Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS
Politically, Japan's position vis-a-vis her neighbours was much more secure than that of Britain. Across the Tsushima straits, there was no France, no Germany, no Italy about which she had to worry. Yet, the war in 1914 was the third conflict within a generation to pay handsome and immediate dividends to Japan by way of prestige.

Japan entered the war "to fulfill her obligations" under the Anglo-Japanese alliance — her political and economic ambitions notwithstanding. The year 1914, therefore, marked the test of the treaty.

To what extent did the Anglo-Japanese Alliance oblige Japan to participate in the War? For some days after the outbreak of war, Japan remained neutral. It offered Germany terms which would have ensured the maintenance of its neutrality. Had Germany accepted these terms and continued to threaten British interests in Asia, it is difficult to see how Japan would have kept faith with both countries. But Germany sent no reply to the Japanese Note, and Japan came into the war "in accordance with the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance".

Viscount Kato, just after his resignation from Foreign Office in August 1915, stated his personal view on Japan's entry into the war — that there was no casus belli between Japan and Germany, the hostilities that had already taken place being those provided for in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. (1) Since it was

difficult to be at war with Germany in the Far East and at peace with her in another part of the world, Japan would not have made decisions to join war in favour of Britain so soon.

Rather "if the European conflict meant anything to Japan, it signified an opportunity to concentrate on Eastern Asia at a time when her leading competitors among the belligerents were engaged in a life and death struggle on the western front". (2) In reality, the question of cost was more than sufficient to keep Japan out of the war in Europe. But in this respect, Japan proved to be more than an ally, a loyal friend of Britain. (3) However, Japan's entry into the war was not received with enthusiasm by the Japanese populace. A belief prevailed in some quarters of Japan that the German army would finally triumph. The Japanese Government never wavered in its policy of abiding by the spirit of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, and this led Lord Haldane to observe in the House of Lords on 15 February 1927, that Japan's part (in the war of 1914-1918) has not yet been adequately recorded by the historians. (4)

So far as Britain was concerned, the treaty, though one of many concluded for safeguarding her world-wide interests, brought in two most outstanding benefits. It confined intractable Russia in 1905 and it rendered invaluable assistance in the British war effort in 1914-18. For Japan, it became the foundation of her foreign policy. Till her success against Russia in the Far East in 1906


3. Young, n. 1, p. 91.

(which in itself was considerably due to the Alliance) Japan would have attracted no attention from the European Powers but for the Alliance. In short, so long as it lasted [1902-21], the agreement helped the Contracting Powers in times of peace in establishing sound relations and friendship with other nations, and in times of war in conducting defensive policies. Britain never had any doubt about Japan's intentions, although there was an undercurrent of feeling that Japan had some understanding with Germany. There was in fact no Japan-German understanding. But certain factors could give such an impression. Firstly, there existed a definite pro-German element in the land of the Rising Sun. (5) Secondly, German ideas had been utilized in the making of modern Japan. Thirdly, there was also the natural tendency among the army officers, especially among those trained in German methods, to believe in the invincibility of Germany. Above all, there was the popular criticism, and the excited interpellations in the Diet, regarding the Imperial Government's action in adhering to the London Declaration of October 1915. (6) The criticism tended to give the impression as if an understanding with Germany existed or was favoured. The defeat of Germany, however, dealt a severe blow to the advisers of German efficiency. And Japan, as a junior player in the game of world-

5. It is relevant to note that after the Paris Peace Conference, Japan opposed the trial of the Kaiser.

6. It was a hasty deduction on the part of Europeans that criticism of the decision of the Imperial Government to adhere to the London Declaration amounted to entertaining the idea that Japan would break away from Britain, France, and Russia and make peace with Germany. Viscount Kikuziro Ishii thought it was nothing but an indication of a lack of knowledge of the Japanese political life.

diplomacy, had to be careful (after her adherence to the Declaration) in taking special precautions to assure herself of a voice in the proceedings of the peace conference, so as to enhance her international standing. Nonetheless, her admittance as one of the five Great Powers in the Paris Conference was not due to any goodwill or patronage on the part of other Powers. Her membership of the Council of both the Paris Conference and the League of Nations was a recognition of her contribution to the war effort and her being a signatory to the London Declaration. The latter especially had assured her an important seat at the peace table with the right to take part in all peace proceedings.

Japan's ultimatum to Germany contained phraseology similar to that used by Germany when "advising" Japan to hand back Port Arthur to China twenty years before; Japan now "advised" Germany to hand back Tsingtao.

