observations are based on Russian documents.

25. The Korean situation was such between Japan and Russia that it would menace the other if possessed by any of them. It was not very much appreciated before the war but the war awakened the Russians.

Shuhsi Hsu, n. 5, p. 191,
China and upholding the balance of Power. (26)

The war, though successful from the Japanese point of view, did not immediately make her a primary force in the Far East. The other Powers came to respect her, but not to the extent of conceding her a determining voice in Far Eastern politics. Their action, following the war, taught Japan her place, at least for the time being.

From the point of view of China's relation with the West, the treaty of Shimonoseki was a turning point in her history. The suzerainty over Korea was no doubt important, but the Chinese had not previously attached much significance to it. (27) They could have overlooked the loss of Formosa and the Pescadores, but what was infinitely more serious than all this was the irretrievable damage inflicted on her international position. From this, China could not recover till half a century later. Internally, too, corruption had eaten up China's vitals. She suffered more in comparison even to Turkey under Abdul Hamid, and to Persia at the beginning of the

26. What dreaded the Powers was that "over against helpless China lay victorious Japan, progressive and efficient, confident and ambitious. Japanese statesmen, it was said, were at bottom aiming at an "Asia for the Asiatics" and were envisaging the day when they could take the place of the European Powers in the Far East.

Langer, n. 24, p. 387.

27. It seems China's main policy was to prevent Japanese predominance over Korea, may be for reasons of security, sentiment and historically. But she did not object to, rather was responsible for, Korea entering into treaty relations with Western Powers presumably to weaken Japan's hold upon her. From this, one may, therefore, infer that China did not herself attach much importance to Korea so long as Japan had not threatened her security.
century. (28)

Li Hung-Chang, the chief architect of the Chinese foreign policy in the nineteenth century, before his departure for the Peace Conference at Shimonoseki had contacted and received a kind of assurance from Russia for intervention in case the Japanese demanded territorial concessions from China. (29) Moreover, before he signed the treaty he had also received assurances from Detering, his agent in Berlin, that Russia had persuaded the German Foreign Office to support her action. (30) It was understood that France, too, would side with Russia. (31) The United States had already

28. It may be added, "Although the Turks were in definitely worse position but the Turkish Army had always been able to fight.

Langer also expressed similar views when he wrote: "The invalid in the Far East was sicker than his colleague in the Near East." Langer, n. 24, p. 385.

29. The reason why Li sought and obtained Russian support was that he knew Port Arthur was Russia's first choice among the ice-free ports within her reach. Secondly, he preferred the distant menace of Russia to the near danger of Japan.


30. The wording of the friendly warning served by Berlin to Tokyo viz. "a demand for the cession of territory on the mainland would probably provoke the intervention of the powers" - makes it clear.

Langer, n. 24, p. 29.


Both cite German documents in support of their view.

31. France was bound to Russia by the treaty of the Franco-Russian (1894) Alliance.
declared neutrality toward the China-Japan dispute. (32)

The "Dreibund" Intervention

Hardly had the belligerents settled new relations after signing the Treaty at Shimonoseki, the "Dreibund" - Russia, Germany and France, at the initiative of the Czar (33) intervened on China's behalf, and asked Japan to retrocede the Liaotung Peninsula. (34)

There were many reasons why Russia sought the co-operation of other Powers and her insistence on Japan's withdrawal from southern Manchuria and Port Arthur. Firstly, it was necessary for Russia to guard her interest, including the future Siberian Railway. Secondly,

32. The policy that the United States followed throughout is outlined in a note No. 23 from Gresham to Bayard in Foreign Relations, U.S. 1894. It was further clarified in a telegram from Gresham to Goschen, No. 58. Ibid.

33. The idea of depriving Japan of the main fruits of her victory had sprung in Witte's brain who though only Minister of Finance, had "paramount influence over all Russia's public business". To him Japan's entry in the mainland of China was contradictory inasmuch as he had his own scheme of peaceful penetration which presupposed the integrity of China.

E.J. Dillon, The Eclipse of Russia (London, 1918), p. 244.

When the news of the cession of Liaotung reached the ears of Count Witte, he is said to have hurried to the Czar Nicholas II and said to him, "We cannot allow Japan to gain her islands and get a firm foothold upon the Asiatic Mainland. That would effectively block our Far Eastern Policy of peaceful penetration."

Count Witte, "My dealings with Li Hung Chang", World's Work (Garden City), January 1921.

34. On 23 April 1895 France, Russia and Germany sent identical notes to Tokyo Foreign Office. MacMurray, n. 20, p. 531, mentions only the translation of the Russian note. The German note, it is said had used excessive language and had threatened Japan with consequences in case of her refusal. This put Germany into unnecessary action.

the possession of the strategic Liaotung Peninsula by Japan would negate Korean independence, make Japan predominant in Asia, and threaten Russian interests in the East. Hence, Russian eagerness to prevent any challenge to its position as a great Power in the Asian continent. (35) At the same time, intervention on the side of China could justify the Russian claim for compensation from her. Besides, Russia's invitation to other Powers for common action was due to her own inability to face victorious Japan. (36) The acquisition of Liaotung Peninsula by Japan was perhaps a major cause of Russia's fear and hence a sufficient cause for seeking other Powers' co-operation.

Apparently, by restraining Japan from the acquisition of the Liaotung Peninsula, Russia was laying the ground work of her Far Eastern Policy, the central aim of which was "to create and preserve conditions favourable to the pacific development of Russia" in China. (37) However, it was dependent on "no-violence, no annexation, nothing to provoke the resentment or arouse the misgivings of the Chinese, and everything possible to draw their sympathy and co-operation". (38) In any case, there was determination not to "allow Japan to quit her islands and get a firm foothold on the mainland". At the same time, the invitation to France and Germany would make it known that Russia considered the integrity of China as important as "the United States' stand for

35. The Times (London), 22 April 1895.
38. Ibid., pp. 245, 246.
the Monroe Doctrine. (39)

It is difficult to understand what prompted Germany to co-operate with Russia in the intervention against Japan at a time when she enjoyed friendly relations with the latter. (40) Germany had, of late, been aspiring to become a colonial Power. She had also felt the need for a coaling station in the Far East. Therefore, by consenting to co-operate with Russia, she would kill two birds with one stone. She would oblige Russia (and France) and put China in debt. This may help, at a later date, not only to put forward but also establish her claim for concession on the Chinese territory. In other words, if the dismemberment or partition of China took place, she need not be a silent spectator but have her share of the "Chinese Melon".

Another, perhaps the underlying, motivation of German participation in the intervention was the Bismarckian policy of encouraging Russian ambitions in the Far East in order to relieve pressure on the European continent. (41) Baron Holstein, too, was

39. Ibid.
40. So much was the influence of Germany that the Japanese Constitution was largely modelled on the Prussian Model. There were also the German instructors in the Japanese Army and wealthier business returns between the two countries.
41. Kaiser William wrote to the Czar, "I shall certainly do all in my power to keep Europe quiet, and also to guard the rear of Russia so that nobody shall hamper your action toward the Far East. For that is clearly the great task of the future for Russia to cultivate the Asian continent and to defend Europe from the invaders of the Great Yellow race. In this you will find me on your side, ready to help you as best I can...."

anxious to prevent a Franco-Russian alliance coming overhead and a formidable Anglo-Russian-French coalition. (42) The latter might create antagonism between Germany and her continental neighbours. After examining other possibilities and eventualities, Germany thought it prudent to exhibit friendship for Russia even at the cost of Japanese goodwill. (43) Bulow later described it as an "unlucky experiment" because the German action had unnecessarily "outraged Japanese feeling for Germany". (44)

France's participation in the joint intervention is not difficult to understand. She, as in the case of other European Powers, (45) had felt jealous of Japan's overwhelming victory over China. She believed that the Japanese predominance would become a menace to European interests in the Far East. Thus, to safeguard the commercial interests in the region and in consonance with the policy of colonial expansion after 1870-71, and above all, because of her alliance with Russia, French policy in the Far East followed

42. There were also negotiations for Anglo-Russian understanding. Chang, n. 30, p. 31; Langer, n. 24, p. 185. Both have extensively quoted German source.

43. Should France refuse to join the intervention, a breach to Germany's advantage in Franco-Russian relations would result. Should she be a party, England would hardly stand aside. In either case Germany would gain. Langer, n. 24, p. 185.


45. Spain took measures in the Philippines to meet any contingency that may arise as a result of the Japanese victory. The Times, 23 April 1895.
Russia. (46)

It is interesting to make a study of the English attitude during the intervention. Before the peace terms were made known, Britain's action was guided by the extent of Japanese demands over China. Should they aim to make China a protectorate, it was considered necessary to thwart it by "European action". This would benefit Britain and also be in accordance with the general interests of European Powers. In the absence of any such fear, she saw no necessity in siding with the tripartite Powers. (47)

The Japanese victory and the terms of the treaty (48) caused no concern to Britain, inasmuch as they did not menace her interests. The Press echoed the same feeling. (49) Rather she expected to benefit by the most-favoured-nation clause, as contemplated in the treaty, which embodied many additional commercial privileges. (50) But Lord Salisbury is quoted as having said, "Had he been in power he would for a start not have allowed the war at all" and that

46. The Times, 11 April, 22 April, 23 April, and 11 June 1895.

Another consideration which struck both to Germany and France as with Russia, that the "Coalition" would lessen the British hegemony in the Far East.


The French intervention may also be due to France's policy of imitating Japan in Asia.


47. Joseph, n. 34, p. 79.

48. For details see MacMurray, n. 20, p. 18.

49. The Times, 23 April 1895. Also The Holstein Papers, n. 41, p. 511n.

50. Shus Hsu, n. 5, p. 190.
"should that have proved impossible, he would under no circumstances have permitted the demand on Japan to give up the Liaotung Peninsula in Russia's favour". (51) However, the words are near boastful than based on real appraisal of the situation.

Besides, Britain had other considerations too. From 1895 to 1901, she was passing through a critical period. She was preoccupied in Africa and followed a policy of "splendid isolation". Russian influence of late, no doubt, had increased and the British influence declined, yet the latter remained the greatest trading power in the Far East. Above all, while on the look out for a replacement of her "natural ally" (52) any thought of co-operation with a Power noted for hatred towards her, and with too well-known motives in the Far East, would not only jeopardise her relation with Japan but would also make her position untenable in the Far East. (53) Finally, because of the considerations Japan had shown to British commercial interests during the war, she decided to avoid any misunderstanding with Japan. She consequently did not oblige


52. China till 1894-95 was considered England's "natural ally" in the Far East, and she counted on China's friendship.

Shushi Hsu, n. 5, p. 191.

