THE ROLE OF HERBERT HOOVER IN THE FORMULATION OF THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE FAR EASTERN CRISIS OF 1931-1932

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The problem. The problem concerns the extent to which Herbert Hoover formulated the American response to the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1932, since most historians credit Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson for the major contributions and dismiss Hoover as too preoccupied with the domestic financial crisis to do more than agree to Stimson’s actions.

Procedure. The procedure has been to utilize primary sources available, such as the Stimson Diary, Foreign Relations of the United States, Documents on British Foreign Policy, materials at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and secondary accounts in determining Hoover’s involvement, both in time spent and actions taken.

Findings. It has been found that although the greater part of Hoover’s time was spent on domestic problems, he was fully knowledgeable of events, he set the parameters of the American response, and contributed several suggestions, including the nonrecognition policy.

Conclusions. Hoover was the final authority on policy. His main concerns were to retain order in the Orient for American business interests to prosper, to show moral outrage at Japanese aggression, and to avoid direct confrontation with Japan. Stimson executed these policies. Although war was avoided in 1932, the policies formulated in this period failed to stop Japanese aggression.
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OF THE AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE
FAR EASTERN CRISIS OF 1931-1932

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Chapter 1

THE PRE-CRISIS SETTING IN THE FAR EAST

The Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1932 began an era in which Japanese militarism dominated Asian affairs. Many scholars see in this episode the opening chapter of the Second World War. Additionally, the crisis signalled the failure of the diplomatic framework set up for the Far East at the Washington Conference a decade earlier. Since the Conference came about primarily through the urging of the United States, Japan's challenge to the Washington framework also defied American Far Eastern policy objectives. In response to the Japanese aggression President Herbert Hoover and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson eventually concluded that the United States should take a stand of some type even though the initial fighting in Manchuria threatened few American lives and investments. Hoover and Stimson were concerned that Japan's refusal to abide by the Washington treaties might destroy the entire equilibrium in the Orient.

In 1921 Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes called on the victors of the World War to discuss the re-establishment of stability in the Far East. In pre-War days world politics had been characterized by the "diplomacy of imperialism" whereby strong nations sought colonies abroad
not only for commercial advantages but also for military and defense purposes. Moreover, possession of colonies indicated power in an era of highly competitive international rivalries. In an attempt to bridle this competition and avoid outright war, powers which were deeply involved in the Orient co­existed through a system of mutual treaties that staked out particular spheres of interest to each imperialist power.¹ However, the First World War undermined this system. Because the European powers concentrated on their problems at home, Japan had a free hand to expand its influence in the Orient. When the War concluded, new forces were at work determining the politics of the Far East. For one thing, Japan had gained considerable privileges in China by seizing former German possessions and forcing China to accept the Twenty-One Demands of 1915. The United States, too, emerged much stronger from the War. Victorious and no longer a debtor nation, the United States sought to show off its new status through economic expansion and a phenomenal naval building program. Moreover, the democracy espoused by President Woodrow Wilson at the Versailles peace talks set in motion Chinese aspirations to attain an equal status with the imperialist powers. Russia, also, reflected a new status, having experienced the Revolution in the latter days of the

War; in postwar days the Soviets proclaimed their intentions to actively revolutionize the rest of the world.  

A combination of forces prompted Hughes to assume the initiative in the Far East. In 1921 the foreign policy of the Harding Administration faced its most serious challenge in the naval arms race between the United States, Great Britain, and Japan. During the World War the United States found its naval preparedness seriously lacking, and in 1916 began a massive building program to catch up. Following the War the British, though still leading in world naval superiority, undertook their own building program to retain their status. Meanwhile, in the Pacific, the Japanese had been steadily accruing naval strength and prestige through their victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, and over the Germans in Shantung province. The decision to station part of the American Fleet in the Pacific as part of the American naval expansion program struck the Japanese as a direct challenge to their own naval position in the Pacific and thus triggered an increased Japanese building program.  

By 1921, with these construction plans well underway, the possibility of a future

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1 Ibid., pp. 6, 9-10.

Japanese-American naval war in the Pacific appeared imminent.¹

A clash between the United States and Japan would have also affected the British, because they had been Japan's ally since the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was first promulgated in 1902. Intended originally to counter Russian expansion in the Orient, and renewed again in 1911 to ward off German designs on British Far Eastern interests, the Alliance and its upcoming expiration in 1921 posed a thorny dilemma for the British. By allying with the Japanese, British officials might be able to steer the ever-rapacious Japanese appetite for oriental expansion away from areas where the British prevailed. However, with the seemingly tacit approval of the British, the Japanese had used the bond to extend Japanese influence in Korea, North China, and Manchuria, actions clearly in violation of Open Door principles and American Far Eastern policy. Since Hughes wanted an end to the Alliance, which he saw as a carryover of the old type of power diplomacy supposedly destroyed at Versailles, the British sought a means to appease him and retain amicable Anglo-American relations. At the same time the British hoped to forestall a future war in the Pacific, to prevent the loss of British naval

¹Ibid., p. 75.
superiority, and to still safeguard British oriental interests, their primary policy consideration. Thus, they, too, were amenable to an international conference dealing with naval limitation and possibly Far Eastern relations.¹

American public opinion and Republican strategy also motivated Secretary Hughes. Wilson generated much public support in favor of the League of Nations as a means of curtailing future warfare until the Senate failed to ratify United States membership in the organization. After the League question subsided, public interest in preventing future world conflicts shifted to the limitation of armaments as a solution. When the Republicans assumed the reins of government in 1921, they turned to disarmament as a program the Republicans could put forth in the place of the rejected League membership.²

As an additional consideration, Hughes inherited a history of American attempts to preserve order in the Far East, through the Open Door policy, in protesting Japan's Twenty-One Demands in 1915, and in convincing other powers with Far Eastern interests to pool certain of China's debts in a consortium in 1918.

The Washington Conference, "the most successful arms limitation conference in modern history,"³ met from November

²Buckley, op. cit., pp. 12, 18. ³Ibid., p. vii.
1921 to February 1922 and produced three major treaties and several ancillary accomplishments. The Four-Power Treaty abrogated the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and established a consultative pact between the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and France. The powers pledged to discuss jointly any future disputes concerning the Pacific possessions. It did not, however, mention the use of force or entail any military commitments.

Conference members addressed the naval arms race in the Five-Power Treaty, which declared a holiday on further capital ship construction and set ratios of allowable naval preparedness. Japan received a smaller ratio in capital ships than the United States and Great Britain, but made up for this in an additional promise that the Western powers would not construct new fortifications in their Pacific possessions. This compromise presumed that with a smaller navy than either the United States or Great Britain, Japan could not challenge them offensively but could still retain defensive security in the Orient.

Finally, the Conference delegates (including China), each with vested interests in China, signed the Nine-Power Treaty. In doing so, the signatories for the first time embodied the principle of the Open Door in a multinational agreement, pledging to honor "the sovereignty, independence, and the territorial and administrative integrity of China."
However, their main concern focused on establishing a harmonious framework of international relations in the Far East, including equality of commercial opportunity within China for all nations, and only secondarily alluded to developmental problems of China itself. One phrase, "to refrain from taking advantage of the present conditions in order to seek special rights or privileges," did suggest the intent of the Washington powers to allow China breathing space to settle its internal problems and modernize without the threat of external pressures. However, the validity of the agreement rested solely on the word of the signers to refrain from future challenges to China's sovereignty, because none pledged to forcefully defend the Open Door.

Several other changes came about as by-products of the spirit of cooperation fostered by the Conference, and virtually all of them represented concessions by Japan. They restored the former German possession of Shantung to China in a separate agreement in 1922 and modified certain provisions of the Twenty-One Demands. Also, Japan transferred some of its exclusive claims on Manchurian railroads to the international consortium and allowed the Chinese to

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1Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

buy back the Tsingtao-Tsinan Railroad. The United States received cable rights on the Japanese-mandated island of Yap, and the Japanese agreed to withdraw their troops from Siberia and Kiaochow.

Superficially Hughes appeared to pull off a major diplomatic victory at the Washington Conference. The holiday on capital ship construction and the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance were important steps. Nevertheless, the Conference overlooked several considerations which proved troublesome throughout the 1920's. For one thing, the Conference had not included some significant powers, especially Russia and Germany, with interests in the Far East. During the 1920's, moreover, the Russians pursued their own independent role in China. Another potential shortcoming was that the agreements rested solely on the willingness of each party to abide by its commitments; the Washington powers established no machinery for forcefully dealing with a party that violated its pledges. Nor did the Chinese receive the full status of sovereignty. The closest the delegates came to doing this was in a resolution of Elihu Root, former Secretary of State and elder statesman of the Republican Party, calling for future conferences to

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1Ibid., p. 110.

2Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 20.
consider restoring tariff autonomy and relinquishing the right of extraterritoriality. The delegates believed that until China was united and stable, they could not risk the lives and interests of their nationals by relegating full sovereign status to China.¹

The Conference also attempted to maintain the status quo in the Far East and failed to recognize nationalism as a legitimate, growing force in China. The Washington powers snubbed Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Chinese Nationalists, and instead extended an invitation to the warlord regime in Peking. Sun responded by refusing to have anything to do with the Conference or its results. Although this rejection in 1921 did not totally destroy Sun's efforts to enlist western support for his programs,² it did, along with the betrayal of the Chinese at Versailles, disillusion their belief in the words of western diplomats and prompt the Chinese Nationalists to seek other foreign backers. In turning away from the West, the Nationalists entered a decade of attacking western privileges in China. Therefore, the status quo in China envisioned by the Washington Conference dissipated into a decade of change and revolution. Western


powers responded by gradually and reluctantly restoring the accoutrements of sovereignty. Japan also attempted this solution initially, but by 1931 had arrived at the conclusion that only military force could handle the Chinese Nationalists and preserve Japan's special position in China.

The Chinese were not united in their nationalistic aspirations; instead, several factions promoted nationalist programs of varying magnitudes. Nationalism in the mid-1890's meant breaking the Manchu control of China to Sun Yat-sen. After the Revolution of 1911 successfully accomplished this, he formed the Kuomintang Party to reunite China after the country had been splintered by the regimes of Yuan Shih-k'ai and other warlords. During this period, other groups gained influence in Chinese society. Students educated abroad returned to China in post-revolutionary days invigorated by their exposure to western ideas and eager to apply what they had learned to Chinese society. From 1917 to 1921 students and writers demonstrated their intellectual excitement in the New Culture Movement and exposed other Chinese to modern ideas. Charged with enthusiasm for western culture and the West in general, Chinese representatives went to Versailles expecting immediate reversal of China's colonial status only to learn that the victors had no intention of extending self-determination to Asia by restoring areas like Shantung, seized by the Japanese during the War.
At home, students vented their disappointment in a massive demonstration on May 4th in which they burned the home of one of the representatives who supposedly had agreed to the Versailles settlement. This incident in 1919 marked the emergence of militant nationalism in China whereby students, feeling their cause to have been betrayed by the West, determined that China itself must expel foreign dominance.¹

Immediately preceding the New Culture Movement, another group, consisting of merchant-entrepreneurs, assumed prominence in Chinese affairs. These individuals seized the opportunity created by European business stagnation during the War to promote home industries. Following the War, western businesses resumed operations in China, protected by favored tariff status, and crippled the newly-emerging Chinese industries. Consequently, the merchants had reason for wanting to remove foreign influence from China. After the disappointment at Versailles they, along with noted journalists, joined the students in protesting foreign domination in China. This coalition staged demonstrations wherever foreign interests precluded Chinese developments. Foreign-owned factories and businesses felt the brunt of Chinese protests, especially in the form of sporadic strikes

and boycotts at foreign-owned factories and businesses.\(^1\)