The Germans were very angry at Japan's participation in the war, and some churchmen published a manifesto which contained the statement that "heathen Japan" had been called in under the pretext of an alliance. An answer was given to them by Sir Claude MacDonald (Minister at Tokyo 1900-12) in a letter to The Times on 6 October 1914. (7)

It was my privilege to be British representative at the court of Tokyo from the commencement of the negotiations which had preceded the war between Japan and Russia until peace was signed; incidentally also it was my great privilege to be an instrument, although a very humble one, in the making of the alliance alluded to by the German theologians. May I therefore venture to state as follows:

7. This was Sir Claude MacDonald's last tribute to Japan he loved so well, for he died the following year.
The whole world knows with what splendid valour our allies fought, but it is not known as generally as I think it ought to be how straight-forward, honest, and dignified, and how loyal to us was the conduct of these negotiations; it is not generally known how appreciative of the stubborn valour of their opponents, how courteous and chivalrous to them in defeat, how cheery and patient in their own sufferings, were the 'heathen' Japanese. It is not known, perhaps, as I know it, that fullest information regarding wounded Russians in the hospitals of Japan, for transmission to their friends, was immediately obtainable, the nature and gravity of their wounds, and in some cases were the temperature of the patient, being telegraphed; The present Viceroy of India, then Ambassador at St. Petersburg (Lord Hardinge of Penhurst), can bear me out as to this. I venture, therefore, to think that some Christian nations, not forgetting Germany, have much to learn of the Christian virtues of chivalry, courtesy and honesty from 'heathen Japan'.

However, with Japan at war, Britain was confronted with two problems. First, the question of China's neutrality, which would be infringed by the operations of the Japanese Expeditionary Force in the Shantung Peninsula moving forward to the siege of Tsingtao; and second, though not taken up immediately, was the question whether Japan's naval and military co-operation should be restricted to the Far East. The first proved a long-drawn-out problem, and was only finally settled when Japanese troops evacuated Tsingtao some years after the war, while the second caused some misgivings on both sides. In Twenty-Five Years Lord Grey observed: "To explain to an ally that her help will be welcome, but that you hope it will not be made inconvenient, is a proceeding that is neither agreeable nor gracious." (8)

Japan's participation in the war marked the end of an era which began with the opening up of Japan to the rest of the world.

by Commodore Perry in 1853. When the war broke out in August 1914, she, it seems, in the spirit of noblesse oblige, and by virtue of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, sided with the Entente Powers. But actually in entering the war, Japan was moved less by a spirit of noblesse oblige than by ulterior motives. Although the war's outbreak in no way affected the special interest of Japan in East Asia, she used the conflict as a golden opportunity to secure hegemony on the continent. The limited military action in the Shantung Peninsula resulting in the ejection of Germany not only gave Japan the satisfaction of paying back Germany in the same coin for Germany's role in the Three Power Intervention twenty years earlier, but also provided a foothold for later encroachments on China proper. The "Twenty One Demands" on China were a clear demonstration of the extent of Japanese ambitions in China and foreshadowed the future Japanese course of action on the continent. Interestingly, the "Demands" seemed to most Japanese leaders as a reasonable basis for future Sino-Japanese relations, but were of course regarded by others, including most Chinese, as a flagrant example of imperialism. Japan thought the "Demands" would provide for the readjustment of affairs consequent on the Japan-German war and for the purpose of ensuring a lasting peace in the Far East by strengthening the position of the Japanese Empire. (9)

The Marshall Islands were occupied in September 1914, and the Marianas and Carolines in October. By 1921, the Islands sank into the obscurity of Mandates, which veiled secret naval preparations.

As regards the question of intervention in Siberia, the United States distrusted Japan's intentions on the mainland of Asia. To the British mind, the American distrust of Japan was not exactly without foundations. Japan used the Allied intervention in Siberia as a cover for expansionist purposes. She went far beyond the agreement that all Allied operations should centre in Vladivostock. On 16 August 1918, Japanese troops landed at Nikolaevsk, 800 miles north of Vladivostock, at the mouth of the river Amur; troops were also sent to Manchuli, while still more were kept in reserve in Northern Manchuria. By the War Office's own admission, 73,400 troops had been despatched by November 1918. (10)

Besides, Japanese activities in Siberia and the Maritime Provinces were continued long after the British, French and American troops were withdrawn at the beginning of 1920. The avowed reason for continued occupation was the protection of Japanese subjects and property, but it may be conjectured that there was a great unwillingness on the part of the Japanese military authority to withdraw before some success had been obtained for the maintenance of military prestige. The military had never returned empty-handed from any previous expedition. It was significant that immediately after the acceptance of the Japanese Command's terms of withdrawal by the delegates of Eastern Siberia, on 4 April 1920, "incidents" occurred in the Maritime Provinces, in Vladivostock, Habarovsk and Nikolaevsk which became pretexts for continued occupation. (11)