53. Taking the situation as it was, if Japan did not consider England as her friend, she had no more reason to consider Russia as being so. Russia had, remarks Okuma, more conflicts with Japan and for years were engaged in dispute over Sakhalin.

It is remarkable that the initial accord at least in principle, between England and Russia on the question of keeping a balance of power in the Far East, maintenance of independence and integrity of Korea, and opposition to any annexation of territory on the Chinese mainland, ended in a "Dreibund" without England. The "Dreibund" was, therefore, not a deliberate policy on Russia's part but the result of circumstances.

54. Standing aloof, Britain did realize, would mean her isolation but had calculated that any rupture in the "East Asiatic Dreibund" would provide her an opportunity to come to an agreement with one or the other power. Should this remain unbroken, she will have reserved for her freedom of action.

Chang, n. 30, pp. 23-24,


56. Between the 1st of April 1895 when Japan's first draft of peace treaty was made known, and 6th of April, the period of uncertainty and indecision of Russian policy was over. Of the two alternatives of friendship with either China or Japan, Russia chose the former not due to her own volitions but as a result of turn in the situation. An understanding with Japan offered a check to the English advance, fulfilment of her long desire of securing a part of Manchuria in order to carry the Trans-Siberian Railway straight to Vladivostok, and an acquisition of an ice-free port on the Pacific. Since these aims of Russia were known in Tokyo, the latter would have raised no objection had it come from the former. But on 2 April Russia in conjunction with Germany and France advised Japan "to desist from the occupation of Southern Manchuria and in case of refusal (by Japan) to reserve freedom of action". Germany joined lest she be left out in case of general scramble for Chinese territory and dreading an Anglo-Russian understanding. France followed suit. If the British had accepted Russian proposal of protest to Japan the case of Russia would have been simple. It was their refusal that was responsible for bringing the "three powers" together due to a variety of reasons and of their own.

The Memoirs of Count Witte, Abraham Yarmolinsky, trans. and ed. (Garden City, New York, 1921), pp. 82, 84.

Japan had taken great care in her dealing with China so as to avoid intervention by any third Power. Premier Ito, although he could not foresee the extent and nature of intervention, was not taken altogether unawares when he saw the note of "advice". What surprised Japan was not the actual intervention, but its extent and the manner in which it took place. (57) The Emperor's proclamation (58) made it clear that Japan had not yielded too willingly (59) and naturally could be expected to kick back when an opportunity came. It was the dread of joint action (60) that led her military leaders to counsel their government to yield, "out of

57. On 27 June in a joint conference of Cabinet Ministers and high military officers in which the Emperor presided, Ito had warned about the probability of a third power intervention.

Hiratsukai, "Ito Hirobumi Hiroku", vol. 1, p. 44. Quoted in Seiji Hishida, Japan Among the Great Powers (New York, 1940), pp. 96-97. The intervention, however, did take Japan aback in view of the actual international situation prevailing till the war viz., antipathy between Great Britain and Russia; Germany's loyal attitude towards Japan; and Russia's indecision till March 1896. Shuhsi Hsu, n. 5, p. 194.


59. Japan made counter proposals to the "Dreibund", showing her willingness to renounce the possession of Fengtian except Port Arthur, on condition of adequate compensation and to remain in occupation till the final fulfilment of the obligation by the Chinese. This was rejected by the Powers. Russia would not agree to any proposal if Port Arthur, for which Russia laboured to bring the Powers together, was to remain under Japanese control.

60. British attitude in this regard is significant. She declined to be a party in the "Dreibund" but not opposed to it. She advised Japan to submit to its demands. While the former helped Japan ultimately to retain some of the gains, wrung from the Chinese the latter was a great factor in preserving the territory for China. So long as Europe was united Japan could not but bow.
regard for peace". (61)

The East Asiatic Dreifund, apparently formed to counter Japan in 1895, may be said also to have British expansion in China in view. (62) But this combination of Powers could not really become "solid" in the face of continued Franco-German mistrust. (63) It could never, therefore, be a genuine united front against England. (64) Thus, while it did deter the Japanese in 1895, it cracked before striking the British either in the Far East or in Europe. (65) That the "demarche" of the Dreifund was a defeat for Japan's first attempt at "Realpolitik" inasmuch as she failed to obtain the approval of the Powers for her continental ambitions, cannot be denied. (66)


62. Lobanov, Russian Foreign Minister, wrote to the ambassador at Paris "It is no less important for our projects ... not to let England extend her influence in China."


63. France could never forget humiliation suffered in 1870-71 at the hands of Germany. The Dreifund remained on paper for 10 years but ceased to exist after 1905 when disappointed Russia turned back again to Europe.

64. The importance of the Dreifund should not, in any way, be minimised. The Franco-German action against the Anglo-Congolese Treaty is a proof. Besides, as the Afro-Asian question came to play greater role in international politics, England being the largest affected party, was bound to face more precarious position.

65. Germany could always side with England and make difficulties in case the Dual(Franco-Russian) alliance ventured to oust the former from the Chinese spoils. France also later realized that in case of Dual Alliance going to war against England, she would face immeasurable harm at the hands of sea-power in Europe while gains, if any, would go to all-continental Russia.

66. Several years later Count Katsura admitted to the German Minister Mumm, "Japan would not have been able to swallow Kwantung and Formosa at that time without serious injury".

Joseph, n. 34, p. 126.
On the other hand, so much substantial was the Russian gain that with one stroke of masterly diplomacy she gave a blow to the rising power of Japan, and won the gratitude of China at the same time. She made a further pretence of friendship in the form of a big loan to enable China to pay her indemnity to Japan.

The Chinese, on their part, became so grateful to Russia with the retrocession of Liaotung and the loan made to them that the Manchu Government completely forgot what Russia had done in the past. So much so that, many a high official advocated an alliance with Russia against further Japanese aggression. (67) The first evidence of their pleasure was represented by the appointment of Li-Hung-Chang to represent China at the Coronation of the Czar in 1896. (68)

In June 1896 the Sino-Russian Secret Treaty was signed. (69)

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67. Cheng cites the case of Chang Chih Tung, Viceroy of the three Yangtze provinces, who had earlier advocated war with Russia, now petitioned to the Emperor for a secret alliance.

Cheng, n. 55, p. 57.

68. Li seems flattered over his selection. There is an indication that Russia impressed on the Chinese Court to send Li, even if there are to be other members in the delegation. The reason for Li being held in high esteem in Russian circles may be due to his position and effective influence in the Chinese Court. And Russia considered him the most suitable man to be bargained with. The possibility of Russia attempting to bargain with Li at the time of Coronation was already in the mind of Li.


69. MacMurray, n. 29, p. 81. The compiler and editor gives the date as May 1896. Cheng in his History of Sino-Russia Relations specifically mentions 3 June. The latter may be correct as the treaty was concluded after the Coronation of the Czar Nicholas III, which was held in May 1896.

There are writers, Cheng for instance, who say the treaty remained secret till after the World War I. But MacMurray in his volume quotes M.A. Gerard, who was the French Minister to China during 1893-97 as having knowledge of the Treaty. Gerard relates the fact in his book Ma Mission en Chine published in Paris 1913. Cheng, n. 55, p. 58.
The treaty, besides offering safeguards to China against Japan, allowed Russia to build a railway via Heilungkiang and Kirin to Vladivostok (70) under the auspices of the Russo-Chinese Bank. (71)

The Chinese Loan question did much to sharpen the differences of the Dreilund. (72) It also foreshadowed other issues, and became a central issue in world politics at that time. The three Powers were not merely interested in checking Japan, but in trying to secure, by every possible means, the gratitude of China for their self-interests. (73)

70. Russia was keen about the Railway concession and the protection from Japan was as necessary to China as to Russia. Only difference was while the former had already suffered defeat the latter was yet to face.

71. The establishment of the Russo-Chinese Bank to work under the Chinese Eastern Railway Company reveals the real motive of Russia in the treaty. It was to be jointly managed by Russia and China, but by clever manipulation, the Russian Treasury got 70 per cent of the shares of the Company.

Cheng, n. 55, p. 59.

72. Langer compares the weakness which characterized the Near Eastern Triplce in the Armenian question to that of the Far Eastern Triplce. Just as the Russians had co-operated with the English in the Armenian question to prevent the success of the English aims, so in the matter of the Japanese peace terms the Germans had acted with the Russians in order to prevent Russia and France from acting alone.

Langer, n. 24, p. 139.

73. After the war the policy, in brief, of the Western Powers was to save the "Sinking ship" (China) lest it fell an easy prey either to Japan or any other single power while at the same time they hastened to take new moves against China to secure their own interests.

The American Minister had warned the Chinese of this at the outset. He had argued in vain that nothing would hasten dismemberment as much as the intervention.

Treat, n. 61, p. 525.
The Anglo-Japanese Alliance

A Japanese proverb says: 'Better be the tail of the ox than comb of the cock'. "By beating China, she [Japan] became the comb of the cock of Asia", said Captain Brinkley in 1894. (74) The result of the war of 1894-95 was not wholly satisfactory to Japan. That the three Powers had interfered was bad enough, but that they had timed their interference so as to expose Japan to the maximum humiliation or embarrassment was infinitely worse. (75) During the war, Japan had already felt the danger of her isolated position. The triple intervention against Japan after the Sino-Japanese war, more than anything else, exposed Japan's isolation vis-a-vis the European Powers. This was the first time when Japan felt the weight of European combination and indirectly the strength of the Dual and the Triple Alliances in Europe. On the one hand, England was suspected of being an ally of China. In fact, when the Sino-Japanese hostilities commenced in 1894, Britain had attempted to organize an intervention of the major Powers against Japan, (76) because she felt that the war threatened her economic and political interests in the Far East, to which peace and the status quo best suited. She also regarded that Japan had deliberately provoked a war with peace-loving China. (77) On the other hand, the policy of


75. The Times, 25 June 1895.


77. The Times, 2 July 1894.
the Russian Government was not so certain, and a sudden Russian attack on the exposed flank of the Japanese, in the event of military operations on the Continent, was not beyond the realm of imagination. (78) The intervention after the war definitely convinced many Japanese statesmen that if Japan wanted to "take its place side by side with other nations of the world", it was not enough for her to meet them on the battlefield, but that she must improve her national strength in order to meet them at the diplomatic table as well.