Following the exclusion of Sun Yat-sen at the Washington Conference, the KMT adopted the views of leaders of the May 4th Movement. In 1924 Sun reaffirmed nationalism as one of the Three Principles of the People after having downplayed it the decades before in an effort to enlist western support.\(^2\) In large measure the reemphasis of nationalism sprang from communist influence within the KMT.\(^3\) Beginning in 1922 Russian Communists, primarily Adolfe Joffe, made overtures to Sun suggesting a closer KMT-Soviet relationship, and in January of 1924 they formalized the alliance. Working through the Chinese Communist Party, founded in 1921, and the Communist International (Comintern), the communists formed a faction within the KMT. In addition, Sun sent Chiang Kai-shek, one of his trusted lieutenants, to Russia to study the communist military system and to return with a plan for the Chinese revolutionaries. The Russians pushed the KMT to oust western influence from China. Had the Chinese revolutionaries pursued their objectives unaided by Russian suggestions, their main emphasis probably would have run to


internal reform rather than anti-imperialism.¹ The next few years witnessed further KMT-Soviet collaborations as the KMT built up an army and mass support with Soviet aid and guidance.²

In 1925 the rival government in Peking also adopted an anti-foreign stance. Throughout that spring, communist agitators fanned dissension among workers in foreign-owned factories by fomenting several strikes and boycotts. On May 30th several hundred demonstrators stormed the Louza police station in the British concession of Shanghai in response to a previous round-up of agitators in which one worker was killed. Another nine persons died in this confrontation. The Peking regime responded on June 24, 1925, by sending notes to the signers of the Washington treaties which declared that the unequal treaty status accorded China had propagated the incident of May 30th and notified the Washington powers of China's intent to revise this position.³

The following year marked the formal beginning of the Nationalist Northern Expedition, the dream of Sun Yat-sen

¹Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 38.


to subdue the warlords and reunite the country militarily.\textsuperscript{1} Chiang Kai-shek led the KMT after Sun's death in March of 1925. The first phase of the Expedition, launched in the summer of 1926, proceeded remarkably well with the capture of Hupah and then the five southeastern provinces. These secured, the Nationalists turned northward to put down the three northern warlords. Deviating for once from their typical jealousies, the northern warlords allied to form the Ankuochun, a military alliance with the explicit purpose of meeting the Nationalist challenge. With the support of the communists, the Nationalists overwhelmed the northern warlords in a decisive defeat on February 19, 1927.\textsuperscript{2}

The exuberance of defeating the northern armies primed the southern revolutionaries into committing more aggressive anti-foreign actions. In March of 1927 the Nationalist armies entered Shanghai and Nanking. Although the capture of Shanghai proceeded without serious mishap, the entry of Nanking erupted in violence and destruction aimed at foreigners. Among those killed were a Japanese naval officer and the American vice president of the University. The Nationalists looted and occupied foreign businesses and consulates, harassing foreign residents of the city. In response, British, American, and Japanese troops

\textsuperscript{1}Cohen, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{2}Iriye, \textit{After Imperialism}, op. cit., pp. 90-91.
stationed nearby found it necessary to bomb sections of the city to regain order. First reports blamed communist elements within the Nationalist ranks for the destruction, but westerners later concluded that this was the rationalization proffered by the Nationalists to excuse their own vandalism.¹

The spring of 1927 also marked the zenith and nadir of communist influence over the Nationalists. With communist assistance the Nationalists had taken the northern warlords. When Chiang learned that the communists were becoming leary of his growing military power and were working through disaffected Nationalists to overthrow him, he purged the KMT of all communist and leftist radicals.² The bolsheviks either withdrew to the hinterlands in Kiangsi or went underground. Mao Tse-tsung and Chu Teh organized a 10,000 man army in the winter of 1927-1928 and began a series of harassing raids on the Nationalist forces.³

Following the communist expulsion, the Nationalists moved closer to the Japanese. Foreign (and Prime) Minister Giichi Tanaka of Japan attempted to pursue a policy of "coprosperity" with China whereby both countries would

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¹Ibid., pp. 126-130.


³Jansen, op. cit., p. 303.
benefit economically if Japan could secure its interests in China and Manchuria from the disorder around them. Three developments related to the Nationalist drive in 1928 made this cooperation short-lived.

The Tsinan Incident in May illustrated the degree to which Sino-Japanese relations had deteriorated. During the second phase of the Northern Expedition Nationalist troops passing through the Japanese portion of Tsinan in Shantung province clashed with Japanese troops stationed there. As a result, the Japanese took control of the civil administration of Tsinan and remained there until early in 1929. The Nationalists, more desirous of proceeding with the Northern Expedition at this time, backed away from a confrontation and sought a diplomatic solution.¹

Japan's intent was not to prevent the Nationalists from unifying China, as long as the lives and property of its nationals in Shantung, Tientsin, and Manchuria did not suffer. In June, defeat of the northern warlords by the Nationalists appeared inevitable, so Japanese authorities convinced the Manchurian warlord, Chang Tso-lin, to evacuate Peking in return for the Nationalists' pledge of safe passage back to Manchuria.² Although Chang reluctantly agreed to leave,

¹Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., pp. 199-201.
²Ibid., pp. 211-212. In 1929 Chang held control of Peking in addition to Manchuria.
his hesitation revealed to the Japanese that he did not automatically dance to their tune and might prove uncontrollable in the future.\(^1\) Chang did not return to Mukden alive; Japanese army officers stationed in Manchuria, led by Colonel Komoto Daisaku, set off a bomb in Chang’s railway car on the homeward journey. They hoped both to eliminate Chang’s intransigence and to create confusion by which they could install a leader more to their liking.\(^2\) After an initial scramble for power, Chang Tso-lin’s son, Chang Hsueh-liang, also known as the Young Marshal, seized the reins of power. However, instead of aligning with Japan, he, too, proved progressively more difficult for the Japanese to control and more interested in promoting a closer understanding with China.

In the fall of 1928 the Nationalists succeeded in taking control of the bulk of China. This was a tenuous control at best; Chiang spent the greater part of the next few years retaking certain areas. However, to outsiders it appeared that one government representing all China had finally emerged. In late December Chang Hsueh-liang nominally allied Manchuria with China, and the reunification


\(^2\)Iriya, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 214.
became a reality.¹

The United States again attempted to assume the initiative in Chinese relations when Frank B. Kellogg became Secretary of State. Kellogg recognized the potency that nationalism was gaining in Chinese affairs and felt by responding favorably to it, the United States could tone down some of the ferocity of Chinese anti-foreignism.² However, the continual internal strife in China made reconsideration of tariff autonomy and extraterritoriality out of the question. In 1928, with the seeming reunification of the country by the Nationalists underway, Kellogg felt China finally to be demonstrating its ability to control its own affairs and moved toward rectifying its unequal treaty status.³

On July 25, 1928, the United States and the Nationalist Chinese signed a new tariff treaty, which provided that on January 1, 1929, all other tariff treaties with the United States would be nullified, that China would achieve tariff autonomy with Americans, and that both nations would enjoy mutual most-favored-nation status.⁴ Within a year Britain

¹Hsu, op. cit., p. 641.


³Iriye, Across the Pacific, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

⁴Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., pp. 228-229;
and Japan followed the American lead by recognizing the Nationalist Government. Although American China observers cautioned restraint in moving toward total Chinese sovereignty because the unification appeared incomplete, American businessmen made efforts to strengthen Sino-American financial ties. American companies extended loans for the development of communications, utilities, and aviation projects in China. In 1929, the Kemmerer Commission, a group of American experts on financial affairs led by Dr. Edwin W. Kemmerer of Princeton, at the invitation of the Chinese, went to China to lend their expertise and counsel on such matters as public credit, taxation, tariff policies, budgets, railway finance, banking and currency, accounting, and fiscal control.

These developments served as a prelude to the particularly ambitious role assumed by the United States in 1929 in the Sino-Soviet railway dispute. This problem centered around the seizure in July of the Russian-owned Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria by the Nationalist Chinese. They


1Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 231.

2Ibid., p. 258; "Uncle Sam's Financial Doctors, in Europe and Asia," Review of Reviews, LXXIX (March, 1929), 118.
also engaged in harassing Russian nationals in Manchuria. Behind these actions lay a dual purpose: one, an extension of Nationalist efforts to expel foreign domination in China and second, a means of circumventing the divisive tendencies of the KMT through an aggressive foreign policy.\(^1\) The upshot of the confrontation was that Russia and China severed diplomatic ties and engaged in minor hostilities both in late summer and November. Ironically, almost at the same time, diplomats in Washington signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact disavowing war as an instrument of national policy. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson saw in the dispute the first challenge to the Kellogg-Briand machinery and called for the creation of a "Council of Commission" to settle the dispute.\(^2\) His suggestion aroused little interest and resulted merely in bringing embarrassment to the State Department.\(^3\) He reacted similarly in November when Sino-Soviet fighting resumed, but again he received little support. However, since he received no negative replies, he chose to interpret the silence of the other powers as acquiescence to a note


\(^3\)Ferrell, op. cit., pp. 53-54.
reminding China and Russia of their Kellogg vows and publicly announced such.\(^1\) Stimson's efforts accomplished little in the way of settling the dispute, but the fact that his pronouncements coincided with China and Russia's decision to settle their quarrel convinced him that he had contributed to the settlement.\(^2\) Nevertheless, he realized that his actions had aroused criticism in that he issued his pronouncements before first privately consulting the other powers.\(^3\) This episode in 1929 influenced Stimson's role in the Far Eastern Crisis two years later in two ways: first, he believed outside powers had set a precedent in 1929 by effectively halting the aggression and second, he experienced the folly of a third party rushing into the fray when it lacked the support of other nations.\(^4\)

The Sino-Soviet dispute also presaged the attitude and aspirations of Japan two years later when it clashed with the Chinese over Manchuria. While Stimson ruminated publicly

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 59; Stimson to Certain Diplomatic Representatives, December 1, 1929, FRUS, 1929, II, op. cit., pp. 371-373.

\(^2\)Ferrell, op. cit., p. 64.

\(^3\)Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 188.

\(^4\)Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 37.
over the necessity to do something to ward off a confrontation, the Japanese remained silent. Although they had long competed with the Russians for preeminence in Manchuria, they were more concerned about not establishing a precedent in which outside powers interfered with affairs in Manchuria.¹

Manchuria assumed a unique position in Japanese designs. Japan had gained special rights in Manchuria through victories in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895 and Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 and believed these privileges were essential for maintaining its rising standard of living and status as a world power. These privileges included a leasehold on the Kwantung peninsula (some 14,000 square miles) wherein they could operate hotels, banks, factories, port facilities, and public utilities.² Known as the Granary of China, Manchuria's rich soils equalled the fertility of the American Midwest.³ Here, Japan saw the solution to its rapidly increasing population's need for imported foodstuffs.⁴ Manchuria also possessed tremendous mineral resources, particularly coal and iron ore.⁵ Lacking

¹Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 265.
³Ferrell, op. cit., p. 45.
⁴Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 18.
⁵Ferrell, loc. cit.
adequate supplies of these raw materials, Japan had come to depend on access to Manchuria. The provinces' relative underdevelopment furthermore offered possibilities for entrepreneurial activity. Both Japan and Russia had set about realizing this advantage by building railways to transport Manchurian products and raw materials or to bring in equipment for the emerging industrial centers. Japan's South Manchurian Railway and spur lines gave it tremendous economic, social, and even political leverage. In addition to operational rights on the railroad, the Japanese stationed troops, the Kwantung Army, along the line to protect Japanese nationals and property from sporadic internal warfare and banditry.¹

On the foreign investment in Manchuria in 1931, 75% came from Japan.² Charles F. Remer has estimated that total British and American combined interests in Manchuria in 1931 amounted to $40 million, whereas Japanese investments totalled $550 million and Russian $262 million.³

Manchuria also served as an important consumer of Japanese manufactured goods. By 1931 retention of this trade

¹Rappaport, op. cit., p. 11.
²Fairbank et al., op. cit., p. 707.
relationship had become a serious concern for the Japanese, since they experienced a cut-back in trade elsewhere. From 1929 to 1931 Japanese exports dropped by 50%, further emphasizing the importance of their Asian trade.

China demonstrated a keen interest in Manchurian affairs also, and considered the three provinces of Manchuria—Kirin, Liaoning, and Heilungkiang, to be part of northern China. The Chinese and Manchurians emanated from the same racial stock and until 1911 shared the same rulers for nearly three centuries under the Manchu dynasty. During that period the preeminent position of Manchurians in Chinese affairs attracted a large proportion of their numbers away from the homeland. The three northern provinces remained sparsely populated until the Twentieth Century when, with the fall of the Manchus from power, the homeland experienced a return migration. Chinese farmers in Hopei and Shantung provinces also began immigrating there in the 1920's after crop failures in China. By 1931 Manchuria supported a population of thirty million, 95% of Chinese stock; of the remaining numbers, one million were Japanese nationals.