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subsequent massacre of the Japanese garrison at Nikolaiievsk in May was a further pretext for continued occupation, for the seizure of the Russian part of Sakhalin and a further incentive for the military to gain tangible success before withdrawal. (12)

Even the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, (13) concluded on 2 November 1917 by an exchange of notes was a measure through which Japan intended to consolidate her position in the Far East. The United States formally recognized, the special interest of Japan in China (though without defining them) arising out of geographical propinquity (14) - a concession which tended to extend the liberty of action which Japan had already acquired as a result of the war.

Japan thus emerged from the war as the most powerful state in the Far East, much richer and stronger than she was when she went into it. Besides the United States, she was the only Power that after the war still commanded huge reserves of men, money, and material resources. She was one of the very few nations to be strengthened and enriched by the war of 1914-18. The war gave her two fundamental advantages: directly, in so far as it enabled her to take over - in some cases permanently - Germany's possessions

12. Ibid., pp. 118-20.

13. This however was marred by the Anti-Japanese Legislation, the California Alien Land Law of 2 November 1920.

14. And as a part of practical politics. Notwithstanding the doctrine of "Open Door" the United States regarded (an uncertain) friendship with Japan as more important than the preservation of China's territorial and administrative integrity. For the sustenance of "Open Door" she was content to employ moral and diplomatic measures and not willing to employ force.

and "special interest" in the Far East; and indirectly, in that it diverted the attention of the Western Powers from China, and left President Yuan Shih-kai to face Japan and Russia alone.

The war gave a tremendous impetus to Japanese commercial and industrial expansion. This made the business classes increasingly important in Japanese life and politics. They became the heroes of a prosperous new Japan, and, as they spread their activities throughout the Far East, they began to overshadow the soldier and sailor as the front line fighters in Japan's search for a place in the sun.

The peace settlement at Versailles did not deal conclusively with any of the Far Eastern ramifications of the World War, although there was a desire to devise for the Far Eastern area specific arrangements to give particular effect to the spirit of international collaboration. There was also a general desire to remove the cause of conflict inherent in the system of spheres of influence in China and give China the opportunity of peaceful development. In the Peace Conference, Japan failed to get her proposal for racial equality inserted in the preamble of the Covenant of the League of Nations. She wanted "the principles of the equality of nations and the just treatment of their nationals" endorsed. But Lord Robert Cecil, on behalf of Britain, refused to accept the proposal of the Ally. The views of the British Dominions had prevailed. Australia obviously had more influence with London than had Tokyo. (15) Woodrow Wilson did lip-service to the doctrine of equality as the basic principle of the League, but declared that questions like

this must be decided unanimously and not by majority. He was perfectly well aware that the Japanese amendment was intrinsically just and reasonable. He was equally well aware that his countrymen and the Australians would not accept it. He observed:

How can you treat on its merits in this quiet room a question which will not be treated on its merits when it gets out of this room? It is a question altogether of the wisest thing to do, not a question of our sentiment towards each other or of our position with regard to the abstract statement of the equality of nations. (16)

In any case, the principle of racial equality was not accepted at Versailles, and the question remained a live issue with Japan. Much irritation was engendered. This problem was admittedly hard to solve, and by more or less tacit agreement—Japanese pride forbidding any overt protest—was shelved.

There were two other questions where Japan was most vitally concerned at the Peace Conference. Japan felt justified in claiming from Germany the conditional cession of "the leased territory of Kiaochow together with the railway and other rights possessed by Germany in Shantung". (17) Baron Makino who, on behalf of Japan, presented the case, pointed out that Japan had entered the war after consulting Britain in conformity with the treaty of alliance and that she had removed the German menace to general peace in the Far East by destroying the German political and military bases in Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

Japan possessed almost impregnable diplomatic position when the Peace Conference tackled the problem. Therefore, all the former


German rights at Kiaochow and in Shantung province were transferred to Japan, to be restored to China. Could it be said, therefore, that Japan obtained the rights, not of Germany but of China, not of the enemy, but of an ally? (18) China thought that a more powerful ally (Japan) has reaped benefits at the expense, not of the common enemy (Germany), but of a weaker ally (China). (19) Had it not been for this decision, or had the Conference decided differently, there would have been no Shantung question. (20)

The second question related to the German Islands north of the Equator. These were the islands which had been conquered and occupied by the Japanese navy and recognized by Britain and France in their respective agreements of 1917. The Conference agreed to assign to Japan under the newly-adopted mandate system of the League of Nations all German islands, except Yap, in the Pacific north of the Equator.