By 1895 Japan had attained the status of a "Power" by her immense growth of trade and industries, and as a result of her success over China militarily. Consequently, there grew a desire in Japan for markets and for supplies of raw materials and food products. She also grew sensitive to another problem of hers, namely, enormous increase of population. Hence, there developed the necessity to find a place for emigration. Manchuria and Korea were considered natural and appropriate areas which would meet the needs of Japan. (79)

Japan had acquired no special rights or privileges in Manchuria by 1895 and therefore was opposed to any preferential rights being acquired by another Power in Manchuria. (80) Consequence

80. Except for the unqualified acceptance of John Hay's first "Open Door" note and their commitments later in the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, and certain lesser general agreements from 1895 to 1904 which would give Japan any special rights in Manchuria. Hence her opposition.

C. Walter Young, The International Relations of Manchuria (Chicago, 1929), pp. 9, 30.
quently, the Russian advance in Manchuria and Korea was of great concern to Japan. Her earlier effort to reach an accord with Russia to secure the integrity of Manchuria to guarantee the status quo, and to obtain a self-denying ordinance from Russia with regard to commercial privileges in Manchuria was of no avail. Now, if Japan were to realize her ambition, she must accomplish one of the three alternatives to reach an understanding with Russia for the common spoil, or to secure an agreement with Britain (81) to check the Russian advance, (82) or wage a war singly against Russia. The last alternative was ruled out because of lack of preparation; she therefore tried the first two courses.

Japan's anxiousness to conclude an alliance with either Russia or Britain came from her anxiety regarding her isolated position after the Intervention, (83) It was natural for her to prefer an understanding with Russia. Firstly, it was feasible,

81. Britain was another country most concerned with the Russian preferential rights in Manchuria.

82. The Russian loan to China (6 July 1895, MacMurray, n. 20, p. 35) to enable the latter to pay war indemnity to Japan, and later the establishment of the Russo-Chinese Bank (28 August 1896, MacMurray, n. 20, p. 78) enabled Russia to obtain railway construction concession in Manchuria (trans-Manchurian short-cut of the Trans-Siberian - MacMurray, n. 20, p. 81 - The Chinese Eastern Railway). On 27 March 1898, Russia obtained the right to extend the Chinese Eastern Railway to Southern Manchuria and the Gulf of Pechihli - the lease of Port Arthur and Talienwan (MacMurray, n. 20, p. 119). This was supplemented by another agreement on 6 July 1898 concerning the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway (MacMurray, n. 20, pp. 154 and 629). In addition to them, several other Sino-Russian agreements were signed pertaining to jurisdiction over Chinese subjects (MacMurray, n. 20, pp. 277, 274 and 321) and relating to municipal administration in the railway zones (MacMurray, n. 20, p. 330).

83. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 81.
because Britain had no interests other than commercial ones in Manchuria; (84) so it was Russia that Japan had to cope with.

Secondly, England was still in favour of isolation, at least not in favour of an alliance with Japan. The reason was simple. Japan had nothing to offer England in return, nor was she able to protect British interests. Moreover, the elder statesmen who still commanded influence in Japan's foreign relations were also in favour of an alliance with Russia, because in the event of an Anglo-Japanese Alliance Japan's relation with Russia would continue to be critical. (85)

Thus, in spite of the Russian part in the Dreikunst, Japan made some efforts to approach the former for some understanding "on the basis of a Russian preponderance in Manchuria, in return for a Japanese protectorate over Korea". She understood her predominant interest lay in Korea, the same being considered "one-half of her vitality" while no such interests existed in Manchuria. (86) Manchuria for Russia was the "keynote of her Eastern policy". (87)

On the other hand, while agreeing to Japan's lack of interest in Manchuria, Russia considered Korea important to her from both strategic and political points of view. (88)

84. Elder Statesmen, like Ito and Inouye, although few in number, had enough influence on the policy-making and were in favour of an alliance with Russia. Ibid., p. 110.


87. Asakawa, n. 36, pp. 32-46, 48-49.

88. Ibid., pp. 46-47. Also The Times, 25 December 1895, and 11 November 1899.
The Japanese success at Seoul (14 May) (89) followed by the Yamagata-Lobanov Protocol on 9 June 1896, to put Japan and Russia on a par, (90) did not prove lasting as the position soon was violated by the Russian. (91) Repeated enquiries "under what approximate conditions Russia would be willing to come to a friendly understanding with Japan in regard to Korea" obtained only "the vaguest assurances of goodwill". (92) In any case, since Russia was unwilling to give up Korea altogether, the negotiations, at least temporarily, were dropped. On the other hand, the Rosen-Nishi Convention (93) failed to satisfy Japan. Nothing "short of a protectorate over, and ultimately, an eventual conquest and annexation of Korea", were the Japanese willing to accept. (94)

89. The success was that Japan brought about an agreement with Russia on the question of Korea. It was a convention signed by Komura and Waebner, the respective Ministers of Japan and Russia to Korea.


A.M. Pooley in the Memoirs of Count Hayashi (n.74) gives the date of the Convention as 13 May 1896.

90. Yamagata-Lobanov Protocol was merely a ratification of the Komura-Waebner Convention. It gave equal powers to the parties to maintain a legation guard of 800 men. Japan obtained further right of a telegraph guard. For details see Rockhill, n. 89, p. 432; and Hayashi, n. 74, p. 85.


92. Rosen, n. 56, vol. 1, p. 146. Langer opines, it was due to an absence of any clear-cut policy in Russia. Langer, n. 24, Chapter VI.

93. The Rosen-Nishi Convention recognized the independence of Korea. The parties pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs of Korea. Russia further recognized Korea-Japan commercial and industrial relations.

94. Hayashi, n. 74, pp. 89.
Under these circumstances, a Russo-Japanese understanding appeared impossible. Although Japan was now working on the other alternative, the Anglo-Japanese alliance, it is remarkable that Japan did not abandon the idea of an alliance with Russia, notwithstanding the readiness of Count Munemitsu Mutsu, the Japanese Foreign Minister, to throw over the Russian agreement even at the last moment, if Britain had some practical offer to make. (95)

It would be an error to place too much emphasis on the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894 when, of all the Western Powers, Britain took the lead to revise Japan's foreign treaties upon a basis of equality. (96) However, that treaty marked the beginning of the idea in Japan of an alliance with Britain. (97) The idea was strengthened when Britain abstained from the Triple Intervention (98) while the fear persisted in Japan lest the


97. The Secret Memoirs of Count Hayashi mention other factors that favoured the conclusion of Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Firstly, the Japanese folk fancied the political freedom enjoyed by their English counterpart. Secondly, the democratic ideas of government by the people and for the people were cherished by the Japanese. These ideas came to their knowledge with the help of numerous translation of American and English works. At the same time, the alliance would give Japan diplomatic instrument which would secure her military aid in time of crisis.

Hayashi, n. 74, pp. 63-64.

98. Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, 1905-16, denies that future friendship with Japan led Britain's abstention from the Dreibund.

Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916 (New York, 1925), vol. 1, p. 23.

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island Power of Europe had a secret agreement with China which might create difficulties in the way of the island Power of the Far East. (99)

The military and naval successes of Japan over China, on the other hand, impressed British public opinion. (100) The Treaty of Shimonoseki was, in a way, welcomed in London inasmuch as it proposed to open new treaty ports in China for foreign commerce and residence. Japan's acquisition of Formosa and the Liaotung Peninsula caused no alarm in the London Foreign Office. (101) The Times' correspondent in the Far East, Valentine Chirol, however, wrote about the realignment of forces in the Far East:

... the path already tentatively opened up before the war by our generous treatment of the question of Treaty revision in Japan had been finally cleared for the better appreciation on the both sides of the community of interests which exist between the island empires of the West and of the East. (102)

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Perhaps the most compelling reason for this policy was the reluctance on the part of the Rosebery Government to violate the traditional policy of "Splendid Isolation" by identifying itself with a group of Powers which were for the most part the economic and political rivals of England.


100. The Times, 24 September 1894.
101. The Times, 9 March 1895; 23 April 1895.
Thus the two countries came closer. The action of the Dreifund still inclined the two favourably towards an alliance. (103) Moreover, the "Russian aggression" in China and Korea (104) convinced the Japanese that if they were to "strike a strong blow" to Russia they would have to make a common cause with Britain. (105)

Japan did not lose the opportunity provided by the favourable opinion in London. Baron Takashira Kato was at once appointed as Minister to the Court of St. James for the special purpose of cultivating British friendship. Kato's efforts bore good results and Britain did not join the European Intervention. He had taken care to keep the British Government privately informed of the Sino-Japanese negotiations at Shimonoseki. This was appreciated by the British Foreign Office, to which Kato said: "I hope you will support us even indirectly in order to make Japan a new Power in the Orient as your future ally and friend." (106)

Of the notables who considered an alliance with England 'advisable and important', the foremost was Count Hayashi. As early as 1895, he wrote articles reiterating the necessity "of some sort

103. Count Hayashi states, the Dreifund Intervention resulted in new grouping of powers. France and Germany stood with Russia, while Great Britain, Japan and the United States stood on the other. This, in turn, resulted in public and official opinion counting the benefits of an alliance with Great Britain.

Hayashi, n. 74, pp. 73, 86. Also The Times, 1 May 1897, 18 March 1898, 9 April 1898 and 3 June 1898.

104. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 138.

105. The Times, 9 April 1898, 3 June 1898.

of an arrangement with Great Britain". (107) He was firmly of the view that England and Japan together would control China and ensure the maintenance of peace in the Far East. (108)

While giving a serious consideration to the probability of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, Japan was not unaware that she was "not in a position to fight to protect British interests", in addition to her own, in the Far East. Nonetheless, Britain's advice to Japan to yield at the time of the European Intervention was appreciated by Japan. Britain knew that the Intervention would unquestionably be backed by force. (109)

Hayashi continued his efforts at his own level to explore the idea of an alliance first at Peking, where he was his country's representative, later at St. Petersburg, with Sir Nicolas O'Connor, the British counterpart at both the places. (110) It was in March 1898 that the subject was given the first official touch when Joseph Chamberlain, the British Colonial Secretary, and Kato, the Japanese Minister in London, mooted the subject. (111) The latter, in turn,

107. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 82.
109. Spinks, n. 98, p. 320. Also Hayashi, n. 74, p. 108.
110. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 83.
111. Ibid. Hayashi clearly states that the initiative came from Chamberlain.