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2. Fairbank et al., op. cit., p. 703.
Manchuria occupied a "peculiar" position in the Orient because it was both an extension of China in culture, tradition, and racial make-up, and simultaneously was a separate entity located beyond the Great Wall, traditionally designated as the outer parameter of northern China.\(^1\) Between the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 and the creation of Manchukuo in 1932 Manchuria followed a path independent of Chinese suzerainty but was nonetheless highly influenced by activities within China.

Perhaps the Japanese and Chinese could have found some means to accommodate their divergent aspirations for Manchuria in time, but the depression cut time short for such developments. The depression sent shock waves throughout Japanese society. Not only did exports drop, thus hurting factory workers in the cities, but economic conditions in the countryside also deteriorated. Moreover, just before the depression hit, Japan had gone on the gold standard to depreciate the yen and obtain both cheaper imports and a better borrowing position abroad. This maneuver tied the Japanese economy closely to the fluctuations of the economies of the western powers; when western economies suffered, Japan's economy dipped all the more.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Thorne, loc. cit.

\(^2\) Fairbank et al., loc. cit.; Thorne, op. cit., pp. 35-36.
Frustrated Japanese blamed Foreign Minister Kijuro Shidehara and the group of elite, wealthy industrialists he represented, the Zaibatsu, for their plight. In their misery, the Japanese masses repudiated the Wakatsuki Cabinet's reliance on a cooperative international policy and turned to the more forceful solutions put forth by military spokesmen.¹

In 1931, therefore, Baron Shidehara found himself in a very tenuous position. His foreign policies had failed to achieve any positive results; in fact, just the opposite occurred. Going on the gold standard proved to be a disaster. Agreeing to the London Naval Treaty in 1930, which revised the Washington Treaty capital ship ratios to 10:10:6.975 and in actuality benefited Japan, provided the military with more fuel to attack the government for its "sell-out" to the West.² The depression created a growing discontent among the Japanese masses who aligned with the military.³ In March of 1931, an abortive conspiracy to overthrow the government convinced those in power that economic gains had to be forthcoming shortly in order to

¹Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., pp. 283-284; Thorne, op. cit., p. 30; Fairbank et al., op. cit., pp. 703-704; Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., pp. 27-28; for further discussion of Japan's political elites, see Fairbank et al., op. cit., p. 682.


retain control of the government. Shidehara turned his attention to the lagging negotiations in Manchuria over further railroad construction. Before he could get this task underway, however, the Manchurians provoked more troubles.

Chang Hsueh-liang steadily built up his power base after taking over the government in 1928 by playing up anti-Japanese feeling and equivocating on treaty agreements with Japan. When Japanese officials objected to his actions, moreover, he hid behind his alliance with the Nationalists and referred all protests to Nanking.

In the spring of 1931 native Manchurians clashed with Koreans renting land in Wanpaoshan over the Koreans' plans to irrigate the area. Their actions prompted an altercation with Japanese police protecting the Koreans. Another incident involved the kidnapping and murder of Captain Shintaro Nakamura, a Japanese soldier on secret mission in Manchuria. In addition to Nakamura's death Manchurians also aroused Japanese anger by dallying in the investigation of the matter and by failing to punish the offenders to Japanese satisfaction.

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1. Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 90.
2. Ibid., p. 252. 3. Ibid., pp. 290-291.
In the heat of these problems, Shidehara chose to pursue settlement of the railway dispute with Manchuria. Japan wanted to build several new spur lines off the South Manchurian Railway and had reached agreement with Chang Tsol in 1927 to do so. Conflict had since arisen because China and Manchuria desired to compete with the South Manchurian Railway by constructing parallel lines. In September of 1931, representatives of the South Manchuria Railway, the Japanese government, the Chinese Nationalist government, and Chang Hsueh-liang met in Mukden at Shidehara's request to settle the dispute and also to finalize the Nakamura deliberations. They seemed to be making progress, thus signalling a possible rapprochement in Sino-Japanese-Manchurian affairs.

The possibility of improved relations in Manchuria jeopardized a scheme long brewing in Japanese military quarters to take direct action in the provinces. Members of the General Staff in Tokyo and the Kwantung Army in Manchuria had devised a plan to stage an incident and in the resultant chaos impose military control under the pretext of protecting the South Manchurian Railway and the lives of Japanese

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1Iriye, After Imperialism, op. cit., p. 179.
2Thorne, op. cit., p. 38.
nationals. To succeed, the plot had to follow on the heels of the suspicions and ill-feelings generated by the incidents of the past years. Although originally scheduling the incident for early 1932, the conspirators worried that the growth of friendly relations would jeopardize their plans. Consequently, they decided to act in September, 1931. During that month, however, a clique within the Kwantung Army acted on its own without the foreknowledge of officials in Tokyo.

The actual "incident" occurred on the night of September 18 when a small bomb set by Japanese conspirators exploded and blew a yard-wide gap in the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway at a point slightly north of Mukden. A patrol unit of the Kwantung Army on guard in the area pursued some Manchurian soldiers, whom they took to be the saboteurs, back to the North Barracks not far away. Gathering reinforcements, the Kwantung troops attacked the Barracks later that night and had them under control by six the next morning. Simultaneously, a prearranged attack occurred in the city of Mukden. The Kwantung assault then fanned out to seize the Mukden airport and the arsenal, where war materiel for the entire Manchurian army was stored. The East Barracks, three to four miles northeast of Mukden, fell to Japanese control within hours of the other attacks.¹

¹Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 32; Takehiko Yoshinashi, Conspiracy at Mukden: The Rise of the Japanese Military (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963),
That same evening Japanese troops took over the outlying villages of Antung, Yinkow, and Liaoyang. The defense of Changchun, the northern terminus of the South Manchurian Railway, fell by three o'clock the following afternoon. The defense of Changchun, the northern terminus of the South Manchurian Railway, fell by three o'clock the following afternoon. Two days later, now under the direction of General Honjo Shigeru, commander-in-chief of the Kwantung Army, the Japanese forces captured the city of Kirin seventy miles east of Mukden, and at gunpoint, the local warlord, Hsi Ch'ia, proclaimed the independence of the province of Kirin.

Despite the fact that the Chinese forces in the area far outnumbered the Japanese troops, the Kwantung Army met little opposition. Young Marshal Chang previously had suspected that the Japanese might manufacture some sort of incident by which they could escalate their activities in Manchuria. Realizing that the Manchurian troops could not mount an effective resistance, Chang had ordered his soldiers on September 6 not to fight if trouble broke out with the Japanese. By not resisting he hoped to defuse any...

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1 Yoshinashi, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

2 Ibid., p. 179; Report No. 754, Hanson and Salisbury to Stimson, October 13, 1931, Foreign Affairs, Japanese Incident, Presidential Papers, Container 869, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa.
blow-up. General I-Cheh, commanding officer at the North Barracks, echoed the same policy the night of the assault.²

In overrunning Manchuria, the Japanese military extended their control to all phases of Manchurian civil affairs. They censored the use of telegraph, telephone, and radio facilities, keeping the outside world in the dark as to their activities. They took over the operation of municipal government, ran public utilities, closed banks and reopened them under Japanese auspices.³ In effect, several thousand Japanese military railway guards (15,000 at the most) seized control of an area protected by an estimated one hundred to two hundred and fifty thousand Chinese troops because of the swiftness and superior military efficiency of the Japanese military.⁴

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¹Ferrell, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

²Sara R. Smith, op. cit., p. 20; Ben Dorfman, "The Manchurian 'Incident' of 1931," Harpers, CLXIX (September, 1934), 458.

³Rappaport, op. cit., p. 107.

⁴Ferrell, op. cit., p. 127; Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 53.
Chapter 2

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ASSUMPTIONS

The crisis around Mukden initially received scant notice in the United States. Other domestic and international problems competed for the attention of the Hoover Administration. At home the depression worsened with the closing of several banks in the fall of 1931. Abroad, already shaky international finance rocked when Great Britain went off the gold standard concurrently with the Mukden takeover. With these situations occupying all their energies, what spare attention the President and his staff directed toward the fighting in Manchuria had to follow traditional lines.

During the first few weeks of the crisis, therefore, the Hoover Administration neither paused long enough to formulate a specific policy in response to the affair, nor felt it necessary to do so. Before proceeding with the policies that gradually did evolve by October concerning Manchuria, an examination of the overall foreign policy of the Hoover Administration and the personnel who formulated and executed it is in order.

Putting aside for a moment the atmosphere generated by the depression, the basic foreign policy goal demonstrated
by the Hoover Administration was Hoover's desire to enhance America's world economic position that had been propelled into ascendancy by the fortunes of the World War. Experts in diplomacy say that the President possesses the final word on foreign policy postures assumed by the State Department;¹ this being the case, Herbert Clarke Hoover came to office more than qualified for this role, with considerable experience both in observing the rest of the world and as a diplomatist.² He spent the first fifteen years of his private career working abroad as a mining engineer and consultant in several countries, including China. From these efforts he accumulated a considerable fortune and international reknown for his expertise. As head of the Commission for Belgian Relief during the War his activities at times brought him quite close to actually conducting foreign policy for the United States even though a private citizen.³ Until their clash over the form of American approval to the League

of Nations in 1920, Hoover served as a close adviser to President Wilson at Versailles. Then, as Secretary of Commerce, Hoover expended great effort in promoting United States business expansion abroad, at times colliding with Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes over which department controlled American commercial personnel in foreign countries.2

According to one historian, Joan Hoff Ison, Hoover was both progressive in his policies and nationalist/internationalist in his outlook. His policies were progressive in that they were "noncoercive" in nature, involving "limited moral and political involvement with the world" while pursuing selective, productive economic expansion abroad. Wilson explains the seemingly incompatible allegiances of "nationalism" versus "internationalism" that he demonstrated as one being the belief in the economic self-sufficiency and supremacy of the United States while the other simultaneously realizing the necessity for other nations to be economically prosperous in order to trade with and thus promote the economic status of the United States.4 As both Secretary of Commerce and President he applied this thinking to specific


2Wilson, op. cit., p. 180. 3Ibid., pp. 163, 208.

4Ibid., pp. 170, 175, 208.
areas of international concern: the tariff, war debts and reparations, the world court, disarmament, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the League of Nations.

Hoover favored a high tariff and signed into law the Hawley-Smoot levels on June 17, 1930. Initially his concern centered on protection of agricultural products, but the exigencies and politics of placating other domestic industries during the depression forced him to accept protection of a wider group of interests. In this regard his tariff stance was more political and nationalistic than scientific, so he attempted to temper it with other commercial treaties with economic flexibility built into them or in most-favored-nation clauses. He never seemed to realize the incongruity of high American economic barriers and the ability of foreign sellers to recover from the depression.¹

War debts and reparations comprised another foreign economic concern of Hoover. As President he never publicly admitted the existence of a close tie between war debts and reparations and adamantly insisted that the two be treated separately.² From Versailles on he opposed the payment of reparations because they crippled European war recovery and stabilization. War debts, however, he insisted be repaid as a sign of the good faith of the Allies and to placate the

¹Ibid., pp. 175-178.
²Ibid., p. 185.
American public. Still, he allowed payments on the interest of the loans to fall in abeyance as long as an effort to repay the principal continued. At times he attached a tacit rider to these adjustments, implying that the European recipient accept certain arms limitations or currency stabilization programs in exchange for his financial generosity.

In a broader sense, Hoover's pursuit of American economic well-being affected other areas of foreign policy. Hoover deemed stable worldwide political conditions to be a necessary requirement for continued American economic expansion abroad. His personal philosophy also accounted for his strong desire for the retention of world peace. Though not a pacifist, he nevertheless adhered strongly to his Quaker background of nonviolence. In addition, his experience in Europe during the War sickened him to the horrors of war:

... I dealt with the heart-breaking backwash of war victims while the guns boomed on the front. I saw the rise of human brutality and its sinister employment of all the equipment of modern science.