China's declaration of war on Germany and Austria-Hungary in August 1917 had little effect on the outcome of the war. China merely obtained representation at the Paris Conference. Sino-Japanese difficulties developed as soon as Japan presented her claims to all former German rights in Shantung.

China would have been an active participant early in the European war, had it not been for Japan's persistent obstruction.

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18. China had jointed the War against Germany on 14 August 1917. Therefore she was an ally.


20. Ibid., p. 6.
President Yuan Shi-Kai realized from the beginning that China must join the war, if she was to solve her problem of international recognition. Therefore, he thought of joining the Entente Powers. He even offered to attack the German leasehold territory in Shantung, by offering to send troops to participate in the capture of Tsingtao. By this, he hoped to participate in the war. President Yuan's offer to participate in the war was a master-stroke of diplomacy, for it was infinitely better for China to join with Japan and Britain in driving Germany out of Shantung than to leave the task to be performed alone by the two island Powers, with the possible result of being excluded from the final settlement.

Sir John N. Jordan, the British Minister at Peking discouraged such an action in order to limit the war zone. British suggestion apart, Japan had the real voice in determining China's entrance into the war. Japan was afraid that China's participation in the war would awaken the four hundred million Chinese which was against the interests of Japan.

The Washington Conference of 1921-22 (21) made an ill-fated attempt to solve the problems left untouched at Versailles. It failed to reconcile the basic clash between the "Open Door" policy of the United States and Japan's claim to special interests in China. The termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance during the

21. The summoning of Washington Conference may not be said to be the doings of America alone. D.C. Watt lists three reasons, viz., the question of the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the deep embitterment of Japanese-American relations by Naval competition, and the alarm of the Dominions, especially Canada, expressed at the Imperial Conference of 1921.

Washington Conference, although an American diplomatic victory, as American-Japanese tension had mounted, did not contribute to an easing of subsequent tensions in the Pacific area. The United States failed to drive Japan into a corner, although her purpose in the Washington Conference was to forestall Anglo-Japanese united action injurious to her interest in the Far East. She had noted with disquietude the Anglo-Japanese harmony whereby Britain tended to overlook the "Open Door" policy. (22) On the other hand, the Japanese could not secure an Anglo-Japanese-American entente, which they conceived as a combination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, and the Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908.

While the perpetuation of friendship with Britain - alliance or no alliance - was the fixed policy of Japan, the Naval ratio 5:5:3 decided upon between the United States, Britain, and Japan only temporarily lightened the burden on the nation's exchequer. The Conference also measured British strength in terms of the strength of a single foreign Power, the United States; the form of estimate which Palmerston had so definitely rejected in 1861, it did not provide the two-hemisphere British Empire with the two-hemisphere navy it needed.

Nonetheless, Japan's pre-eminence in East Asia could not be doubted, despite the uncertain new force of Bolshevism. By 1920, Japan was already becoming the workshop of Asia. Her large factories, equipped in many cases with the most modern machinery,

formed the base of the pyramidal Japanese industrial structure. She prospered by capturing former European markets in Asia and in South America, and carried much of the trade of Asia in her ships. By the simultaneous destruction of the Russian and German navies, she became not only the greatest naval Power in the Far East, but also the third largest in the world. In fact, there was no foreign force that seemed prepared to challenge successfully a Japanese force that was fully committed in its own territories or in any part of East Asia. Besides, Japan continued to be an appeal in the sphere of political nationalism in Asia.

British policy in the Far East during the nineteenth century was mainly governed by commercial considerations, in particular due to the massive attractions of the Chinese market. Commercial considerations led to the two principles of "Open Door" and the maintenance of China's administrative and territorial integrity. The British claim to have enunciated these principles long before John Hay, the American Secretary of State, drew up in the famous notes of 1899. (23)

With the formulation of the policies of exclusiveness, pursued first by France in South West China, Russia in Manchuria, and Germany in Shantung, the British attitude changed. Britain began to regard participation in the battle of concessions as necessary, so as not to be squeezed out. She marked out the Yangtze basin as the special sphere of British investments and acquired her own lease of a naval base, which she built up at

Wei-hai-wei in 1899. Her overall aim in China, the then "sickman" of the Far East, was, therefore, to slacken the pace of disintegration while securing a share in the spoils appropriate to the scale of British interests.