It is possible to rely on Hayashi. On 31 December 1897, Chamberlain wrote to Salisbury advocating "an understanding" with Japan if not a treaty of alliance. As a consequence therefrom diplomatic relations were raised, on English initiative, from Legation to an Embassy level immediately.

emphasized to his government the advisability of the alliance. (112) Hayashi took up the thread with vigour when he joined the assignment in London in 1900. (113)

In the meantime, there was much furore in England on the Russian designs in China and criticism of her policy. (114) The public urged the British Government to adopt a strong and definite policy. (115) The British Cabinet could not lightly ignore such public feelings, and some members of the Cabinet began to question the necessity of continuing the policy of "splendid isolation". They favoured a policy of alliance. (116)

It is difficult to agree with Chung-Fu Chang who said "England at the beginning did not feel the need of an alliance, much less one with Japan." (117) In fact, as early as 1895, at the

112. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 83.
113. Ibid., p. 111. Hayashi says while at Peking he had learnt a favourable response when he discussed the subject with The Times' Foreign Editor Valentine Chirol. In 1900 he discussed the subject with Dr. Morrison, The Times' Peking Correspondent. He together with a large majority of newspapermen was in favour. Ibid.
114. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 1 March 1898, cols 305, 317, 321; vol. 55, 5 April, col. 274; vol. 56, 29 April, cols 1531, 1532.
115. The Times, 10 March 1898, 12 April, 25 April, 2 August, 9 August, 11 August, 15 August, 6 September, 24 September 1898, 27 February 1899, 2 March 1899.

Chamberlain had anticipated it. For details see Chamberlain to Salisbury, 29 December 1897 and Chamberlain to Balfour, 3 February 1898.

116. Chamberlain at Birmingham, The Times, 31 January 1898, 14 May 1898; Chamberlain in the Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 10 June 1898.
117. Chang, n. 30, pp. 51-52,.
time of the "Intervention", England had felt being "left out", particularly by Germany's participation in the Dreikampf. In 1898, there were evidences of people questioning the policy of "splendid isolation". (118)

Lord Kimberley, the Foreign Secretary, in his last official conversation with Kato, before the Rosebery Cabinet fell on 24 June 1895, declared that the two countries (Britain and Japan) had much in common, which he hoped, would lead to closer understanding. (119) Three years later, while criticizing the Far Eastern policy of the Salisbury Government, Kimberley admitted in the House of Lords that the future friendship of Japan had been an important consideration at the time of the Triple Intervention.

... we came to the conclusion ... that we were not justified in interfering ... with the victorious power; and ... we were of opinion, looking to the great change impending in the Far East, that there was nothing more important to this country [Britain] then to establish relation with the growing naval power of Japan. (120)


Moreover, the South African War had not concluded and England was at odds with France and Germany in the African continent.

The eclipse of "splendid isolation" and a policy of alliances were favoured. Chamberlain had also concluded that the "splendid isolation" was a bankrupt policy. Garvin, n. 111, p. 254.


Besides, isolated by the Dual Alliance comprising France and Russia, and the Triple Alliance comprising Germany, Austria, and Italy, Britain herself was looking for an ally. The isolation of both Britain and Japan and their identical interest in checking Russian pressure on the northern frontiers of Manchuria in case of Japan, and India in so far as Britain was concerned, brought them closer.

It may be that Britain was not enthusiastic about an alliance with Japan "at the beginning". (121) But after the Boxer outrages when Russia was seen still planning to occupy the Manchurian provinces as an indemnity, "England could not but feel resentful toward Russia". "She realized the necessity of joint action with Japan in the Far East". (122) This might have proved one of the most important reasons for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was later concluded. No doubt, no immediate steps or serious negotiations were undertaken by either England and Japan. Nevertheless, there was visible appreciation among the public of the idea of an alliance between the two. (123) Lansdowne probably was holding back such a serious action in order to know the real mind of the Germans. (124)

121. Although there were no direct overtures to Japan yet it is on record that the British Ambassador to St. Petersburg mentioned the possibility of an Anglo-Japanese alliance while discussing the German action at Kiaochau with the Russian Minister of Finance, M. Witte.


122. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 113.

123. Ibid.

124. Lansdowne (Foreign Secretary, November 1900 - December 1905) might have preferred to know the outcome of the Anglo-German negotiations since started.
In March-April 1901 Baron von Eckardstein, the German Charge d'Affaires in London, seriously mooted the idea of a Triple Alliance between Japan, Great Britain and Germany "to regulate" the Far Eastern situation. (125) It is not clear if the Baron was acting on his own, or whether he was acting on behalf of his Government, or whether there were some other reasons for his approach. Perhaps, the Baron was conversant with the minds of Bulow and the Kaiser before he approached his Japanese counterpart. (126) In order to impress upon Hayashi, the Baron pointed out that some of the prominent members of the British Cabinet (127) favoured the

125. England at that time was most concerned with Russian advances in the Far East and had troubles with France on the Niger and the Nile. Chamberlain recommended simultaneous negotiations with Tokyo and Berlin (Garvin, n. 111, pp. 248-9, 251-2). Grey also says (in his Twenty-Five Years, n. 98, p. 43) that the counterpart to the Anglo-Japanese was Anglo-German negotiations. As to the initiative for Anglo-German negotiations, the Germans name the English while the latter put the onus on the German side (Garvin, n. 111, p. 255). In view of Bulow's doubting the integrity of Freiherr von Eckardstein as a diplomat (Bulow, n. 44, p. 341) and Chamberlain's biographer emphatically stating that it was ... Eckardstein (who) brought "Chamberlain into direct contact with German diplomacy" it is possible to side with the latter. Garvin's assertion is probably due to his access to the private papers (Garvin, n. 111, p. 254). For detailed study see Garvin, n. 111, pp. 254-9 ff. Thus Eckardstein might have also approached Hayashi. Hence the possibility of a Triple Alliance. But the Holstein Papers (Cambridge, UK, 1963, vol. 4, pp. 214-15 ff) make it abundantly clear that Chamberlain was the standard-bearer of the idea of alliance.

126. Hayashi states that on the occasion of the funeral of late Queen Victoria the Kaiser met King Edward several times and Baron von Eckardstein always attended the Kaiser, so he was in a position to know. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 115.

Bulow appreciates Eckardstein as an informant but a diplomat "as fool". Bulow, n. 44, p. 341.

idea and that an initiative from Japan would be ideal. (128)

Hayashi, already harping on the possibilities, weighed the idea and obtained his government's authorization, on 16 April 1901, but in no way binding the Government, approached Britain. (129)

Lansdowne favourably responded to Hayashi's approach made the next day, but showed inability to proceed on "this very important matter" in view of absence from London of Lord Salisbury. The interesting feature of this meeting was the suggestion of Lansdowne at the end that an agreement such as this "would not of necessity be confined to two countries, but any other country might be admitted to it". (130) It is not clear whether Japan or England, was more eager to know Germany's mind on her possible inclusion in the prospective Anglo-Japanese alliance. (131) Later,

128. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 115.
129. Ibid., p. 116.
130. Ibid., p. 117. There is no doubt that the 'other country' was Germany. See in this connexion Sidney Lee, King Edward VII (London, 1927), vol. 2, pp. 140-5.
131. Hayashi says (n. 74, p. 117) "Considering the last statement of Lord Lansdowne in conjunction with those already made to me by the German Charge d'Affaires, I came to the opinion that the British Government had already had occasion to consider the matter, and might even have done so far as to seek views of the German Government on the same."

On the other hand, the British documents clearly state, it were Hayashi who first spoke to Eckardstein on the possibility of a Triple Agreement for "the integrity of China" and the "maintenance of the open door at existing treaty-ports". The Document further clarifies as Hayashi having mentioned that the basis of the agreement should be the Anglo-German agreement of October 1900. The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. MacDonald, 17 April 1901, Br. Docs.; vol. 2, no. 99, p. 89.

In this connexion the Holstein Papers (n. 128, vol. 4, p. 760) are also relevant.
the Tokyo Government "paid particular attention to the possibility of an understanding having already been arrived at between Great Britain and Germany on the matter" in view of Lord Lansdowne's statement that such an agreement "should not necessarily be confined to the two countries". (132) When Hayashi met him on 15 May, Lord Lansdowne had repeated again that the proposed agreement would not necessarily be confined to Great Britain and Japan, and that a third country could also be admitted. (133)

From the above, it is clear that both England and Japan were anxious for an alliance. Sir Claude MacDonald, who was on leave from his post at Tokyo, met Hayashi in London on 15 July and conveyed the favourable attitude of the British Government. (134) But the British Government had its own misgivings that during the time of negotiations between England and Japan, the latter might form an alliance with Russia. (135)

In fact, the position was that ever since the publication of the Alexeieff-Tseng agreement in the London Times on 3 January 1901, the Russian dealings with China had invited anxiety in Europe, as in Japan and in America. The Tokyo Government was more alarmed because of the apprehension that the two Powers might agree

133. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 120.
134. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 122.
135. Ibid.
on the neutralization of Korea under a guarantee of the
Powers. (136) Secondly, pressure of Russia on the Tsungli Yemen
for further entrenchment in Manchuria, raised a storm of indignation
in Tokyo. The Japanese were convinced that once the Trans-Siberian
Railway was completed, it would be too late to stop Russia. At the
same time, recalling the action of the Dreibund (1895), Japan was
prepared to reach an understanding with Russia, failing which to
go to war provided that the international alignment was favour-
able. (137) Japan's calculations that Russia, once in control of
Manchuria, would begin operation in Korea were appreciated in
England. That "if Japan must fight for Korea, she had better do
so over the Manchurian agreement, before the Russian (Trans-
Siberian) Railway is completed" was freely understood there as
well. (138) The true position was "unless Japan can make sure of
neither Germany nor France taking an active part on the side of
Russia, she will not fight over the Manchurian Agreement. If the
possession of Korea by Russia were at issue, Japan would fight,
with or without support, and independently of whether France and
Germany would remain neutral."(139) That means, the interests of
Japan in Manchuria were indirect, but on the question of Korea she
would be obliged to protest. She was sure of her ability to deal

136. MacMurray, n. 20, p. 329. Admiral Alexieff was the
Commander-in-Chief of Kwantung Peninsula and of the
Russian forces in the Pacific; Tseang Chi was the Tertar
General of Mukden. The agreement was regarding Manchuria.