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1 Ibid., pp. 163-164.  
2 Ibid., p. 164.  
4 Ibid., p. 75.  
One of his primary means of retaining world peace lay in pushing for arms limitation. Although he played only a secondary public role at the Washington Conference in 1921-1922, he did advise Secretary Hughes to be fully prepared with proposals and documentation when Hughes opened the sessions. As President he himself prepared assiduously for the proposals he put before the London Naval Conference in 1930, believing that a naval arms race still existed. Again, in June of 1932, he proposed to the Geneva Disarmament Conference that not only naval but land forces be cut by one-third to reduce the possibility of war. In this respect, he watched the military budget unceasingly, believing in preparedness but not lavish, unchecked military spending. These policies generated a feud with the military, particularly the Navy League, which occasionally aimed barbs at the President. Thomas H. B. Dressler concludes that Hoover probably placed too much emphasis on large armaments precipitating wars rather than seeing them as the end products of a climate of ill-feelings between nations.

Hoover also made limited attempts at international cooperation to secure world peace. He favored joining the

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1Wilson, op. cit., p. 190. 2Ibid., pp. 191-194.
3Henry L. Stimson, Diaries of Henry L. Stimson in the Yale University Library, Microfilm copy, Reel 3, October 29, 1931, Manuscripts and Archives Section, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.
4Dressler, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
More than anything else, this statement points up Hoover's solid belief in voluntary, noncoercive interrelationships between nations. It also demonstrates a practical realization that changing times and situations could change a commitment into a paper pact signifying nothing. He admitted to Secretary Stimson in January of 1932 that

1 Wilson, op. cit., p. 195.


although he had felt the Kellogg-Briand Pact a significant step toward world peace in 1929, he had not actually thought it had the teeth to be of practical use.¹

Regarding the Far East specifically, the President held certain predispositions gained from his own experience there. Early in his mining career he worked for the Hai-lin, a Chinese-owned coal mine and cement plant operation where his assignments took him to parts of China rarely seen by foreigners.² While he was in China he witnessed the Boxer Rebellion and its aftermath, an intensified scramble among the western nations for spoils and concessions. China impressed him as possessing great potential for development but trapped by its own political chaos and degeneracy.³ As a Commerce Department official he recommended that a loan be extended the "dreamy" government of Sun Yat-sen to bolster the central government against foreign encroachment, particularly the Bolsheviks.⁴ When the loan proposal failed, the Commerce Department eyed the possibilities of the Second China consortium for pumping American investment into China. A consortium of private American officials was even proposed

¹Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., January 26, 1932.
³Ibid., p. 30.
when the Second China Consortium failed to encourage enough American investment, but the department lacked coherence in its plan, so the idea fell by the wayside. As another alternative he turned to a series of China Trade Acts between 1921-1933 that placed American companies in China under the umbrella of federal incorporation and exempted them from certain federal taxes.¹

Nonetheless, Hoover displayed little interest in the internal problems of China and concerned himself mainly in guaranteeing the Open Door for American business ventures. If loans to China could bolster stability and thus facilitate American business operations, Hoover favored them. Aside from this purpose, he viewed China as basically nonproductive.² His real support went to Japan, accepting it as the leader in the Far East and the best hope for reestablishing order.³

In several accounts of the Far Eastern Crisis Hoover is depicted as too preoccupied with domestic problems to do much more than provide Stimson with basic guidelines.⁴

¹Wilson, op. cit., pp. 203-204.
²Ibid.
³Ibid., p. 204.
There is considerable evidence to support these views. Throughout the fall Hoover's concerns included finding solutions to the problem of war debts and reparations after the Moratorium expired, softening the effects of bank closings, two major visits from European heads of state, Premier Pierre Laval of France in October and Count Dino Grandi of Italy the next month. In his Diary Stimson related how in late September Hoover showed him a memorandum on his desk that listed the various considerations before the President at the moment: a plan for the rescue of the Farm Loan System, a plan for the relief of banks stocked up with frozen mortgages, a plan for the release of credits from certain banks which had suspended operations, a plan for salvaging distressed insurance companies, and an idea for an organization that would serve as a central relief agency for banks in trouble. During the winter of 1931-32 Hoover's attention turned to composing his annual message to Congress in December, turning down European requests for further alleviation of their war debts and reparations burden as gently as possible, and forming the American delegation to the upcoming World Disarmament Conference in Geneva and devising instructions for the American representatives.

In addition to the program pending before him, Hoover contended with a Democratic Congress that had its

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1 Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., September 29, 1931.
own measures, quite apart from his, for meeting the economic crisis. He felt himself also at a disadvantage with fellow Republicans because he inherited from his predecessor, also a Republican, specific policies and appointments and little unused patronage to use as leverage in keeping party members in line.

The older Republican elements of the party in Congress never forgave my elevation to the Presidency and at times occupied themselves politically. ... I had also to deal with those perpetual members of my own party who wished to demonstrate publicly by grasshopper bites that they had greater liberal minds than the President, and that they did not wear his collar.¹

Another major factor behind what may have appeared to be Hoover's lack of participation in responding to the crisis was his administrative style of maintaining a low public profile. He preferred to work behind the scenes through subordinates who carried out his policies publicly.² Although Hoover remained in the background throughout the crisis, allowing Stimson to follow through on policies they jointly formulated, there was never any doubt that he controlled the situation.³

On the other hand, the Secretary of State was not one to placidly take orders without question. Moreover, his

¹Hoover, Memoirs, II, op. cit., p. 218.
world view and conception of America's international role differed pointedly from the President's.1 Hoover pictured a new world order rising from the ashes of the War, albeit one where the United States prevailed economically, but still modern in light of his willingness to back international economic competition based on scientific principles. The days when a few powerful states lived off the labors and treasures of the rest of the world were dead in his estimation; he shied away from anything smacking of imperialism.2 Conversely, the Secretary of State viewed the world situation from the perspective of the power diplomacy of the pre-War era.3 An elitist at heart,4 he saw a handful of leaders determining the course of the rest of the world, all to everyone's benefit, of course, and in a gentlemanly fashion. He especially admired the British system of empire, even though his British counterparts found his style of leadership arrogant.5 Unlike the President, who lived by scientific reason, Stimson's profession was the law, where

1 Thorne, op. cit., pp. 415-416.
2 Ibid., p. 54.
3 Ibid., pp. 56-57.
4 Ferrell, American Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 166.
civilized persons abided by established codes or received punishment if they did not. Stimson applied this framework to the relationships between states whereby nations abided by their agreements or faced international chastisement for breaking them. Both men stressed morality in international relations, but differed in their definitions of the word. To Hoover "morality" meant a powerful code of ethics by which the people of the world exerted their influence over governments. Stimson saw morality in terms of his own personal, judgmental beliefs of fair conduct; when these were offended, he lashed out vitriolically as a means of catharsis.

Hoover and Stimson also split over the manner by which each interacted with other nations. The President preferred open, above-the-table dealings. This became quite evident in February of 1932 and again in May when he attempted to spell out precisely what the United States was and was not willing to do in response to Japan's aggression. Hoover would not sanction force or even the threat of force as an instrument of national policy. However, he was willing to protect the continent from invasion.\(^2\) Stimson, on the other hand, was more assertive in his dealings with Japan, believing that the United States should take a stronger stance in response to Japan's aggression.

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\(^1\) Rappaport, op. cit., pp. 129, 133.

other hand, favored less overt clarifications of policy, seeing more maneuverability in implications rather than categorical statements. Holding back information comprised a major proportion of his diplomatic arsenal. Ideally, Stimson would have preferred world public opinion to settle disputes between nations, but in practical terms he realized this tactic might not always work. At that point he felt a nation must be prepared to back up its words with stronger measures, i.e., force. As will be seen in Chapter 4, this division in outlook accounted in good part for their two differing policies that evolved concerning the crisis.

Finally, Stimson's personality also influenced his conduct of foreign policy. He tended toward emotional, rash actions when excited to frustration. To be demonstrated shortly, he felt betrayed by empty promises of the Japanese on several occasions (November 1932 over the advance on Chinchow, early January 1932 when Chinchow fell, and February 1932 when despite Japanese assurances to the contrary they continued their assault on Shanghai) and reacted bellicosely.

Though the differences Hoover and Stimson came to experience during the Far Eastern Crisis emanated primarily

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1Stimson to Walter Lippman, May 19, 1932, Newton D. Baker Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa.

2Ferrell, American Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 42.
over policy disputes and differing perceptions of the
world, their contrasting temperaments accounted for their
inability to fully comprehend these disparate views.

From almost the beginning of their association they
realized they differed from each other in many respects, and
therefore set about "meticulously" defining a relationship
based on their "mutual respect." Publicly, each man spoke
only in the highest terms of the other. Privately, they
trusted each other and addressed each other with total can-
dor. Although they never tangled openly, an undercurrent of
uneasiness permeated their relationship. Hoover's shyness
manifested itself in a brusqueness of manner with Stimson
and discouraged the development of a close friendship.

Where Hoover clung to caution, Stimson acted on
impulse. Where Hoover was self-contained and cerebral,
Stimson was ebullient and emotional. Stimson complained
that the Chief insisted on "seeing the dark side first" of
every issue and felt that "If he would only walk out his own
way and not worry what his enemies say, it would make matters
so much easier." Hoover's bleak moods reflected the low

1 Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study
of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston: Houghton-

2 Ibid., p. 403. 3 Thorne, op. cit., p. 84.

4 Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., Reel 2, December 4, 1930.
state of the economy and permeated the mood of members of his administration. Stimson, however, refused to succumb to the "fog of gloom" pervading Washington and for this reason found himself an outsider in administration circles.¹

The President paid attention to the foreign policy views of other Cabinet members, particularly Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur and Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley. Wilbur, a trusted friend of the President whose relationship went back forty years to their college days at Stanford, served as Chairman of the Institute of Pacific Relations for sessions in 1926 and 1928 and in conjunction with this role toured Manchuria, North China, and Japan.² Hurley's familiarity with the Orient was even more current, having been in the Philippines when the Mukden explosion occurred.

Stimson, too, depended on subordinates for input to the policies he formulated. Regarding the Far Eastern Crisis, these advisers in the State Department included: Undersecretary of State William R. Castle, Jr.; Chief of the Far Eastern Division, Stanley K. Hornbeck; Assistant Secretary of State James Grafton Rogers; and Assistant to

¹Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., p. 197.

the Secretary, Allen T. Klots. In the field the list included: Minister to China, Nelson T. Johnson; Ambassador to Japan, W. Cameron Forbes; Joseph C. Grew, who replaced Forbes in February of 1932 (although he did not arrive in Tokyo until June, 1932); and Prentiss Gilbert, Hugh Wilson, and Norman Davis, diplomats with the League of Nations in Geneva.

By tradition the State Department had come to be quite favorably disposed toward Japan in its Far Eastern dealings.¹ Throughout the Twenties the Japanese had shown themselves to be the most technologically advanced, admirers of western culture, and offered the greatest promise as the keepers of oriental peace. Until September of 1931 these factors outweighed the threat of their growing economic and naval competition with the United States. The Chinese, though, aside from a lingering romantic American notion of a mission to uplift them religiously, presented a constant problem to American interests through incessant internal warfare, banditry, and threats to expel foreign economic domination.

Stimson's advisers did not all share the same opinions as to how the United States should respond to the Crisis.² The factor that caused this disparity of views

¹Thorne, op. cit., p. 85. ²Ibid., pp. 51-52.
was not a matter of being pro-Japanese or pro-Chinese but rather the role each adviser saw Japan assuming in the Far East and the extent of retaliation he advised the United States to take.