Britain was drawn towards Japan when her growing commitments in Europe and shrinking power overseas profoundly affected international politics in the Far East. Security for British interests in Asia was sought through the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in order to bring stability to support the status quo in this remote area. (24) Britain entered into a military partnership with a non-European Power, Japan, for the first time. It was first directed against Russia, later against Germany. The Alliance was one of the various ways Britain laboured to fashion a political substitute for their formal naval dominance in the Far East.

Britain's attitude towards Japan was quite different from what the latter understood. It was not as simple as Japan thought it to be.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance ensured British neutrality in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, and served as a warning to France, now united with Russia by her alliance of 1891-92, against going to her ally's assistance. Britain was bound to join Japan in the event of France's involvement in the Russo-Japanese war. However, the total Japanese victory over Russia was as much a surprise in London as elsewhere. The Japanese success over Russia

24. Britain even encouraged American annexation of the Philippine Islands in 1898, in order to bring a friendly steadying influence in the Far East.

resulted in the consolidation of the Japanese paramountcy in Korea, formally annexed in 1910. Japan also secured the lease of the Liao-tung peninsula and Port Arthur, the South-Manchurian Railway from Changchun to Port Arthur, the Southern part of the island of Sakhalin. In secret treaties entered into with Russia from 1907 until 1916, Japan also secured recognition of her dominant interests in south Manchuria, while granting similar recognition to Russia in the northern half. (25) With these gains, and with China torn apart by seemingly endless civil war, Japan became the undisputed dominant local Power after the Russian Revolution. By 1919, she was not merely the heir to Germany's rights in China and her possessions in the Pacific north of the Equator, but, as an unwearied partner in the Allied intervention in Siberia, the chief potential beneficiary if Russia split apart.

When the third Anglo-Japanese alliance was concluded, Anglo-German relations had almost reached a breaking point and Europe was an armed camp. With so many British possessions in the East — e.g., Australia, New Zealand, India, Singapore, and Hongkong — Japan's friendship was absolutely essential to Britain. How essential it was may be judged by recalling the British Government's embarrassment when a choice had to be made between the Alliance and American friendship. Within three years after the conclusion of the third Alliance, the war broke out in Europe, and Britain benefited greatly from Japan's chivalrous conduct. Of the three Alliance, it was from the third that England derived the greatest

concrete advantage. Indeed, the third Alliance was a boon to her.

To help Britain out of her dilemma in 1911, Japan even agreed to exclude the United States from the scope of the Alliance. She wanted the Alliance to be retained even after 1921, as she believed no harm would result if it were continued. Although the Japanese did not seem to have any deep attachment for the Alliance, it is a fact that they were not happy with the manner in which Britain terminated the Alliance. They were pained to see it disposed of, (in the words of Kikujiro Ishii) like an old pair of sandals.

It is unbelievable but true that when the term of the third Anglo-Japanese Alliance was about to expire, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, and the other leaders of the British Government in 1921, seemed to be ignorant of the delicate circumstances under which the Alliance had been entered into in 1902. But the Japanese never comprehended that Britain had to look to the utility of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance solely from the European angle. Till 1911, Britain had always excluded the United States from the calculations, although John Hay's Note on "Open Door" was nothing short of America's quest for "Informal Empire". Japan was an ally. There was the entente with France, and though Italy was a member of the Triple Alliance, the possibility of her acting against England could be discounted. Then, the Australian naval power was small, though not negligible. After 1911, the United States' political and naval influence was being increasingly felt. The United States had emerged from the World War as a great world Power. Besides, the defeat of Germany in 1918

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3. Ishii, n. 6, p. 60.
completely altered the balance of naval forces in Europe. No longer was the Royal Navy to be chained to European waters. Therefore, the political situation in which Britain found herself after the World War rendered the alliance almost useless. Thus, under Article IV of the Four Power Treaty signed on 13 December 1921, the Alliance was dissolved. Had Edward Grey been in power at that time, he might have been more chivalrous.