137. Langer, n. 24, p. 720. Langer's assertion is based on
Japanese, French and German documents.

138. Memorandum of Francis Bertie, 11 March 1901, Br. Docs.,
vol. 2, no. 54, p. 43.

139. Ibid.
with Russia, in case of war, single handedly, both on land and sea, but her anxiety was to prevent a third party coming to her aid. (140)

The Russians, on their part, thought poorly of the Japanese army. A Russian General, in 1901, called it "an army of sucklings", while another remarked "not to be compared with any major European army, least of all with the Russians". (141) But some of them did appreciate the danger from Japan. Alexander M. Izvolski, Russian Minister to Tokyo, advised his government to double the troops along the frontier of Manchuria. Count Vladimir Lamsdorff, Russian Foreign Minister, and M. de Witte, Russian Minister of Finance, later Prime Minister (1905-6), understood the need of an early evacuation of Manchuria. Witte advised the government that the great task for Russia was to avoid war with Japan. (142)

Great Britain, on the other hand, could ally, in the Far East, with Japan, with Germany together with France, with the United States, (143) or with Russia. (144) No doubt, the attitude of Japan had turned favourable after the Intervention (145) and

140. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 175. The Japanese Premier Ito, in spite of the action of the Prebund (1895), was anxious to strike a bargain with Russia, failing which to go to war only if assured of favourable international alliance. Quoted in Langer, n. 24, p. 720.

141. Langer, n. 24, p. 743.

142. Ibid., pp. 720, 743.

143. The United States was another major power as it is today having commercial interests in the Far East.


144. Ibid., vol. 1, no. 5, p. 5.

145. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 73.
there were many advocates of an alliance with Japan in British Parliamentary and Royal circles. (146) Nevertheless, there were certain practical difficulties in the way of an Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Britain feared that Japan would use the alliance as an instrument for a policy of aggression and expansion with the ultimate object of a protectorate over China. (147) This would bring her into conflict with Russia, and England might be obliged to side with Japan, thus incurring the enmity of Russia. Moreover, Britain might have to fight her alone in all parts of the world, because it would be difficult for Britain to be the enemy of Russia in Asia, and, at the same time, be her friend in Europe. Secondly, in the event of war between Japan and Russia, it would disturb the much-needed peace for British commercial interests, besides the existing prejudice against a non-Christian yellow race. (148)

The other alternatives were an alliance with Germany, adhered to by Japan and, perhaps the United States; or a friendly

146. The most eloquent advocate was Sir Illis Ashmead Bartlett, a prominent politician. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 4, vol. 54, 1 March 1898, cols 305-6; ibid., vol. 76, 7 August 1898, col. 70.

Even the King Edward VII considered it most essential that the British should give Japan their hearty support on all occasions when it was possible to do so. Minute by King Edward, Eq. Docs., vol. 2, p. 92.

147. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 64.

148. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 8 February 1899, col. 198.

On an early occasion, the biographer of Edward VII remarks, the idea of an alliance with a yellow-race did not find much favour with the King.

Lee, n. 130, p. 140.
understanding with Russia. (149) Open conflicts of interests between England and Germany in the Near East, Africa and also in Asia had marred their otherwise friendly relations existing for generations. The rise of German industry and sea power had also provoked jealousy and hostility of Great Britain. (150)

Under the circumstances, Britain first made direct overtures to Russia in January 1898 asking "whether it is possible that the two [England and Russia] should work together in China" since their "objects are not antagonistic in any serious degree". (151) Russia responded favourably to this proposal and even went further in assuring her readiness to consider "any proposal which would bring a closer understanding between the two". (152) Even the Tsar found the idea desirable and possible. (153) The basis for the proposed alliance could be that Russia "regards the Yangtze Valley as England's proper sphere of influence" provided "she will not impede Russian ambition in the North". (154) England agreed to the idea of partitioning of spheres for concessions, for Russia in

149. A few English statesmen preferred an understanding with Russia to an alliance with Germany. UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 10 June 1898, cols 1346-50; ibid., vol. 56, 8 February 1898, col. 238; The Times, 11 October 1898 and 26 January 1899.


151. Br. Docs., vol. 1, no. 5, p. 5; Salisbury to O'Connor, 17 June 1898; Hayashi, n. 74, p. 142 ff.


153. Ibid., vol. 1, no. 10, 2 February 1898, p. 9. It is interesting to note that both England and Japan first tried Russian hand before concluding the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

"the Valley of Hoango with the territory north of it" and for England in the Yangtze Valley. (155) The negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily until, in February, Britain obtained some concessions from China, (156) over which Russia came to have an unfavourable impression. (157)

On the Tsar's insistence, the Anglo-Russian negotiations eventually broke down. (158) Although the negotiations reached an impasse, there is no denying the fact that many British statesmen had preferred an understanding with Russia. (159) Balfour had even made an offer in a speech at Bristol, on 5 February 1896, that there was no objection to Russia obtaining an outlet to the Pacific. (160) Some were even willing to abandon Manchuria to Russia. (161)

155. Ibid., no. 9, p. 8, Salisbury to O'Connor, 25 January 1898.
156. Ibid., no. 1, p. 2, Memo of J.A.C. Tilley, 14 January 1905. Also MacMurray, n. 20, pp. 104-5.
157. Ibid., no. 22, p. 16, O'Connor to Salisbury, 3 March 1898.
158. The British Ambassador termed it as not having broken down but "had a severe shock". Ibid.
159. England and Russia, possibly on the former's suggestion concluded a temporary agreement; each promising not to obstruct each other's application for railway concessions, consequently agreeing on the partitioning of spheres for concessions.

UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, 10 June 1898, cols 1346-50; ibid., 8 February 1898, col. 238.
Besides, British official circles would have been pleased at the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian Alliance because of growing Russian preponderance in Persia and danger to India. (162) The Press and Parliamentary circles favoured an alliance with Russia. (163) In spite of so much of favourable opinion, an understanding with Russia could not be reached. (164) The exponents of Anglo-Russian rapprochement even broached the idea of English-Russian-Japanese agreement (165) which, in turn, would strike an Far Eastern settlement giving Korea to Japan. (166) Manchuria and


So much was the apprehension that Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy in India, concluded that "we are at present drifting merely towards another Port Arthur and a Second Manchurian Convention".


163. It seems the pro-Russian trend in the Press was more due to anti-German feelings.

Sir Edward Grey, an opposition member, said on 26 July 1901 in the House of Commons that Russian alliance was "really vital to any satisfactory condition of affairs".


164. Lord Lansdowne is said to have remarked "We have been very glad to make other arrangements (for an alliance with Russia) but we always found the Russian door closed". Br. Docs., vol. 2, no. 131.

Lord Lansdowne personally desired "more cordial relations" between London and St. Petersburg. He indeed made overtures "to bring about a better understanding" both in China and in Persia, but, he admitted "he had not been successful".

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson, British ambassador to Paris, 12 February 1902, ibid., no. 131, pp. 124-5.

165. The Times, 29 October 1901.

Mongolia to Russia, and the Yangtze Basin to England. (167)

An agreement with Russia could not be "half-hearted". "It must be on the boldest possible lines". (168) It must also result in a settlement in the Balkans and the Persian Gulf, that is, a free hand in the Balkans, in return for a free hand in Egypt; a commercial outlet in the Persian Gulf, in return for a promise to observe the status quo in that area. (169)

But this "too much for too little" offer to Russia met with a cold and disappointing response. (170) The feeling in England also took the opposite turn. It was questioned if Russia at all wanted an agreement with England. The Times remarked that concession to Russia in the Persian Gulf would be a menace to India and there was no possibility of Lord Curzon consenting to such an agreement which would diminish British influence in the Gulf. (171)

Meanwhile, Hayashi had continued his negotiation with Lansdowne. He found an appreciation of the Japanese stand of special interest in Korea and an agreement with the Japanese policy of maintaining the integrity and open-door in China. Identical were their views on Manchuria that Russia should be prevented from

170. It is said Witte favoured an agreement with England only if possible to raise loan in London. Staal went further in saying Russia could attain her objectives without an arrangement with Britain.
171. The Times, 1 November, 4 November, 16 November, 21 November, 23 November 1901.
coming in. (172) What Japan had desired most was that in case she is involved in war for protection of her interests in Korea, a third party coming to the rescue of Russia should be prevented. Secondly, Hayashi enquired the possibility of Germany being included in the alliance. This he did in order to make sure if London was in previous engagement with Germany. (173)

While Tokyo expressed general agreement with Hayashi's continued negotiation, another development took place which looked inconsistent with the Japanese policy towards England. Hayashi was asked to see Marquis Ito (174) at Paris before proceeding further with the negotiation at London. He also learnt privately that Ito was to visit St. Petersburg on his way back in connexion with the Russo-Japanese agreement. He further learnt at Paris that Viscount Shin-ichiro Kurino, the Minister-designate at St. Petersburg had accepted the appointment on the condition that he was empowered to conclude a convention with Russia. (175)

This shows that as late as the end of 1901, Japan had not abandoned the possibility of a Russo-Japanese agreement. It was because Japan, perhaps, believed, that she and Russia could not "continue to look at each other with 'cross eyes' in regard to Korea". (176) This attitude of Tokyo had put Hayashi in a

172. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 124 ff.
173. Ibid., p. 131.
174. Ibid., after the change of government in Japan, left for the United States on health reasons and also to receive the honorary degree of LL.D. on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the foundation of Yale University. Ibid., p. 135.
175. Ibid., p. 139.
176. Ibid., p. 138.
dilemma who had made steady progress in the pourparlers with London. (177) Ito who had no idea before meeting Hayashi about the progress of the negotiations, later appreciated and agreed with him, that the Japanese could not withdraw from the negotiations, although the trip to Russia was to be made uninterrupted. (178) Hayashi's difficulty was not on the ground that Russo-Japanese agreement was irreconcilable with the Anglo-Japanese alliance, but had to negotiate simultaneously with Russia; and it was difficult if not impossible, to cancel the Anglo-Japanese negotiations for the sake of Russia. (179)

Could it be called a contradiction of instructions (to Hayashi) - or an inconsistent policy on the part of Tokyo? Hayashi had received plenipotentiary powers on 8 October. (180) However, he had been cautious, throughout his conversation with Lansdowne, to regard his views as personal, and put the matter with England in abeyance for sometime on some flimsy grounds. (181)

The Ito-Hayashi meeting cleared the dilemma. Ito's visit to St. Petersburg was, in no way, to obstruct Hayashi's work at London. Japan's continued preference for an alliance with Russia

177. Ibid., p. 136. It seems Tokyo did not as yet take Anglo-Japanese negotiation as being serious, perhaps because it doubted the possibility of an alliance with England. Ibid., p. 138.