William R. Castle, the highest-ranking career diplomat in the Department as Undersecretary, contributed two major dimensions to decision-making. First, through his recent post as temporary ambassador to Japan while Cameron Forbes attended the London Naval Conference in 1930, Castle acquired an admiration for Japan's rapid strides in modernization. Underlying this admiration was his belief that if Japan stabilized conditions in the Far East, American business interests there could thrive without the United States actively having to protect them. He embodied this thinking in a letter to Minister Nelson T. Johnson in China in 1930:

It seems to be that, if Japan can feel that we are wholeheartedly her friend, she will be much more likely to play the kind of game we want played in China than if the Japanese can feel we are friendly only with very big reservations. After all, although I would not say this to a Mother's Day Meeting or to any one outside of the State Department, our policy must inevitably be selfish and I am convinced that selfish interests make it imperative that we have Japan as a friend in the Western Pacific, so long at least as Japan maintains an ethical code which we can recognize.\(^1\)

Moreover, in return for this order in the Far East, he felt the United States had to realize and accept Japan's

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\(^1\) Castle to Johnson, October 13, 1930, William R. Castle Papers, Container 2, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa.
Far Eastern aspirations-economic expansion in Manchuria and blockage of any further southern expansion of the Soviet Union:

I can never feel that Japan can afford to give up certain measure of control in Manchuria unless China has become absolutely unified and thoroughly capable of defending its own interests and respecting the interests of others. Manchuria is too near Japan and is too vitally important to Japan in case of trouble for that country to be able to look calmly on any anarchical condition and there is no doubt that Japan is really afraid of Russia.¹

Consideration of Japan's stabilizing influence in the Orient remained uppermost in Castle's mind throughout the crisis, so he primarily advised caution and restraint in order to avoid jeopardizing American relations with Japan.

Castle's second dimension in the State Department lay in his close friendship with the President. Hoover, in fact, recommended him for the position when Stimson's original choice, Joseph Cotton, died in March of 1931, and pushed the Secretary hard to accept the nomination.² Castle's friendship with Hoover at times proved quite beneficial because he served as liaison between the President and the Secretary when both were tied up with demanding matters. This type of communication, however, further sacrificed understanding between Hoover and Stimson, imparting to it the slant of a third party, and during the latter

¹Ibid. ²Ferrell, American Diplomacy, op. cit., p. 38.
months of the crisis when Hoover and Stimson were of two different minds over policy, forced Castle to side with one against the other.

Stanley K. Hornbeck's views at times resembled Castle's, only inside out. Hornbeck contributed considerable Chinese expertise to State Department information from his early years as a professor of Chinese history and experience living in China teaching American history. Although certain historians designate Hornbeck's outlook as pro-Chinese,¹ his attitude, like Castle's, reflected not so much an endearment to the country per se so much as his concern for the self-interest of the United States in light of Japanese imperialist designs. Where Castle advocated a strong Japan maintaining the peace in the Orient, Hornbeck sought a revitalized China to check Japanese expansion. Both, however, desired a stable Orient where American economic interests could operate unhindered. Thus, like the rest of the State Department, he supported the status quo in American relations with China.²

In spite of his rank as senior spokesman on the Far East in the State Department, Hornbeck lacked the Secretary's fullest confidence. In part, this resulted from his not

¹ Current, Secretary Stimson, op. cit., p. 71.
being one of the "inner circle" of Stimson's cronies from Ivy League schools.¹ Also, he tended to submit his views from the context of a scholar rather than a diplomat, placing more emphasis on the theoretical than on the practical.² The floods of "meticulous" memoranda he cranked out moved Stimson to complain on one occasion that he found Hornbeck "tiring" and that "he adds tremendously to my work."³

Stimson placed more confidence in the views of James Grafton Rogers and Allen T. Klots. Described by Richard N. Current as the "extremists" of the Department, they, more than any other advisers, urged a firm stand against Japanese aggression.⁴ Stimson's work style called for a small group of kindred souls who shared his views on international matters. For reasons just mentioned, both Castle and Hornbeck were not included. Instead, the Secretary recruited Klots, son of a Yale classmate, as Special Assistant in November of 1930 and Rogers as Assistant Secretary of State in February of 1931. A major portion of Klots' work


²Sara R. Smith, op. cit., p. 12; Current, Secretary Stimson, op. cit., p. 71.


⁴Current, Secretary Stimson, op. cit., p. 84.
consisted of drafting Stimson's diplomatic statements, and some of his own thinking crept into the wording. Rogers' original assignment was to advise on legal affairs, but his advice eventually included policymaking also. Stimson entertained both men and their families as frequent guests at his Washington residence, Woodley. Klots, especially, customarily stopped by on weekends and early mornings to brief the Secretary on urgent matters.¹

In the field, Nelson T. Johnson, Minister to China, proved to be a conscientious appendage to the State Department's policy objectives. He made a determined effort to learn Chinese customs and language ² and optimistically envisioned a stable, prosperous China, permitted it passed successfully through a necessary, difficult period of adjustment.³ He was not necessarily pro-Chinese, however, but rather more interested in the total stability of the Orient to insure continued American business expansion. Therefore, a year before the Mukden crisis he looked favorably on what he saw to be a developing amicable relationship

¹Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., September 20, November 7, 8, 10, 11, 10, 22, 26, December 13, 25, 1931, January 4, 5, February 21, 1932.


between China and Japan and did not see any threat in Japan's moves:

... in regard to Sino-Japanese relations, I have seen nothing in these relations so far to make me feel that the Japanese are interested beyond the establishing of the friendliest feelings insofar as the Chinese are concerned. The whole attitude appears to have changed and so far as I am able to determine, Shidehara is succeeding.¹

In fact, the confidence he placed in the words of Japanese diplomats in China caused him to disregard rumors relayed to him early in September of a possible outbreak of Sino-Japanese fighting in the near future.² Throughout the crisis Johnson loyalty supported Stimson's policies, placing great reliance on the Kellogg Pact and Nine-Power Treaty to insure the future efficacy of collective security.³

In Japan, the choice of American representative had not been quite so fortunate. W. Cameron Forbes, wealthy grandson of Ralph Waldo Emerson, proved himself an unknowledgeable source of information and adamantly opposed any policies arousing Japanese anger. Moreover, he chose to return stateside to check on his polo ponies just after the Mukden explosion. While American policy continued to support the government of Baron Shidehara, Forbes' views

¹Johnson to Castle, September 7, 1930, Castle Papers, op. cit.
²Buhite, Nelson T. Johnson, op. cit., p. 64.
and those of others in the legation in Japan\(^1\) were consistent with the line taken by the State Department. However, once Stimson assumed a more aggressive stance against Japan, Forbes deviated from the views of his superior. He obtusely reiterated that Stimson's actions would further alienate the Japanese and foster no positive results. He seriously believed Japanese aggression in Manchuria to be momentary and if not goaded by outside criticism, would subside once the bills from the expedition started coming into Tokyo.\(^2\)

In February of 1932 the impasse between Stimson and Forbes forced the Ambassador to resign. His successor, Joseph C. Grew, boasting a distinguished career of twenty-seven years in foreign service, appealed to the Secretary and the American press.\(^3\) He did not arrive in Tokyo, however, until June of 1932. By then it had become apparent that the Japanese fully intended to take over in Manchuria and that there was very little the outside world could do, short of force, to prevent it. Coupled with the rather ambiguous and minute instructions he received from the President and Secretary of State before departing the

\(^1\)Neville to Castle, September 24, 1931, Castle Papers, op. cit.

\(^2\)Rappaport, op. cit., p. 144; Forbes to State Department, February 14, 1932, cited in Rappaport, p. 144.

\(^3\)Rappaport, op. cit., p. 163.
States, about all he could hope to do to carry out United States policy by then was to avoid any incidents which might further escalate Japanese-American tensions.

As the Far Eastern Crisis opened, those who were responsible for the formulation and execution of American foreign policy agreed on certain basic points based on existing conceptions of conditions in the Orient. One, that Japan was the strongest military power in the Orient, and the Washington treaties further entrenched Japanese military strength. Two, that the greatest concern of American diplomats lay in retaining and expanding American economic interests in the Far East. Three, that direct action was out of the question. Four, that the Chinese had asked for what they were getting in Manchuria by their unruly acts of the past decade. Finally, however, that the United States was party to several collective security agreements which attempted to lessen the possibility of future world warfare, and by invading Manchuria the Japanese were setting a dangerous precedent in ignoring these agreements. This, then, was the problem in September 1931: to curtail the hostilities in Manchuria

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before they assumed proportions whereby the Japanese would categorically violate their agreements and force the other signatories to respond. In United States foreign policy circles, all agreed on the nature of the problem; it was the solution that led to a split between the President and the Secretary and amongst members of the State Department. This only further pointed up a deep division in foreign policy objectives at the top levels of the government.
Chapter 3

MUKDEN TO NONRECOGNITION: HOOVER-STIMSON ACCORD

By late September-early October 1931, United States observers realized that the activities in Manchuria involved more than a minor railway explosion, and some kind of response by the United States seemed called for. Generally speaking, the President and the Secretary of State were in agreement until late February of 1932 what that response should be. From September 19 to that point they sought: to facilitate a peaceful settlement of the fighting agreed upon by both parties; to support the actions of the League of Nations, although from an independent position; to maintain a subdued American profile throughout so as not to alienate United States-Japanese relations; and to do nothing to unsettle the control of moderates in Japan, whom westerners saw as the best hope for halting hostilities. As Japan's aggressive intentions became more apparent by the end of the year, Hoover and Stimson agreed to chastise Japan with the moral opinion of the rest of the world.

The initial American response to the Mukden explosion evolved gradually because the news arrived on a weekend while Hoover was in Detroit delivering an address and Stimson was vacationing at Hoover's retreat on the Rapidan. Hornbeck
oversaw the early State Department response and met with Katsuji Debuchi, the Japanese Ambassador for a briefing. By the time Stimson returned, Hornbeck had formulated his recommendations. He advocated that the United States not view the Manchurian incident within the context of traditional Far Eastern policy but rather from the framework of its implications to world collective security. That is, the Japanese move had violated Tokyo's obligations under the Kellogg-Briand Pact. However, he advised that the United States not directly confront Japan and risk angering the Japanese, but instead that another agent, such as the World Court, should take on this responsibility. Hornbeck further pointed out that outside parties could easily upset the fluid balance of power between the civilian government and the military in Japan, causing one to gain ascendancy over the other. Therefore, the United States should avoid any precipitate admonishments to Japan in order that Baron Kijuro Shidehara could regain control of the situation.\(^1\)

Castle, also, counseled restraint and moderation in the United States response so as not to alienate the Japanese.\(^2\)

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From China came the outraged reaction of Minister Johnson. He felt betrayed by the Japanese in their bland assurances that they had no intention of a military takeover in Manchuria. On September 11, Dr. John C. Ferguson, an American serving as adviser to the Chinese Nationalist government and a proven source of reliable information, reported to Johnson a rumor purported to have originated in the innermost circles of the Kuomintang camp to the effect that the Japanese would invade some part of China within the next three months. Although Johnson did not immediately check out Ferguson's warning, on the seventeenth he did consult Yano Makoto, Japanese Counselor of Legation, and received a flat denial. So, Johnson neglected to pass on the information to the State Department until weeks after the explosion had occurred. In his frustration over failing to detect signs of trouble, Johnson labeled the invasion


2Johnson waited until October 26 to convey the warning received from Ferguson as part of a routine report on the situation, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1931, III (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), Johnson to Stimson, dated September 30, 1931, received October 26, 1931, pp. 94-95, hereafter cited as FRUS, 1931, III; Rappaport, op. cit., p. 25.
"an aggressive act by the Japanese apparently long planned and when decided upon most carefully and systematically put into effect." Moreover, he could find no other explanation of the Japanese moves than to brand them as falling "within any definition of war."\(^1\) In addition, the Chinese Minister outspokenly advocated invocation of the Kellogg Pact, believing that the peace treaty structure must succeed in stopping Japan for the future efficacy of collective security.\(^2\)

Since Forbes set sail for the States almost immediately after the crisis broke, Edwin Neville, first counselor of legation at the Embassy in Tokyo, represented the United States in Japan. His first assessment was to downplay the whole affair, believing the moderates could regain control of the situation in short order.

The Japanese have seized on the first plausible incident to 'put the fear of God' into the crowd in Manchuria. Shidehara would never have done anything so naive, but the military went ahead on their own hook... After they had their picnic they will leave the Foreign Office to get out of it the best way they can. I don't see anything more to it myself, although anything may happen.\(^3\)

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3 Neville to Castle, September 24, 1931, William R. Castle Papers, Cont. 2, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, hereafter cited as Castle Papers, Hoover Library.
Neville also interpreted the confrontation from the context of his Japanese predilections. In other words, he saw a certain amount of legitimacy in the moves of the Kwantung Army. He blamed the incapacity of the Chinese to protect themselves for the swiftness of the Japanese invasion.