If the Alliance helped in the elimination of Germany from the Far East, its termination resulted in China-Japan tensions, and rivalry between the United States and Japan. However, the effect of its termination was felt far more in Japan than in England, where it was wrapped up in soothing phraseology, to the effect that alliances were rather outmoded and unnecessary, that the League of Nations was a surer guarantee of peace, and that anyhow Britain and Japan should always be friends. (27) The British found in Japan a dull glow of resentment, which every now and then showed signs of bursting into flame. The Japanese considered that the British had been guilty of ingratitude, and that they were ashamed of their old association with Japan; the also Japanese felt they had lost face, and had been humiliated. Winston Churchill writes:

The annulment of the Alliance caused a profound impression in Japan and was viewed as the spurning of an Asiatic Power by the Western World. Many links were sundered which might afterwards have proved of decisive value to peace. (28)

Why was the continuation of the Alliance necessary? Against whom was Japan to defend herself? As far as America was concerned, Japan knew that the treaty was comparatively useless, for the United States was outside the actual belligerent scope of the alliance, in the event of war by America against Japan. Germany and Russia were at that time helpless to wage an offensive war in the Far East, and no other European Power could attack Japan. Japan did not help England to face chaotic and helpless China. Thus, from every point of view, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had outrun its usefulness. (29) A naval expert said: "It is very true as her Japanese publicists said in 1916, and have repeated many times since, that Japan must face the Pacific problem alone and solve it unaided." (30)

Tatsuji Takeuchi's only objection is that its abrupt termination was "inadvisable". (31) Another Japanese scholar, Professor Tamura Kosaka of Chuo University, also felt "... Japan should not insist on renewal, but take some other measure to come to an understanding with the United States and Britain." (32)

This, however, did not lessen Britain's sense of gratitude to Japan for her co-operation in the war. Without the assurance of Japanese co-operation that the Alliance gave, Britain would hardly have been able to go to Belgium's help. It was obvious

that Britain could not possibly, at the same time, have carried on one serious war in Europe and another in the Far East.

The sense of gratitude was clear from the speeches made by the party leaders in the House of Commons on 10 February 1927, when an Address of sympathy with the new Emperor (33) and the people of Japan was presented to the Emperor of Japan. (34)

Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin said:

The outstanding event in his (Emperor Taisho's) reign was the Great War, during which time, as our ally, he and the gallant Japanese played a notable and a loyal part. Later, at the time of the Washington Conference, Japan and Great Britain abandoned the old form of alliance which had subsisted for some years from a feeling that a military Alliance of that nature was less in accord with the feelings of the new world than it had been when that alliance was first entered into. That alliance was transferred into the basis of a wider fellowship in which other countries were able to co-operate with the object of maintaining peace throughout the Pacific.

David Lloyd George said: (35)

It was during his (Emperor Taisho's) reign that the alliance between his great country and ours was put to its supreme test, and loyally and honourably did, he and his ministers, with the backing of the whole nation, carry out the obligations of that alliance. At a time when we stood sadly in need of their assistance, when the whole of our resources were concentrated upon our coasts and upon the North Sea and the Atlantic, when we had not adequate forces to protect our trade and commerce in the Pacific or convoy the troops which came from the Dominions, Japan faithfully interpreted the obligations of the alliance and protected and convoyed those troops and protected our trade and commerce.

33. Emperor Taisho died on Christmas Day, 1926.


35. Ibid., col. 308.
Earlier, on 20 June 1921, Premier Lloyd George, in opening the Imperial Conference said:

We have found Japan a faithful Ally who rendered us valuable assistance in an hour of serious and very critical need. The British Empire will not easily forget that Japanese men-of-war escorted the transports which brought the Australian and New Zealand forces to Europe at a time when German cruisers were still at large in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. (36)

In the House of Lords, a similar address was moved on 16 February 1921 by the Secretary of State for India (Lord Birkenhead) and supported by Lord Haldane. Lord Birkenhead said:

The terms of our relationship with Japan are well within the memory of all your Lordships. We were their Allies when the Great War began. Their conception of the obligations of a loyal Alliance has not been surpassed. We asked them to do nothing in the course of that struggle which they did not undertake. They undertook nothing which they did not carry to brilliant achievement. It was necessary, for reasons of maritime strategy which are well within the recollection of all your Lordships, that there should be a concentration of our Naval strength within our home waters, and there presented itself at the same time a menace very great to our world-flung trade, springing from the presence of enemy cruisers in waters which it was difficult indeed for us to protect. At that moment we were not failed by our great naval ally. Their task was discharged with as much efficiency as loyalty, and the serenity with which we were able to contemplate the first six months of the War, covering as that period did the transport of Indian troops to the central theatre of war, was in no small measure due to the assistance which we received from our Ally. (37)

Viscount Haldane said:

The Alliance with this country [Japan] has been an Alliance distinguished by the scrupulous adherence to every term which our Ally undertook.