The biographer of King Edward VII speaks in the same vein. Lee, n. 130, p. 144 ff.

178. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 140.

179. Ibid., p. 141.

180. Ibid., p. 127. The British documents confirm this.


181. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 129.
was, to some extent, due to lack of complete understanding about the extent of negotiations that had been reached with England. (182)

There is also another question. Why did the Ito-Hayashi meeting take place in Paris and not in England? Ito proceeded direct to France from the United States, perhaps at Tokyo's instance, that he should go ahead with the negotiations for the Russo-Japanese agreement. (183) Besides, Delcasse, on his part, was trying hard for the said Triple Alliance. And it is possible that he had talked to Ito to arrange a compromise. (184) Although Hayashi dropped this idea, as did Ito later, in favour of an alliance with England, (185) the British Government was apprehensive, until the alliance was concluded, that a Russo-Japanese agreement might precede the Anglo-Japanese alliance. (186)

The apprehension in British circles was natural, because "Hayashi was to temporise in London until he had heard the outcome

182. Moreover, Ito was to go St. Petersburg availing of an opportunity while abroad and to try for the last time before finally striking a bargain with England. Ibid., p. 141.

183. M. Tausuki, Ito's diplomatic assistant in his foreign tour, was in favour of a Franco-Russian-Japanese Alliance. Ibid., pp. 142-3.

184. See Langer, n. 24, p. 762.

186. Hayashi did not oppose Russo-Japanese alliance but was of the opinion that the one with England must be concluded before considering the feasibility for one with Russia. Hayashi, n. 74, pp. 144-5.

186. Bertie (Assistant Under Secretary-British Foreign Office) warned Hayashi that Russian terms might look advantageous but Japan should not "rely on those terms, for Russia would certainly repudiate them whenever it suited or appeared to suit her". Hayashi, who too, had not looked Ito's St. Petersburg's visit with approbation agreed and could leave the (British) Foreign Office with an assurance to be cautious, if at all anything took place. Ibid.
of Ito's Russia mission". (187) However, the Tokyo Government recognized the seriousness of the situation and definitely stated "it had no intention of playing a double game as between Britain and Russia". (188)

On 30 November, Tokyo sent the amended draft which the British Government had prepared on 6 November. (189) Curiously enough, the amendments were to seek Ito's approval from St. Petersburg through Hayashi before being submitted to the British Government. (190) Perhaps Tokyo still wanted to gain time before finally voting in favour of England. (191)

Besides, certain objections were raised (by Ito) on the draft-treaty wherein no specific mention of Japan's interest in Korea had been made. (192) In view of this, the negotiations for an Anglo-Japanese alliance were toned down until it was sure

187. Ito on the other hand had promised to confine his talks in Russia to "harmless gossiping".

See Langer, n. 24, p. 763; Hayashi, n. 74, p. 12 ff.

188. Britain expressed satisfaction when it was made clear that Ito's mission in St. Petersburg was not official. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 148.

189. Ibid., pp. 132, 149.

190. It is not clear why approval could not be sought direct from Tokyo that M. Mutsui had to be specially despatched for the purpose. Ibid., pp. 150-2.

191. There is a substance in this view. It was reported that Ito in Europe and Inouye in Tokyo, the elder statesmen who were counted in the formation of governmental policies, had been working for the Russo-Japanese agreement.

Hayashi, n. 74, pp. 150, 153.

192. Tokyo's views on Korea were well-known in Britain before negotiations for the Anglo-Japanese alliance were taken up seriously. Br. Doc., vol. 2, no. 102, p. 91.
that "it is hopeless to attempt to conclude a convention with Russia". (193)

But Ito's detailed discussions revealed little appreciation in Russia of the Japanese stand in Korea, although there existed, in Ito's view, the possibility of carrying out the negotiations further, at that time. (194) Before his impressions could reach Tokyo, the Council of Elder Statesmen had on 7 December taken a decision in favour of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. (195) On 30 January 1902, the alliance was signed. This was to last, in the first instance, for a period of five years, (196) and became "the corner stone of Japanese diplomacy for the next twenty years". (197) Germany was informed both by Tokyo and London on

193. Inouye had pointed out in a crucial Cabinet meeting that the reason why England was breaking her "isolation" by forming an alliance with Japan, was probably her dire need to make Japan bear some of her burden. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 154.

There were other factors also. Ito had been received with extreme cordiality both by the Tsar and his government by which the elder statesman had been greatly impressed. The Times, 26 and 30 November 1901.

Izvolski is said to have advised from Tokyo that it would be their last chance. Witte chose complete cession of Korea than an armed conflict with Japan. The Memoirs of Count Witte, Abraham Yarmolinsky, trans. and ed. (Garden City, N.Y., 1921), p. 117.

194. It is true that the opinion in Japan in regard to the Anglo-Japanese alliance was divided but, remarks Hayashi, Ito, too, was a man of conflicting views. Hayashi, n. 74, p. 159.

195. Ibid., p. 158. The Council was presided over by the Mikado. He in agreement with the government had decided in favour of Anglo-Japanese alliance. Ito's proposals were rejected on the ground that he himself had favoured the same alliance during his Prime Ministership. Ibid., p. 161.

196. Article VI of the Alliance. For terms of the Alliance, see MacMurray, n. 20, pp. 324-5.

3 February 1902, (198) about the alliance which she initiated but was concluded without her.

Britain signed the agreement with Japan because the conflict of Russian and Japanese interests was approaching a crisis. If that crisis was to mean war, as was probable, it also seemed probable that the war might spread from the Far Eastern theatre to Europe. There might be no certainty of such an issue; but it was a possibility fraught with such portentous consequences that the British Government was bound to take a serious view of it.

Two courses were open to the British Government: either, to persuade the Powers excluding Russia and Japan to sign a self-denying ordinance of the same kind as the Anglo-German Agreement of 1900 by which the coming conflict might be confined to Manchuria and its results tempered for the benefit of China, if also in the interests of the "balance of power" in the Far East; or, to give public notice to any Power other than Russia and Japan which attempted, by participating in the war, to widen the area of conflict and so provoke a general war, that such a Power would find itself at war with Britain. The European situation of Britain practically precluded resort to the first course; and to make the second course effective, a definite understanding with Japan was necessary. The British Government

198. Since it was only a notification, not an invitation, there was no question of Germany joining the treaty. Probably Germany never really wanted to be a party to it, either due to Anglo-German strained relations or enthusiasm of the German Charge d'Affaires Eckardstein was only a timely factor and later forgotten. Else it could be that Germany considered her relation with Russia of more importance hence saw no advantage to join the treaty.
adopted the second course, in the form of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In signing it, Lord Lansdowne, while conceiving it as a warning to Russia and as an effective means of promoting British interests elsewhere in Asia, was primarily concerned with the preservation of the general peace and for that reason he, as British Foreign Secretary, could plead that he did the best he could to protect the world as a whole from a real danger -- besides the Alliance being as an asset to British interest. (199)

Moreover, despite its unpopularity in America and China, and in the absence of any other stabilizing factor, the Alliance served a useful purpose in the then existing balance in the Far East, and sixteen years later, played an effective part in the victory of the Allies in war. Immediately, the Alliance helped, although indirectly, in the Younghusband expedition to Tibet, in curbing the Indian Nationalist movement and Britain's agreement with Russia later in 1907. It was the British awareness that Japan could play a significant role in the protection of her interests in India, in the Far East, and vis-à-vis Russia that she concluded the alliance with Japan.

In the defence of the British alliance with Japan it is relevant to quote Lord Lansdowne. Justifying an alliance with Japan, he had argued in a memorandum on 11/12 November 1901, saying:

... because we have in the past survived in spite of our isolation, we need have no misgivings as to the effect of that isolation in the future. In approaching the Japanese we have, indeed, virtually admitted that we do not wish to continue to stand alone. (200)

199. Frederick Whyte, China and Foreign Powers (London, March 1928), p. 11.

And it is evident that the Cabinet was with Lansdowne in fearing the practical effects of that isolation of which Salisbury made light. (201)

The Alliance with Japan in effect bound England in advance to potential action of the former in the Far East. At least in one respect, and that was, that England could not remain friendly to or co-operate with, Russia in Europe, if England was bound by an alliance to restrain Japan's aggression in Asia. Hence, the alliance was a factor in bringing the Russo-Japanese war in 1904.

The Russo-Japanese War - Extension of Japan's Influence in China including Manchuria

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was, on the whole, well received in the United Kingdom. The United States hailed the Instrument in the hope that it would maintain the "Open Door" in the Far East without involving her in European complications. (202) In Berlin, and other European capitals (203) it was received "with interest and satisfaction" inasmuch as it was thought to be directed against Russia, providing a free hand to Japan in the event of war against Russia. (204) If the Dreibund was Russia's diplomatic triumph, the Alliance gave her a diplomatic rebuff. Whatever the "appreciation" and "calmness" Russia exhibited, there was no denying the fact that

201. Harold Temperley, and Lillian M. Pension, Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1782) to Salisbury (1902) or Documents, Old and New (Cambridge, UK, 1938), p. 521.


204. Ibid., no. 142, p. 131.
the alliance had been aimed at her. (205)

A close study of the alliance indicates that it contained germs of the future Russo-Japanese war. For instance, how could the preamble "... maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China and the Empire of Korea, and in securing equal opportunities ... for the commerce and industry of all nations...." be reconciled with Article I of the alliance? That article stated "special interests of Great Britain relate principally to China, while Japan, in addition to the interests which she possesses in China, is interested in a peculiar degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Korea...." (206) Logically, "equal opportunities of all nations" could not go together with "the special interests of Great Britain and Japan".

Even Grey asserted that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had put Japan in a position to avenge the slight and retrieve the loss inflicted upon her by the combination of European Powers in 1895. She could not try conclusions with Russia alone. In case any other European Power were to help Russia, then Britain would be bound to come to the assistance of Japan; and the British and Japanese fleets together would be amply strong enough to prevent any European combination against Japan.

Moreover, at the time of signing and in accordance with the terms of the alliance, China was an independent country. None of the Powers, except for certain interests, had any rights there. Therefore, if the allies insisted on special status, the so-called defensive system could provoke other interested Powers in China.

206. MacMurray, n. 20, p. 324.
On 8 April 1902, Russia and China concluded an agreement in regard to Manchuria, (207) to which, however, Japan and Great Britain had no objection.