It is believed by a great many that without their own forces the region would be given over to banditry as the Chinese forces have little public spirit or military discipline. This is somewhat borne out by the fact that a small Japanese force was able, in a few hours, to take charge over Mukden and the famous arsenal despite the alleged presence of twenty odd thousand crack Chinese troops.¹

Meanwhile, members of the League of Nations eyed the fighting in Manchuria from their own perspective. Initially, representatives from the larger nations hoped to avoid having the issue come directly before the League. The League had dealt with disputes between nations before, but this particular incident brought a major League power to the fore for the first time as one of the disputants. As happened, the 65th Session of the Council of the League convened at nearly the same time the rails exploded near Mukden. Japan occupied a permanent seat on the Council; China had just been elected to a rotating term. With the movements of the Kwantung Army fanning out several miles beyond Mukden and beyond their legitimate treaty zone, the Chinese decided to take their case to the League under the provisions of Article XI of the

¹Neville to Stimson, September 29, 1931, Foreign Affairs, Far Eastern Incident, Presidential Papers, Cont. 871, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, hereafter cited as Foreign Affairs, Hoover Library.
League Covenant, which required that the Council discuss the dispute and recommend actions for halting the hostilities.

Council President Alejandro Lerroux of Spain responded to the Chinese appeal by sending identical notes to Japan and China on September 23 urging both a cessation of hostilities and the safe return of the Kwantung troops to their specified railway zone. A Committee of Five appointed by Lerroux to find a solution acceptable to both parties discussed favorably a proposal put forth by the Chinese representative, Dr. Alfred Sao-ke Sze, to send a commission of enquiry to Manchuria to investigate and mediate the dispute until they received word from the United States that Stimson opposed the plan.

The United States had been approached by both the Chinese and League members soliciting American cooperation and advice shortly after China made its appeal. League members also suggested that an American join them in the deliberations over Manchuria.¹ The State Department warmly assured the Council that the United States would follow the matter closely; however, Stimson declined to seat an American representative with the Council in Geneva and refused

to back the proposal to form a commission to mediate the dispute in the Orient. From his experience dealing with the Sino-Soviet dispute in 1929 the Secretary considered himself qualified to advise that third parties stay out of the negotiations and allow the Chinese and Japanese to settle the matter by themselves. Stimson's recommendations ran counter to the advice proffered by Hornbeck, who feared that direct negotiations might foster an unbalanced settlement which would provide the grounds for a future world war in Asia.

Stimson did assure League members, though, that he would follow up the steps already taken by Lerroux and send notes similar to the Council's to Japan and China reiterating the need to end the fighting and return the troops to the railway zone. The State Department felt that the

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3 FR, Japan, I, op. cit., Stimson to Neville, September 24, 1931.
most pressing, immediate requirements for ending the hos-
tilities were diffusing emotions and promoting a more
conducive atmosphere in which negotiations could proceed.¹

Behind these moves lay the belief held by Stimson
and the rest of the State Department that the United States
could do the most good by remaining in the wings and talking
with the parties involved, ascertaining their positions, and
steering them into the paths advocated by the League.² Stim-
son and Castle held numerous conversations throughout the
fall with Debuchi, the Japanese Ambassador, the Chinese
Chargés, Yung Kwai and Hawkling Yen, and W. W. Yen, the Chi-
nese Minister.³ In Geneva Hugh Wilson, Norman Davis, and

¹FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Memo Trans Tel Con,
Wilson to Stimson, September 23, 1931, p. 43; Henry L. Stim-
son, Diaries of Henry L. Stimson in the Yale University
Library, Microfilm Copy, Reel 3, September 23, October 3,
1931, Manuscripts and Archives Section, Yale University
Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

²Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., October 6, 1931.

³FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Memoranda of Stimson:
September 23, p. 52; September 24, pp. 55-56; September 28,
p. 65; October 1, pp. 100-101; October 3, p. 108; October
19, p. 240; November 4, p. 167; November 10, p. 417;
November 22, p. 514; November 28, p. 579; November 30,
p. 596; December 7, p. 629; December 11, p. 677; Memoranda
of Castle: September 24, p. 64; September 25, p. 67;
October 1, p. 101; October 12, p. 165; October 14, p. 190;
October 17, p. 219; October 18, p. 230; October 28, p. 333;
November 14, p. 446; Memoranda of Hornbeck: November 19,
p. 465; December 21, p. 698; December 23, p. 704; Stimson,
Diaries, op. cit., September 22, October 15, 16, 18, 19,
November 9, 18, 19, 21, 22, December 17, 23, 1931, January
5, 6, 1932.
Prentiss Gilbert talked daily with both the Chinese and the Japanese representatives, gathering information.¹

The September Council session concluded with the passage of a resolution on September 30 which stipulated that the Japanese troops should return to their railway zone with the Chinese guaranteeing to protect Japanese lives and property while the evacuation proceeded. The United States concurred in notes to China and Japan sent October 5.² At the time, Council members felt this measure a sufficient step in light of assurances by the Japanese representative that the troops would retreat provided the Chinese guaranteed their safety. The relative calm in the days following the Council's adjournment seemed to support this assumption.

Therefore, western observers were quite startled on October 8 when Japan "deliberately crossed the boundary of self-defense and maintenance of treaty rights," the reason given for their actions in September.³ On that day twelve


²FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Stimson to Johnson, October 5, 1931, p. 117.

Japanese airplanes circled the southern city of Chinchow, where Chang Hsueh-liang had temporarily set up provincial headquarters after the seizure of Mukden, and then bombed the sector housing the University.¹

Although Stimson briefly reported the Manchurian episode to the Cabinet on September 22, neither his Diary nor his two books allude to any participation by Hoover in the steps taken by the Secretary the first two weeks of the crisis. After the bombing of Chinchow, however, Stimson decided that a firmer stand was called for and laid the current situation before the President and the Cabinet. Hoover readily agreed that the western powers should make some gesture to curtail the hostilities, especially if the League handled it. Nonetheless, he did not want the problem to come directly before American consideration, or as he is credited as saying, he did not want "anybody to deposit that baby on our lap."² Moreover, the self-denying agreements Japan had signed, such as the Kellogg Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty, he referred to as "our scraps of paper


²Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., October 8, 1931.
or paper treaties" and placed little confidence in their ability to halt a Japan bent on expansion.¹

Believing that the President did not fully comprehend what could happen to the international peace structure if Japan flaunted her treaty commitments, Stimson pointed out that by allowing Japan to run "amok" in Asia it would be all the more difficult for Hoover to secure congressional approval of his plan to cut the Navy.² His point was not wasted. The following day he found the President keenly interested in hearing more details, supportive of steps the Secretary had taken up to that point, and ready to consider entering a new phase of cooperation with the League by allowing an American to participate in the talks of the Council in Geneva.³ Six days later Prentiss Gilbert, consul at Geneva, accepted the Council's invitation to sit with them and participate in discussions considering whether the fighting in Manchuria violated the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Once Hoover had consented to limited cooperation with the League, he adhered strongly to his decision, even when the Japanese protested the move on October 15.⁴

Having reconvened a day early in response to the renewed Japanese activities in Manchuria, the Council

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., October 9, 1931.
³Ibid., October 10, 1931.
⁴Ibid., October 16, 1931.
immediately got down to business after Gilbert joined them. On October 17 the Council invoked the Kellogg Pact by reminding both China and Japan that they had pledged not to rely on war as an instrument of national policy. This action taken, Stimson instructed Gilbert that his assignment had been completed and on October 19 ordered him to stop attending the meetings. Stimson was motivated by dual considerations: both he and the President felt public opinion had been stretched to its limits through this collaboration with the League; and he did not wish to antagonize the Japanese further. Withdrawing from formal participation with the Council proved to be more involved than he expected, however, because Lord Reading, the British representative, and Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary of the League, feared Gilbert's departure might appear as American disapproval of the invocation of the Kellogg Pact. After extended transatlantic telephone conversations, Stimson finally agreed to allow Gilbert to attend one more Council meeting and one more secret meeting of Council leaders.¹

The Secretary faced another dilemma when the League passed a resolution on October 24. The resolution differed

¹FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Stimson to Gilbert, October 19, 1931, p. 248; FRUS, 1931, op. cit., Memo Trans Tel Con, Stimson-Reading, October 19, 1931, p. 248; FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Memo Trans Tel Con, Stimson-Gilbert, October 20, 1931, p. 266; Stimson Diaries, op. cit., October 19, 1931.
from that of September 30 in that it included a deadline for the evacuation of Kwantung troops to be completed. Stimson was torn because he wanted to support this latest Council action, but he strongly disagreed with specifying a definite withdrawal date. He feared the League's prestige would be jeopardized if the Japanese chose to disregard the November 16 deadline. After taking several days to arrive at the precise terminology, whereby he could avoid reference to a specific withdrawal deadline, Stimson finally sent back-up notes to the October 24 resolution to the Japanese and Chinese in early November.¹

Meanwhile, Hoover's response to the situation also continued to evolve during October. Sometime during the month the President delivered his opinion regarding the crisis in Manchuria to his Cabinet. Basically, it followed pro-Japanese lines and recommended minimum retaliatory action by the United States. Although continuing to oppose the use of force and condemning the Japanese for having chosen this tactic, he recognized the legitimacy of the concerns that prompted the Japanese action. The continual chaos in China and a renewed drive by the Bolshevists to extend their influence into China had given rise to Japanese anxieties concerning their economic interests in China and Manchuria.

¹Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., October 29, 30, November 3, 4, 5, 1931.
Despite the relative ease with which the Kwantung troops had seized parts of Manchuria, Hoover did not believe that Japan would overrun all China. No outside invasion could ever totally subdue the Chinese, he thought; the country was too vast, contained too many people, and enjoyed traditions dating back too far. Concerning the current situation in Manchuria, he readily committed the United States to exhausting "the process of peaceful negotiation" to settle the problem, but he stressed that the United States go no further than moral pressure, even if the rest of the world pursued more aggressive measures. The President's role later in the month seems to have been to support Stimson in his carefully-worded response to the Council's October 24 resolution.

Diplomats in the field provided further elucidation on Japanese moves in Manchuria in October. One of the initial State Department responses to the crisis had been to seek more accurate information regarding the actual circumstances that had led to the fighting in Manchuria rather than rely on the slanted reports of both the Chinese and Japanese. Stimson received word on October 1 through

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2Ibid.
Ambassador Debuchi that Japanese authorities had been instructed by Foreign Minister Shidehara to facilitate in every way the proposed American fact-finding mission in Manchuria. Stimson selected George C. Hanson, Consul General at Harbin, and E. Lawrence Salisbury, First Secretary of the Embassy in Tokyo, to tour Manchuria. He explained his intentions to the American Embassy in Tokyo thusly:

It is taken for granted that both Salisbury and Hanson already understand the rights of Japanese in Manchuria. Keeping these rights in mind, they should be able to inform us as to how far they have been illegally extended, whether the extension was justifiable, and whether there seems to be a desire to restore the status quo ante.

He also charged them with observing the areas outside Mukden in regard to the "form of civil administration" the Japanese had set up and "whether the military are unduly interfering with the Chinese civil administration."

The reports that began arriving from Hanson and Salisbury in early October provided damning information against the Japanese case. In their first report, which reached the State Department on October 8, Hanson and Salisbury described the explosion near Mukden and the happenings of the night of September 18 as told them by both Chinese

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1 FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Memo of Stimson, October 1, 1931, p. 100.


3 Ibid.
and Japanese sources as well as international witnesses. Their conclusions supported the allegations of the Chinese that the Japanese had wantonly provoked an incident as a pretext for a military takeover.

We believe possible Chinese soldiers in question had no intention of shelling nor the audacity to shell the Japanese settlement... We believe that the attack... was unjustifiable from the standpoint of international law.¹

Hanson's response, since he was stationed in Manchuria, is easy to understand. Salisbury, however, despite his allegiances to the area where he served, stated in unqualified terms that the Japanese were in the wrong.

A second report arrived on October 13 which described the military seizure of Kirin City and the Kirin-Chanchung Railway. In this edition the American officials presented a new twist which was further complicating the withdrawal: Chinese troops had scattered, leaving the countryside to the mercy of bandits and providing the Japanese with a legitimate reason for delaying evacuation:

The circle is vicious. The coming of the Japanese military caused these troops to leave and are now according to reliable information, refusing to allow the Chinese authorities to use government funds to support them. I am convinced they will soon become brigands against whom it will be necessary to maintain a Japanese garrison in the City. It would be dangerous to Kirin if the Japanese withdrew.²

¹Hanson and Salisbury, Report 727, October 6, 1931, Foreign Affairs, Cont. 869, Hoover Library, loc. cit.