The reliability of Japan as a friend and the co-operation which she has rendered are fresh in the memory of all of us. I do not think that the part that Japan took in the late war and the naval assistance to which the noble Earl (Birkenhead) has referred have yet been adequately recorded by the historian. It was a very great assistance that she rendered in that world-wide struggle and it had its part in determining the issue. (38)

Lord Haldane's remark that the historians had not done full justice to Japan's part in the war is only too true. Major-General F.S.G. Piggot who lived through that period writes: "Many people have never heard that Japanese Destroyers helped to hunt down German submarines in the Mediterranean in 1917 and 1918. There are others who knew, but have forgotten." (39)

Captain M.D. Kennedy, who was also a close observer of the events, enumerated in his book (40) the great contribution made by Japan in the war. The war, while it furnished the best occasion for proving the sincerity of the Japanese Government and the value of its alliance, exerted the ambitions of Japan to exploit China and adventure into Siberia also.

The first World War, on the other hand, sealed the expansion of the British Empire and ended the conditions that had made pax Britannica possible. The decline of British power led to the growth of other world power centres in the Western Hemisphere, like the United States and Canada, and in the Far East, like Japan. This was certainly at the expense of Britain. Although she continued to hold on to the empire after the war, it was for a brief period and without the former strength to hold it.

38. Ibid., col. 80.
However, it was no part of British war strategy to substitute Japan for Germany in Shantung, or to encourage Japanese occupation of Germany's Pacific Islands. Britain was much concerned that while the Entente Powers were seriously engaged in the problems of the Balkans, the Greek territorial ambitions, and the restoration of Belgian independence, Japan was, all the time, quietly making her way as the residuary legatee of the Central Empires in the Far East, the successor of Europe as the dominant influence in China. (41) For Britain, Japanese friendship was a considerable asset in the war, but anxiety lest Japan's action in the Pacific might alienate the United States, Australia, and New Zealand forced Sir Edward Grey to warn Japan against expansion. London's insistence that Japan should not extend her military operations "beyond the China Seas" was on account of that Capital's anticipation that the United States Government might raise strong objections to Japan occupying those island groups which flanked American military road across the Pacific, and that without restraining, Japan might get out of hand.

In May 1915 came the famous "Twenty-one Demands" on China, many of them modified as a result of American pressure. When these had been accepted by China, Sino-Japanese treaties were concluded on 25 May recognizing Japanese interest in Shantung province, Southern Manchuria, and Inner Mongolia. These agreements involved no commitment on the part of Britain, except that, throughout this period, Japan enjoyed British diplomatic support by virtue of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which had by now been renewed till 1921.

41. Northedge, n. 23, p. 15.
Japan was also blamed in some quarters, a little unjustly, of course, for failing to send troops to France when invited to do so. A similar invitation to take part in the campaign in Mesopotamia produced another refusal, saying: "We cannot undertake warlike operations against Turkey, as we should have to break off diplomatic relations first; but we have no diplomatic relations with that country, so they cannot be broken off." (42)

While Japan was not slow to exploit the opportunity provided by the war to consolidate and extend her positions in the Far East and in the Pacific, the only western Power directly affected by it, the United States, made no serious effort to prevent the occupation of even the Pacific islands by Japan. In fact, the destruction of German power in the Far East and the Pacific, accompanied by the all-but-complete withdrawal of Russian, French, and British forces from eastern Asia, left only the United States in any position whatever to guard Occidental interests in that region. But after in 1914, she was no position to retrieve the loss of opportunity by the Wilson Administration to make a very strong stand in the Far East. Instead, the Lansing-Ishii Agreement of 1917 secured some recognition of Japan's claim in Asia. The two countries began drifting apart, especially after the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921, when the United States felt diplomatically encouraged to follow a vigorous policy vis-a-vis Japan.

In a way, the advance in Japan's power was not disturbing to Britain; Japan, similar in its island-character to Britain, tended to be regarded as a stabilising force which might serve to

42. Piggot, n. 27, p. 110.
prevent Soviet communism from penetrating China, where the National revolution against the Manchus of 1911-12 was still far from having resulted in a firm central government, Japan was also regarded in London as a counterpoise to the United States - now, after Germany's defeat, Britain's only naval rival. Though Anglo-American naval competition, which began with President Wilson's Naval Appropriation Act of 1916, was never considered in Britain a possible source of conflict, the link with Japan, now the world's third naval Power, was a useful asset to Britain in the settlement of post-war naval question with Washington. Moreover, at the end of the war, Japan had all the characteristics of a conservative democratic state. Her sudden accession to the inner circle of Great Powers, with a permanent seat on the League Council, gave a strong inducement to maintain good relations with the European allies.