But for the existence of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, Japan would not have ventured a war with Russia. Because she always feared that a war with Russia would mean, in effect, a conflict with the military and naval forces of the great Dual (Franco-Russian) alliance. The Russian historian, A.L. Galperin supports this view. (208) Even the attempt of Nish to defend Britain does not seem plausible. Apart from the Alliance itself, how could Japan raise war loans in Britain? The argument that the commercial capital market was international and free from state control cannot be reconciled with Britain's strict neutrality. (209) Moreover, Germany could not raise similar loans in 1914 or 1939 war in London capital market.

Besides, Britain had it within her power to prevent the war, but failed. In fact, a war in which Britain was not implicated but which exhausted Russia, was of great benefit to Britain.

The Russo-Japanese war was fought for Korea but in Manchuria. Such were the interests of Russia and Japan in the immensely rich and yet undeveloped North China (of which Manchuria was a part, and to which Korea was an appendix) that it is no wonder that the two Powers came to blows. In Manchuria, both sought trade, but Russian interests were actual and potentially

208. Quoted in Nish, n. 95, p. 227.
209. Nish, n. 95, p. 237.
preponderant. While the policy of "open door" would satisfy Japan, nothing short of exclusive policy would meet the Russian interests.

Korea, however, was different. Japan saw in her a much-needed ballast to her economy whereas Russia regarded her as the very hinge of her security. Moreover, from the Japanese standpoint, Russia in occupation of Korea would be like a dagger aimed at the heart of Japan. (210) She would not only block her trade and enterprise but also be a menace to her security. It was for Korea that Japan had fought China in 1895. It was, again, to safeguard her interests there that she had felt the need of the English in 1902. In view of the above, therefore, Japan was hardly expected to watch with patience any move which brought Russia closer to her frontiers. It is for these reasons that the war with Russia, like the one with China in 1894, was a war of self defence.

The war ended as it started, at least partly, because of the situation in Europe. The Treaty of Portsmouth which concluded the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 was a setback to the Russian efforts in the Far East. The terms of the treaty made Russia recognize Japan's "paramount political, military, and economic interests in Korea" and committed Russia not to interfere with the Japanese measures of control in Korea. Both Russia and Japan were to evacuate Manchuria and restore the same to China. Japan succeeded to the Russian leases of the Kwantung province wherein are located Port Arthur and Dairen. Japan obtained the southern half of Sakhalien. Russia agreed, lastly, to grant Japanese subjects, fishing rights along the coasts of Okhotsk, and Behring Seas, and

210. From Korean Southern corner, the Japanese island of Tsushima, since coveted by Russia, is only 50 miles off.
and pay Japan 20 million yen as the net cost of maintaining the Russian prisoners in Japan. (211)

The Russo-Japanese war in its immediate effect disclosed the inadequacy of Russia's striking power in Eastern Asia. At the same time, the prevailing conception of Japan in the mind of the Powers in the West was altered with as much dramatic suddenness as the image of Russia had fallen.

Besides, Japan had not only made a decisive military thrust in Asia but had also exhibited her diplomatic strength which had accompanied her military campaigns. She had relied to a great degree upon the continued support of her ally, Britain, and the United States which helped her to keep France away from joining Russia in the war.

The loss of the command of the Far Eastern waters and the practical annihilation of the Russian prestige in the Far East, compelled Russia to divert her energies thereafter to the Balkans, thus removing for some years one factor which had particularly disturbed the atmosphere in the region since 1895. As for Japan, the war facilitated the ultimate annexation of Korea. In South Manchuria, she succeeded, with Chinese concurrence (viz., the Peking Treaty of 22 December 1905) to replace Russian rights and interests. Japan thus succeeded in her aims with sufficient guarantee to protect her success. (212) On the other hand, Great

211. MacMurray, n. 20, pp. 522-5.

212. The Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance provided a safeguard from a possible revanche by Russia against Japan in the Far East, and against Britain in India.

Britain, after the war, more and more felt the need of abandoning
the policy of "splendid isolation". After the Anglo-French
Entente (1904) she reached an understanding with Russia in 1907,
converting the former into the Triple Entente.

Having stabilized her position both in the Far East and in
general international relations, Japan now sought to create a new
image of herself as a great Power and leading member of the world
family of nations. The first measure taken to ensure the
continuity was by maintaining good relations with Britain and the
United States. With the former, the Alliance was renewed even
before its five-year term expired and before even the Portsmouth
Peace Conference. The Taft-Katsura secret agreement of 29 July
1905 was the Pacific counterpart of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.
This was followed on 30 November 1908 by Root-Takahira Exchange
of Notes. In the same year, Japan and France concluded a political
agreement.

An irony of history is that after the war of 1905, both
Japan and Russia developed friendly understanding regarding
Manchuria in 1907. In fact, Russia's defeat opened a new chapter
in world history. By removing the fear of her ultimate domination
over eastern Asia, and by causing her to concentrate on an active
diplomacy in Europe, it led to the termination of Russia's under-
standing with Germany, and to that extent improvement in her
relations with Britain and Japan.

By the first of these, in 1907, Japan and Russia bound
themselves publicly to respect China's territorial integrity; and
all the rights accruing to one another from the treaties and
contracts in force between them and China. On the other hand,
secret clauses recognized their respective spheres of interest in Manchuria, Korea and Outer Mongolia. The secret conventions concluded in 1907 and 1912 elaborated the original partition of the outlying parts of China into spheres of interest, adding the western half of Inner Mongolia to the Russian sphere, and the eastern half to the Japanese, (213) while a mutual pledge was given "to place no obstacle of any kind in the way of the confirmation and future development" of the special interests within these spheres.

The revised Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1911 in so far as it related to the integrity of China was a mockery. Instead, the Alliance led to the break-up of the Chinese Empire.

Japan further obtained railway concessions in China in October 1913, followed by the establishment of the Republic in China. In 1914, following the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany in Europe, Japan felt obliged to side with the former against the latter in the Far East, in view of the revised Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1911.

Those who are critical of the Japanese role in the Far East, also blame Britain for her alliance with Japan. It was due to the Anglo-Japanese alliance, they argue, that the Treaty of Portsmouth recognized Japan's "predominant political, military, and economic interests in Korea", which, in turn, led Britain to acknowledge, in the revised Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1905, Japanese rights in Korea, especially "the right to take such measures of guidance, control, and protection in Korea as she (Japan) may deem proper.

to safeguard and advance" (Italics added) her interests, while Japan recognized the same right in respect of British India. Five years later Japan annexed Korea.

Secondly, the Treaty of Portsmouth pushed Russia out of South Manchuria, and transferred the base of Kwantung to Japan. In September 1905, Japan stood where Russia had been in February 1904; and with Russian rights, Japan acquired Russia's spirit. Japan, in her ascendancy in North-east China, became, in so far as the Western Powers were concerned, "the menace of the Far East". The rapidity with which this position was won was due to two things, the weakness of China and the Anglo-Japanese alliance. That the position might have been worse without the Alliance was probably true; "but in reckoning the whole account, as favourable to British policy during the next twenty years, it would be fatal to ignore the blemishes which deface it". (214)

How far was the Russo-Japanese war an indication of Japan's future policy particularly in the Pacific and the Asian continent? The German Documents are revealing in this regard.

Two years after the Treaty of Portsmouth in October 1907, the German ambassador in Washington, Baron Speck von Sternberg, discussed in detail the situation in the Far East with President Theodore Roosevelt. The ambassador hinted at the desirability of a German-American arrangement "to protect China against Japan". He also pointed out that Japan was doubtless aiming at control of the Pacific Ocean, extension of her territory southward, and domination in China. Symptoms of this, the ambassador argued,

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were to be observed directly after the war with China (1895), but aggressive action on Japan's part was not to be expected until she had settled her large international questions, recovered from the heavy expenditure of the Russian war (1905) and was ready again for another great war. Leading military authorities, explained the ambassador, considered that many years must pass before Japan could be ready for such a war. It was their view that the great danger of Japanese expansion would affect not only the United States, but also Japan's allies - England and France - in an equal degree.

The ambassador's analysis of future probabilities in the Far East, from which the President at least did not dissent, were more prophetic than he knew, though it is probably correct to say that he was thinking in a matter of ten, rather than thirty, years. But the most interesting aspect is that there was evidently no predisposition on the part of the ambassador or the President to underestimate Japan's war potential.

President Roosevelt later in the conversation actually contemplated the possibility of a Japanese invasion of America in which the American Army would first suffer a crushing blow; and only then, after a thorough army reorganization, would Japanese invading forces be annihilated and America be in a position to take her revenge. On this last possibility, the German Kaiser minced; "very optimistic"! But whatever may be thought of these far-reaching speculations, it is at least abundantly clear that the results of the Japanese victory over Russia were not underestimated either in the Old World or the New. But only for a
moment did it deflect Britain's gaze from Central Asia. (215)

For Britain, the consequences of the Japanese victories were significant. It exposed Russian weakness which had so long been believed so profoundly in strength. How little, reflected Edward Grey uneasily, did we really know of the Japanese character? (216) But in view of greater preoccupations in Europe he was content to leave at that, and did not try to speculate too closely about the direction of Japan's expansion in the future, still less to assume that it would be necessary to take measures to meet it, which was to be the business of the United States. In any case, if to the Western world the Japanese victory was a portent, to Asia it was the symbol of revival. Japan's spectacular victory over Russia in 1905 may be said to have marked the "birth" of militant Nationalism in Asia. (217) The impression produced by the defeat of one of the Great Powers of Europe in single-handed conflict by an Asian nation never faded. It is in this context the English people could boast that the Japanese victory was made possible by the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 - an alliance expressly designed to ensure that if war came, Russia should fight without allies.

POSITION OF THE POWERS IN THE FAR EAST

A year before the Sino-Japanese War Sir Cecil Spring-


Rice (218) wrote to his friend: "I am very much impressed with Japan as a Power, and it will be interesting to see what it turns out to be - bubble or nugget." (219) The victory of Japan over China in 1895 reversed the power status of the two countries. Japan emerged as the leading Asian nation, and Western statesmen shifted their attention from Peking to Tokyo. Besides, whatever restraint the Powers had so far exercised in the demands on China, the partition of China now seemed at hand. Different countries had different interests. Some favoured partition of China, others not. But whether they deemed it to their advantage to seek to preserve the territorial integrity of China or whether they schemed to secure a choice slice of the country for themselves, they now had to consider Japan, be it as an aid or as an obstacle to their plans.