²Hanson and Salisbury, Report 754, October 13, 1931, Foreign Affairs, Cont. 869, Hoover Library, loc. cit.
The State Department possessed the Hanson-Salisbury intelligence and other information from the field by mid-October and forwarded it to the President. Stimson shared some of his inside knowledge with leaders at Geneva, but the bulk of it remained confidential until January when the Senate asked to inspect it. Consequently, Hoover and Stimson knew early in the crisis that the Japanese were willfully fomenting trouble in Manchuria as an excuse to extend military control throughout the region. Although they took cognizance of this information in building up a case against Japan, their primary concern remained supportive of Shidehara's efforts to regain control over the unruly military. Therefore, they kept silent in regard to Japan's activities. Should the reports have been made public, there would have been a public reaction in the United States against Japan, although not enough to stimulate warlike feelings. However, the publicity would have angered the Japanese public and caused Shidehara a further loss of support, so the decision was to remain quiet.  

Nevertheless, the seriousness behind Japanese actions in Manchuria remained uppermost in Stimson's mind, causing him to speculate on what United States actions should be if

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the invocation of the Kellogg Pact failed to halt the Japanese. In a conference with Hoover, the Secretary suggested that they consider a proposal made by Charles P. Howland of Yale, editor of Survey of American Foreign Relations. During the War the United States had been concerned about its shipping rights as a neutral nation. In the case of the current incident, however, tacit approval of an economic boycott against Japan being discussed in the League seemed desirable. The difficulty lay in finding some way to abide by it without actually participating. Howland's idea appeared to do this by providing a means whereby the United States Navy and private American traders could use the "Pact of Paris . . . as a means for judging the attitude of other nations" boycotting Japan, should the League decide to impose an embargo. The President wanted to avoid a direct stance vis-a-vis Japan but agreed he would "think it over with an open mind." The President and the Secretary of State did not seriously discuss economic sanctions as an alternative step until the next month.¹

¹Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., October 17, 1931.
The Japanese surreptitiously encouraged General Chang to challenge Ma for control of the region; and during the confrontations between the two leaders, Ma burned the railroad bridges over the Nonni River to cut off Chang's approach to Tsitsihar. The bridges were necessary to transport the soybean crop, soon to be harvested, to Japan. Kwantung commandants demanded that Ma repair the bridges by November 3 or the Japanese would complete the job.\(^1\) The ultimatum expired without Japanese satisfaction, so the attack began. Tsitsihar fell on November 19, and the Japanese set up General Chang as their puppet over the province.

The outbreak of fighting around the Nonni Bridges signalled to the rest of the world Japan's intent to ignore the Council's November 16 withdrawal date. Believing that the civilian government in Tokyo might collapse at any moment, Stimson responded to the latest turn of events by discussing with Hoover what response America should make. Once again the President refused to consider sanctions, but proposed withdrawing the American ambassador from Japan. However, he would accompany the move with a statement that the United States did not intend to go to war with Japan, thus removing the threat of an economic embargo.\(^2\)

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The following Monday, November 9, Hoover backed away from this proposal and replaced it with the idea of announcing "that if the treaty is made under military pressure we will not recognize or avow it." Agreeing to consider the idea, Stimson presented it to Castle, Klots, and Hornbeck. The Far Eastern Chief rejected the proposal for the reason that a similar move had been ineffective in 1915 during the Twenty-One Demands episode. For the time, Stimson apparently shelved the idea for future reference.¹

Although the Diary does not record when Stimson first proposed it to Hoover, the President accepted the idea of sending a representative to Paris for the upcoming Council discussions the same day he brought up his nonrecognition suggestion. Stimson did a great selling job on sending an American to Paris, because the Diary relates that Hoover previously desired avoiding any repeat of Gilbert's participation with the League. In October League members had used Gilbert's junior diplomatic status to coax him into attending more meetings than Hoover and Stimson intended. At one point Hoover admitted to Castle that he regretted even the limited cooperation the United States had undertaken with the League and wanted to "get completely out of the League connection and thinks it might have been wise

¹[bid., November 9, 1931.]
politically, to make Stimson keep out."\(^1\) Stimson attributed the problem in October to not having had a prestigious enough personage in attendance and pushed this time for a "big man" of international status who could maintain an independent role for the United States. Ambassador to Great Britain and former Vice-President Charles G. Dawes fit these requirements. Once persuaded, Hoover "came over very fully and cordially."\(^2\) Stimson allowed Dawes to decide whether to attend the meetings. Although the Ambassador kept informed of developments and played a key role in informal discussions while in Paris, he never went to the Chambers of the Quai d'Orsay where the Council was meeting.

A few days after approving sending Dawes to Paris, Hoover contributed another possible solution in a memo to Stimson dated November 12. Even at this point, however, the President did not concede that Japan was out to take direct control of Manchuria. Instead, he believed the Japanese were more interested in imposing internal order in Manchuria than in extending territorial control; and proposed that the Manchurians set up a new government, responsible to Nanking but amenable to the Japanese, and replace

\(^1\)William R. Castle, Diary, November 4, 1931, cited in Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. 79; see also Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., December 29, 1931.

\(^2\)Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., November 9, 1931; FRUS, 1931, I, II, op. cit.; Memo from Tel Con, Stimson-Dawes, November 10; 1931, pp. 407-414.
the young Marshal Chang Hsueh-liang with an official in the nature of a viceroy.¹

The President revealed his attitude further in a Cabinet discussion a week later. Stimson reported to the Cabinet that Kenkichi Yoshizawa, the Japanese representative on the Council, was going to promise in a speech before the Council that Japan had no intentions of "taking a single foot of Chinese territory." Stimson read between the lines and commented that even though this guaranteed the non-annexation of Manchuria, it did not say anything about setting up a puppet government. The Secretary did not want to see Manchuria succumb to the status of puppet, but neither Hoover nor Secretary of War Hurley were aroused to the same anxiety. They did not view that possibility as either humiliating to the United States or a diplomatic defeat.²

Two days later Tsitsihar fell. The gloom which pervaded the discussions in Paris filtered back to the State Department. Stimson protested strongly to Debuchi because Tsitsihar stood completely beyond the scope of the original confrontations.³ This time Stimson found the President in a

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¹FRUS, 1931, III, op. cit., Hickey to Stimson, November 12, 1931, p. 431.
²Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., November 17, 1931.
quieter and less adamant mood against a boycott. "He was ready to go the whole thing." That included approving instructions to Dawes that in the event the League did impose an embargo, the United States would not interfere with it. "The President added that he thought that I could tell him/\textit{Dawes}/\"that the sympathy of our people would undoubtedly be with the embargo, and that there might be a private embargo put on here by voluntary action in refusing to trade with Japan.\"\)

Although these instructions represented a change in the President's attitude, they proved unnecessary, because Japan in the meantime proposed that the Council form a commission of enquiry to tour Manchuria to ascertain certain facts of the case. Although this proposal resembled China's September suggestion, the Chinese now objected because they felt a commission could not halt Japanese aggression and return the situation in Manchuria to where it stood before the September incident. Initial reports that reached the United States indicated glowing prospects for approval of the Japanese idea and offered a glimmer of hope that a settlement was in sight. Later reports, however, quashed this promise, citing Chinese opposition to the idea. Hoover thought Dr. Sze, the Chinese representative, "an awful fool" for his intransigence, an indication that the President felt

\footnote{Stimson, \textit{Diaries}, op. cit., November 19, 1931.}
the Chinese should settle for whatever the Japanese offered and end the fighting.¹

Stimson, too, desired passage of the Commission plan. His earlier objection was based on the assumption that the Japanese would not agree to it, but this was obviously no longer the case. The Secretary threw his support to the Japanese and helped convince the Chinese to forego their objections.²

The Japanese quickly added more obstacles to passage of their proposal by shifting their attention once more to Chinchow in the south. Kwantung commanders argued that a riot in Tientsin, south of Chinchow, required police action. They continued to bomb Chinchow, however, even after the trouble subsided in Tientsin, retreating to Hsinmin only when the emperor himself ordered them to do so.³

The renewed attack on Chinchow prompted Stimson to return to the subject of sanctions. Without specifically recommending the move, he at least wanted the President to think about the positive effect of a brief, widely-supported embargo. Reassessing this discussion with Hoover

¹Ibid., November 21, 1931.


³Yoshihashi, op. cit., p. 217.
in his Diary, he seemed to think that it was now not so much a matter of Hoover's being opposed to an embargo as it was his being boxed in by all his previous anti-sanctions statements.¹

Thus far Stimson successfully restrained his anger at Japanese actions, but the second attack on Chinchow prompted a brief flicker of his true feelings. During a news conference in late November he revealed that Shidehara had broken his pledge that the Kwantung Army would not attack Chinchow. Reporters, having received less information than they would have liked throughout the fall, attached their own interpretations to their stories. The Japanese press service in San Francisco, Rengo, failed to discern these editorial comments, so the Japanese press printed that Stimson had said 'the Japanese army is running amuck.' The next day a further clarification of Stimson's exact words became necessary to abate a growing tenseness in Japanese-American relations.² Privately, Stimson confessed: "I feel like kicking the whole thing over... It makes me feel that I cannot trust the sons of guns now. Their army is as hard-boiled as anything can be."³

¹Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., November 27, 1931.
²Rappaport, op. cit., p. 75.
By the first part of December it became evident that even a commission of enquiry was not going to stop Japanese expansion in Manchuria; and in light of rumors that the Wakatsuki government in Tokyo would soon fall, Stimson consulted his advisers to consider eventualities. Stimson sought to assume a sterner stance regarding the Japanese by publicly stating that the United States would not recognize a change in existing treaties brought about by force, in essence Hoover's suggestion of November 9. At a meeting at his home on December 6, Stimson and his advisers also discussed the possibility of the success of a League-imposed embargo. The idea appealed to all but Castle, especially after Hornbeck reported that the effect of an embargo a few weeks in duration would hurt Japan's economy enough to force the Japanese to back down. The group decided, however, to table their discussion of an embargo temporarily to await the outcome of the League's vote on the enquiry commission.¹

In the second week of December, it appeared that the drive on Chinchow had temporarily abated; and the commission plan passed the Council. Five nations placed representatives on the newly-formed body; General Frank McCoy represented the United States. In January the group chose Lord

¹Ibid., December 3, 6, 1931.
Lytton of Great Britain as its president, and thereafter the commission bore his name.

The independent actions of the Kwantung Army considerably weakened the Wakatsuki Cabinet in Japan and discredited Shidenara both at home and abroad. Moreover, the events in Manchuria elicited popular support in Japan of the military. Nonetheless, the Wakatsuki group hung onto minimal control of the government throughout the autumn of 1931, through an attempted coup in October, until repudiation of its fiscal policies in December. The Wakatsuki Cabinet fell on December 10, with the government reorganizing around Inukai Tsuyoshi. The new government first took Japan off the gold standard and then threw its support to the completion of the Manchurian takeover.

Stimson learned of the renewed Japanese activities on December 21 from Hornbeck, who himself received the information from Chinese Minister W. W. Yen. Between this

1 Rappaport, op. cit., p. 10.
2 Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., December 3, 1931.
4 Rappaport, op. cit., p. 81.
5 Seiichi, op. cit.
time and January 3, 1932, when the news of the fall of
Chinchow reached him, Stimson's thoughts as to a future
American response crystallized, especially now that he no
longer had to worry about protecting Shidehara. ¹ Rising
early on Sunday, January 3, he set to work on a brief note
to both China and Japan based on Secretary Bryan's note in
1915. He showed it first to Klots, Hunter Miller, Ransford
Miller, and Dr. George H. Blakelee of the State Department
staff. Initially "they were staggered by it . . . because
it was so different from what we had been thinking."
Previously they discussed issuing a much longer resume of
Japan's actions and reasons why the United States had
decided on nonrecognition. Eventually they accepted the
gist of the draft and assisted in polishing the language.²
The following day Stimson consulted Hornbeck and Rogers.
The Far Eastern Chief proved hesitant and "argumentative,"
because he did not feel a demonstration of words alone
would bring results.³ Stimson went ahead, however, and that
evening showed Hoover the note. He took the President two
drafts: one covered merely the nonrecognition of Japanese
dominance in Manchuria where American commercial rights were

¹ Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., January 3, 1932.
² Ibid., January 4, 1932.
concerned, the other assumed broader scope and interpreted
the move as based on obligations under the Kellogg Pact.
Without hesitation, Hoover approved the latter, the form
the Secretary also preferred. Stimson held a final con-
ference to discuss the wording of the note on January 6 with
Klots, Hornbeck and Castle. The latter, who had just
returned from a Christmas vacation, pleased the Secretary
with his "vigorous" support of the note and suggested that
the other members of the Nine-Power Treaty group be notified
and asked to take the same action. Later in the day the
President approved this suggestion also.