The war irretrievably discredited the old concept of balance of power and marked the definite decline of the world-predominance of Europe. Germany was for the moment impotent. Austria-Hungary dissolved into its component fragments. Russia was also partially disintegrated and was unable to lend any support to the old concert of Europe. The remaining Great Powers were politically and economically exhausted. The growth of the two extra-European Great Powers, Japan and the United States, diminished the importance of the old continent. The United States endeavoured to exercise direct influence on the world through the leadership of the Peace Conference. But the power of Japan and the relatively increased strength (more financially and to some extent politically) of the British Dominions, made up for the weakened authority of Britain to stand before the United States.
The war, on the other hand, having destroyed the last vestiges of the strategic unity which the world had all but achieved under *Pax Britannica* also shattered the politico-naval equipoise which had governed the disposition and movements of European fleets since early twentieth century. The destruction of German sea-power, the advance of Japan in the Far East and the Pacific, the wartime surge of navalism in Britain, Japan and the United States, and the astounding development of military and industrial technology, all set the stage for the next act in the drama of sea power and the world politics.

Britain's dominance in European waters was reaffirmed, at least temporarily, by the defeat of Germany. But neither England's triumph nor the vast increase in naval power through which it was brought about, could restore the global command of the seas which had supported the *Pax Britannica* of pre-war years. Nor could any other Power assume that historic role of Britain.

The war had incalculably strengthened the strategic position of Japan in the Far East and the western Pacific. The rise of Japanese Naval power undermined England's strategic dominance, and hence political influence in the Far East. Through one of the ironies of history, Englishmen themselves contributed materially to this result. British shipyards in the 1880's and 1890's built one warship after another for Japan. And British naval officers were loaned to the Mikado's Government to teach the elements of naval science and administration.

It could be argued, of course, that someone else would have built the ships and given the advice, if England had refused. It could also be argued that Britain needed a counterpoise to
Russian imperialism which was at that time encroaching on British preserves in Asia. But all that does not alter the fact that a modern Japanese fleet in Asiatic waters fundamentally altered the strategic situation to the disadvantage of Britain; that British squadrons guarding the English Channel, the North Sea, and the Mediterranean, no longer, *in so fact*o dominated the sea communications of the Far East.

Gustav Stresemann (43) has commented that regardless of the final outcome of the war involving German defeat, "in a certain sense, even England has emerged as the conquered one". For with the rise of Japan, England had already begun giving up control of her prized East Asiatic markets. He added:

Connected with English defeat in East Asia is the defeat of the White race by the rising yellow race. White rule received its first setback when the Russian dreadnaughts were destroyed by the Japanese fleet in the sea battle of Tsushima; it ends now with ... the self-confidence of that aspiring State of the East so strengthened that it has been able to treat China like a tributary nation and to extend its position as a world Power in Hongkong, Nanking, and Peking. The great world commercial establishment of John Bull, London, has liquidated its East Asiatic branch, which belonged among the firmest pillars of its world business, and transferred it to Japan. Germany has lost her influence in all of East Asia, perhaps in part of India, and the collapse of a world prestige, till now strongly defended, is announced to the twentieth century. (44)

The American Navy wielded overwhelming force throughout the western Atlantic and eastern Pacific. But for obvious geographical reasons, neither America nor Japan, despite the yearnings of super-

43. He was Foreign Minister of the German Weimer Republic from 1923 to 1929. He shared a Nobel Peace Prize in 1926.

patriots, could transmute, save at prohibitive cost, its inherently regional command of the sea into world dominance, as England had done before the rise of modern fleets of Japan and the United States.

Nevertheless, all three leading naval Powers either held territories or claimed important interests within the strategic sphere of one or both of the others. The British Empire stretched around the globe. The United States had widely scattered interests in the Pacific. Japan's programme in Asia challenged the policies and threatened the real and speculative interests of both the Western Powers. The status of Japanese subjects in America was still in dispute. And these were definite and disquieting indications that Japan and the United States might be slipping into Germany's fateful role as the chief commercial rival of Britain.

An attempt on the part of these Powers to reach a purely military solution could result only in armament competition trending toward bankruptcy or war, or both. Any move to reassert British sea power in the Pacific or in the Western Hemisphere could inevitably provoke countermoves by Japan and the United States. Further expansion of the Japanese Navy could be taken as a threat to Western interests and possessions in the Pacific and Far East. An American fleet strong enough to wage war in virtually the home waters of Japan, could be regarded in that country as a menace to be countered at any cost. And if to these ramifications were added the ever-present factors of national tradition, national pride, and national prestige, it was clear that no purely military solution could hope to assure even a semblance of order and international stability in the years ahead.