Britain's amiable, if not entirely disinterested, support of Chinese territorial integrity till 1895 evoked little warmth from the Chinese side. For, Britain's own record as an imperialist Power was bad. Cheng Chih-tung had, in a memorial, complained to the Chinese Emperor that England "used commerce to absorb the wealth of China". (220) There were equally cogent reasons against alignment with most other Powers. France "used religion to entice

218. Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice served as Secretary at Brussels, Washington, Tokyo, Berlin, and Constantinople before 1900; Charge d'Affaires, Teheran, 1900; Secretary (later Councillor) of British Embassy at St. Petersburg, 1903-05; Minister and Consul-General, Persia, 1906-08; Minister to Sweden, 1908-12; Ambassador at Washington, 1913-19.


220. See Evan Luard, Britain and China (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 36-38.
the Chinese people"; Germany had "no common territorial boundary with us (the Chinese)"; and the United States "does not like to interfere in the military affairs of others". Therefore, Russia was considered as the most suitable ally for the most useful support against Japanese and other foreign encroachments. (221)

But to Britain Russia remained the supreme menace all over the East. Russian activities in the area were regarded by the British Foreign Office with an almost paranoid suspicion. For long, Britain's policy in China was aimed at bolstering the ailing regime against this dangerous antagonist. She took other steps. She secured consular posts in the wilds of Chinese Turkestan, to watch over the approaches to India. She secured a naval base at Wei-hai-wei to offset the Russian ports at Vladivostok and Dairen. She undertook an adventure in Tibet to counter Russian influence there.

Thus when, after the Boxer Rebellion, Russia appeared about to obtain for herself a still more dominant position in Chinese affairs, the British felt the need to counter this development in some more effective way. In these considerations, the need to retain the goodwill of the tottering regime in China seemed of only small importance. Yet, by deciding in 1902 to enter into alliance with Japan, Britain was in Chinese eyes, siding with China's principal enemy. And by specifically recognizing in the treaty the right of Japan to take what measures she saw fit to "safeguard her interests in Korea", Britain seemed to the Chinese to be shamelessly encouraging Japan in her pretensions in that

221. Ibid., p. 36.
Area. To the British, the alliance was directed to helping Britain against Russia. To China, it was designed to aid Japan against herself.

Nonetheless, with the exposure of China's weakness, the Far East became a world centre of haute politique, and Britain became involved, whether she wished it or not, in an international struggle for territorial possessions and special "spheres" in China.

The struggle had two facets; it was partly a local scramble for economic advantage, and partly the playing out on the Far Eastern stage of rivalries between the great European Powers, who were at that time actively engaged in grouping themselves with power-blocs following the abandonment of the policy of "splendid isolation" by Britain. The political alignment of the Great Powers persisted up to the time of the Great War.

The most striking change which the European politics brought about in the Far East was the relaxation of the policy of Chinese integrity. So long as there was a hope of the Chinese Government remaining a master of its own house to act itself as guardian of the "open door" and to resist Russian advance which was feared in England as part of Russia's southward drive through Asia towards the frontiers of India, it was a primary tenet of British policy to preserve the integrity of China. But once it had become impossible to save China from dismemberment, then British statesmen had to contract their outlook, and the British Government duly competed for spheres of interest in the race for territorial acquisitions called the "battle of concessions" on the Chinese territory.
When France in the South West, Germany in Shantung, Russia in the North, Britain in the Yangtze Valley had, after the "battle of Concessions" established spheres, Conger, the American Minister in Peking, felt the door of China could not be kept open if America stood aside. On 6 September 1900, John Hay, the United States Secretary of State, wrote the famous "Open Door" notes while seeking a naval base and territorial concessions in the province of Fukien. Hay acted in the belief that such a foothold would prevent the disintegration of China and serve as a guarantee of the Open Door. The proposal fell through, because China had given a promise to Japan never to alienate any part of Fukien. The high political tension in the Far East calmed down with the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese alliance on 30 January 1902 and as the result of the check given to Russia by her defeat by Japan in 1905.

What has been Britain's attitude towards Japan since she was a major Power in the Far East? There was deep-rooted suspicion in Japan that Britain might enter the war of 1894-95 on China's side. But the Japanese tried hard not to alienate Britain, and it was a relief to many Japanese when she pledged her neutrality after war was declared.

It is possible to argue that Britain in 1894 did not realize Japan's strength and probably expected that ultimately victory would go to China. However, a considerable section of the British experts on the region who also carried weight with the Foreign Office, believed in China's incapacity to face Japan. (222)

The Japanese excitement at their success, apart from infusing confidence, was not unaccompanied by anxiety. They had realized

222. Chirol, n. 102, p. 3,
that their victory had disturbed the European Powers and their interference in or during the peace settlement was no surprise. Their only surprise was that the Triple Intervention took so long to mature and that the Dreikabin was solid although unnatural.

Once Russia, France and Germany had jointly offered what they called a "friendly advice" to Japan to return the Liaotung territory to China, Britain's role became crucial. She felt that the Triple Intervention was "harsh, uncalled for, and repugnant"; (223) Lord Kimberley thought that Japan "should not be deprived of the reasonable fruits of her victories over China, although Britain would have preferred no disturbance of the status quo". (224) But Britain had no wish to become committed to Japanese expansionist ambitions in China which had already been reported by the Tokyo legation. (225) Since, however, she was attached to Japan for commercial benefits, she acted in the manner of a Power with international status would. She advised Japan "not to overestimate the indignity of making concessions in answer to international protests", (226) and the Treaty of Shimonoseki was revised. All the same, it is wrong to say that as a result of the Tripartite intervention the prestige of Russia, Germany and France had increased at the expense of Japan. At worse, according to Satow, the Tripartite intervention had put water into the wine and moderated the Japanese policy. (227)

225. Ibid., p. 31.
226. Ibid., p. 30.
Moreover, whatever the nature of the Japanese demand on China, the sino-Japanese war favoured Britain and the United States since the chief object of Japan, according to Satow, "was to anticipate the completion of the Siberian Railway and to prevent Russia gaining free access to the Pacific Ocean". (228)

Thus the East Asiatic Dreikonz had given Japan a setback inasmuch as she had to wait till 1905 to become a world Power. In the meantime she concentrated her efforts on building up her national strength, sufficient to become eligible for a treaty with Britain in 1902 and match Russia by defeating her in 1905.

The critical period after 1895 witnessed the emergence of Japan as the dominant Power in the Far East. In 1895, she defeated Imperial China, and, ten years later, she administered a similar defeat to Imperial Russia. In 1910, she rounded off her achievements by territorial expansion as an empire by annexing Korea.

In 1894-95, for the first time in her modern history, Japan resorted to war as an instrument of national policy. Her victory and the extent of her economic and territorial gains at the expense of China demonstrated that Japan had come of age militarily. Japan had created a national army based on universal conscription, equipped with modern weapons, trained in the tactics and strategy of the Western military Powers of the time and backed by an emerging system of industrialization. The attack on the collapsing Imperial Chinese government revealed not only Japan's readiness, but its eagerness to resort to force to achieve her goals in foreign policy.

228. Ibid., p. 34.
The long-term significance of the Japanese victory was that it established the relationship between Japan and China that was to prevail until after the end of the World War — Japanese domination and Chinese submission. Consistently and almost without interruption, Japan pursued an aggressive diplomatic, economic, and military policy towards China which gradually aroused the Western Powers against Japan's policy on the continent.

The Three Power intervention was the immediate and effective reaction of Russia, Germany and France to the Japanese victory. Though Japan was forced to yield at the time, the resentment created among the Japanese was certainly one factor that led Japan to go to war with Russia in 1905 (and with Germany in 1914). The principal issue involved in the intervention, the Liaotung Peninsula, brought Manchuria into the main arena of Far Eastern international relations; (and it remained one of the key areas of tension in Far Eastern international relations even after the great War).

The Japanese victory over Russia in the war of 1904-05 was additional and even more convincing proof of Japan's newly-developed capacity to wage war. Imperial Russia was one of the world's great Powers at the beginning of this century, and the Japanese victory cannot be explained away as a lucky one at the expense of a backward neighbour, as was the victory over China a decade earlier. The economic drain on Japan was considerable and at first victory almost eluded the Japanese forces; nevertheless, the Treaty of Portsmouth gave Japan substantial gains, especially in Manchuria and Korea. Of equal, if not greater, significance was the fact that it blunted the Imperial Russian thrust into the Far East, which, history shows, the latter never forgave.
The conclusion of the first Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902 was a major diplomatic victory for Japan. In the first place, it was a necessary preliminary for the war with Russia. In the second place, to become allied with what was generally accepted as a great world Power of the time was a major achievement for Japan which had been regarded as a mere international upstart and which, additionally, had escaped from the onerous burden of the unequal treaty system only three years earlier. The alliance also provided the means for Japan later to become involved in the World War at the expense of Germany, one of its principal rivals in China.

A mention must be made of another Western Power, potentially great, but whose greatness was not yet realized when Japan assumed that role — the United States. She was not, till 1914, directly involved in the Far Eastern international relations of the time as Russia, Germany, France and Britain were or Japan had assumed. Yet she was as much concerned at the colonial role of the European Powers in the Far East as with the Japanese expansion in the region.

The military victories of Japan in the Far East and her alliance with the greatest Power of the period had convinced the United States the extent to which Japan had mastered the techniques of power politics which characterized international affairs at the time. She was not willing to be a mere silent spectator of an economically, diplomatically, and military strong Japan, becoming increasingly aggressive and willing to resort to war to achieve its foreign policy goals. Nor was she satisfied with a progressively weakened China, enfeebled not only by internal problems of great magnitude but also by increasing pressure from European Powers. The situation in the Far East and the role of the United States
there so changed the increasingly complex interplay of tensions in the region as to make it a first-rate problem of global significance. Manchuria remained one of the key areas of tension in Far Eastern international relations. Korea emerged into a new web of international rivalry and conflict.

The first American reaction to the Far Eastern situation created by the Japanese victory and the "carving of the Chinese Melon" by the European Powers, was the Open Door policy of 1899. Since the essence of the policy consisted only in gaining the commitment on the part of the other Powers that they would not harm the United States position in China, it hardly strengthened that position in any positive manner. However, it revealed an attitude toward China, its problems and the United States' future policy which deeply involved her in the region. Her thrust in 1905 at Portsmouth which brought the Russo-Japanese war to an end was a signal which was not taken seriously at that time both by Japan and Great Britain. Only when the Washington Conference in 1921 dealt a death blow to Anglo-Japanese cordiality that the power of the United States was felt by the other Powers,