Although Stimson informed both the French and
British Ambassadors on January 5 of his intended action and
suggested that their respective governments might want to
follow suit, he went ahead on his own and issued the notes
unilaterally to both Japan and China on January 7. Even
though Japan remained in Manchuria, he and the President
placed great confidence in the moral tone of the notes
which refused to recognize what they deemed to be illegal
actions. Here was one of the last occasions where they
were in total accord over the Far Eastern Crisis. Later in

1 Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 96.
2 Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., January 6, 1932.
3 FR, Japan, I, op. cit., Stimson to Forbes, January
7, 1932, p. 76.
January the Japanese expanded their aggression to Shanghai. This period ushered in a gradual disintegration in the consensus between the President and the Secretary of State.
Chapter 4

POST-NONRECOGNITION: HOOVER-STIMSON DISCORD

In late January 1932 Japanese forces bombed a suburb of Shanghai, killing hundreds of Chinese residents. This phase of the Far Eastern Crisis produced far more world interest and anxiety than had occurred with the fighting in Manchuria because western nations held considerable investments here and did not want to see them jeopardized. It was also during this period that Secretary Stimson, frustrated by the lack of influence of words alone on Japanese aggression, sought a more powerful deterrent. In doing so, his views on what American action should be departed from those of the President, producing an ambiguous American stance which accomplished very little.

In seeking another means of curbing Japanese expansion Stimson attempted to avoid the lone position he experienced with the nonrecognition doctrine. Although not specifically soliciting joint action when he informed the French and British Ambassadors of his intentions to send notes to Japan and China, he did hope both Britain and France would shortly follow his lead. However, he sent the notes before giving either government a chance to reply, believing that discussion beforehand might have
delayed delivery or watered down the language. Moreover, he feared the press might get wind of it and spoil the "psychological effect." Still, he hoped once the notes became public that other governments would issue similar statements. He believed the British would join, following a tradition of supporting the United States on the Open Door in China since the turn of the century, and because the last two years had especially witnessed close Anglo-American cooperation in promoting a world peace structure. In passing, Stimson noted that recently the British government had undergone a change in cabinets and that the new group in power reflected more conservative attitudes, but this did not seem to dispel his hope for British cooperation.\(^1\)

The British did not duplicate Stimson's actions because they felt such steps would endanger their relationship with Japan. Great Britain enjoyed a tremendous economic stake in the Orient, particularly in China's Yangtze region. Due to Britain's reduced world economic status resulting from the World War and financial problems stemming from the world depression, this investment assumed all the more importance in London's Far Eastern policy considerations. Realizing early in the crisis that Japan held the upper hand

militarily and believing it to have a legitimate case in Manchuria, diplomats in Britain's Foreign Office attempted to protect their Chinese investments through a cordial policy with Japan.¹ Initially, the Foreign Office decided the best way to prevent the hostilities from spreading to the rest of China and still arouse the least Japanese anger was to work through the League instead of supporting direct Sino-Japanese negotiations.² For its role in the League resolutions of September 30 and October 24, Great Britain received the brunt of Japan's hostile response. Except for the period in October just before Gilbert received the League's invitation to participate, Japan praised the United States for its moderate response to the conflict.³

Therefore, in January of 1932, when the United States appeared to be assuming a more vigorous role in the crisis, the British did not desire to find themselves in the position which they had been in during the fall. Some


officials even thought the United States should have an opportunity to experience Japan's acrimonious press.\textsuperscript{1} Moreover, the British did not view the fall of Chinchow with the same anxiety as did Stimson. They believed that this move signalled an eventual return to normalcy in the Orient. A successful Chinese defense might serve only to prolong hostilities.\textsuperscript{2} Members of the British Foreign Office unanimously responded to Stimson's request by advocating that Britain not follow suit.\textsuperscript{3} Despite Stimson's great love of England, his note offended the British because of its rash manner and moralizing tone.\textsuperscript{4} Disregarding the decisive tone of the message, the British did not believe the United States would be willing to back up its statements with forceful actions.\textsuperscript{5} Stimson may have felt morally refreshed to excommuni cate the Japanese, but British diplomats feared what an isolated, alienated Japan might attempt. Sir Victor Wellesley, Deputy Under Secretary cautioned: "An excitable people like the Japanese, armed with formidable military power are capable of any excess and might, if driven to it, \\

\textsuperscript{1}Hecht, op. cit., p. 182. \textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 184. \\
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 181. \textsuperscript{4}Ibid. \\
defy the world. Simon pictured himself "between two stools" in trying to avoid both irritating the Japanese by agreeing to the note and in failing to back up the United States. 2

The tactic finally taken by the Foreign Office was to reject issuance of a similar note on the grounds that it was unnecessary. In discussing this dilemma with the Japanese Ambassador to Great Britain, Tsuneo Matsudaira, Simon persuaded him to issue a statement supporting the Open Door in China and repeat it again later in the month before the League Council. Simon explained his decision to Stimson by citing his belief in Japan's assurances on the Open Door and that British Chinese investments would not be jeopardized. 3

Meanwhile, in mid-January Japanese attention turned to Shanghai. Throughout the Manchurian phase of the crisis Chinese troops stood by helplessly; they were unable to assist because Chiang Kai-shek was concerned about the Communists in Kiangsi province. 4 Chiang thought the central

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1 DBFP, IX, op. cit., Memo of Wellesley, February 1, 1932, p. 289.

2 Ibid., Stimson to MacDonald, January 29, 1932, p. 215.

3 DBFP, IX, op. cit., Simon to Lindley, January 8, 1932, pp. 90-91; DBFP, IX, op. cit., Simon to Lindsay, January 9, 1932, p. T01.

4 Warren I. Cohen, America's Response to China: An Interpretative History of Sino-American Relations (New York:
government could not come to the aid of Manchuria until it first suppressed the Communists. Some historians argue that Chiang hoped that by not interfering in Manchuria, he would avoid giving the Japanese a pretext to expand their military activities to China proper. In addition, the depression and the flooding of the Yellow River in August which inundated a thousand square miles of land and left eighteen million people homeless seriously weakened China's defenses.

The Chinese, however, did respond to the actions in Manchuria by instituting an extensive boycott of Japanese goods. The boycott further damaged Japan's sinking economy and contributed to anti-Chinese sentiment in Japan. Once again, all the situation required was a minor incident to set off full-fledged fighting. The incident occurred on January 18 when workers from a Chinese towel factory in Shanghai attacked five Japanese nationals, including two monks. Two nights later, a Japanese mob burned down the

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1Ibid.

2Thorne, op. cit., p. 31.

towel factory, but this did not satiate their desire for revenge. The Japanese Residents' Association appealed to Tokyo, and the Foreign Office responded by demanding of the mayor of Shanghai an indemnity, prosecution of all guilty parties, and the dissolution of all anti-Japanese groups in the area. When the mayor did not meet the Japanese ultimatum, Rear Admiral Keichi Shiozawa, on his own initiative, bombed Chapei, a Chinese suburb of Shanghai, killing scores of Chinese residents.¹

The possibility of fighting in the vicinity of Shanghai prompted another long Cabinet session to consider an American response. Hurley contended that words alone would not halt Japan, but the President ruled out the use of force. Stimson also reported in his Diary that Hoover praised him for making the Kellogg Pact more than a "mere gesture," something he apparently had not considered possible when signing it in 1929. Hoover also reiterated his belief that China's size alone would prevent total Japanese penetration and would eventually expel the invader.²


²Henry L. Stimson, Diaries of Henry L. Stimson in the Yale University Library, Microfilm copy, Reel 3, January 26, 1932, Manuscripts and Archives Section, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn.
After the bombing occurred on January 28, Hoover's actions assumed a more active role in the affair because the theater of conflict now affected American citizens in the International Settlement in Shanghai and possibly in the Philippines. Enlarging defensive moves already begun by Stimson, Hoover ordered the 31st Infantry Regiment stationed at the Philippines and four hundred marines to Shanghai to protect American lives. In addition, he reinforced the Asiatic Fleet and sent it closer to the area; plus, he added to the forces already protecting American lives in the Philippines. He also attempted a further diplomatic move by suggesting that he and King George make representations directly to the Japanese emperor but dropped the idea when told by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald that this would be a breach of royal etiquette.

The British, likewise, now viewed the situation differently. They compared Manchuria to their own domination in Egypt, and wrote Manchuria off to Japanese control.

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Shanghai presented another story, however. The British held extensive interests in the city and, even more significantly, feared that appeasing Japan could be the beginning of a British retreat from the Orient, perhaps eventually India. Regrettably, Foreign Office officials realized they had to take a stand against Japan's aggression.

In Shanghai, the Japanese military faced tougher opposition than they had in Manchuria. The Chinese Nineteenth Route Army made a concerted effort to resist. Nonetheless, it received no backing from other Chinese troops because Chiang's disaster in Manchuria temporarily ousted him from office, and he refused to send in the Nationalist troops under his command. This expedition of the Japanese military also faced difficulties at home because their actions in Shanghai lacked imperial approval and caused embarrassment for officials in Tokyo. Unlike the Manchurian incident, furthermore, Japan did not have the pretext of treaty rights to hide behind. Therefore, Tokyo sought to isolate the Shanghai episode from what was transpiring in


Manchuria and to liquidate the former incident as soon as was feasible.\textsuperscript{1} In early February, consequently, Japanese officials offered to let the western powers mediate.

Upon hearing that Japan would be amenable to the western powers extending their good offices to mediate, Hoover and Stimson set to work conferring with British officials and devising points of negotiation. In retrospect it appears that this and other appeals by the Japanese during the month of February were ruses to gain time to regroup the Japanese forces into more effective offensive positions.\textsuperscript{2} Before this tactic became clear to Hoover and Stimson, nevertheless, they did believe during the early days of February that there was a chance for a negotiated settlement. Hoover, especially, involved himself directly in the hour-to-hour exchanges between the State Department and the Foreign Office in London, even to the point of establishing a special telephone line from the White House to the State Department so he could listen to overseas conversations. However, Hoover's part in this period, as far as the Stimson Diary reported, was limited to "listening in" and "being on the line" rather than initiating discussions.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Seiichi, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
\textsuperscript{2} Rappaport, op. cit., p. 129; Ferrell, op. cit., p. 179.
\textsuperscript{3} Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., February 1, 1932.
Through their telephone conferences Stimson and Hoover produced a list of five points to be covered in Sino-Japanese negotiations. The Japanese objected to the fifth point, settlement of all outstanding Sino-Japanese differences with neutral observers present, because they had no intention of reopening the Manchurian controversy to third parties. Simon did not want to see the opportunity for mediation slip away and therefore was ready to give ground on the terms. Stimson, however, would not consider proceeding with anything less than the whole program. The Secretary argued that the Japanese had called the shots too long. Stimson's demands accomplished nothing except to prompt the Japanese to reject the mediation offer.¹

After the joint Anglo-American attempt to mediate failed, Stimson searched for another way to halt the fighting around Shanghai. He looked to the machinery of the Nine-Power Treaty. He possessed Hoover's support in this, because Hoover saw the possibility of repeating the non-recognition posture of January. Apparently, the President believed the notes of January 7 had been quite important, despite the lack of enthusiasm for them displayed by the rest of the world.

¹Nappaport, op. cit., p. 128.
the more he thought of it, the more he was convinced that that would be one of the greatest steps forward in international relations that he knew of.  

British collaboration figured heavily in Stimson's planning, as he had no desire to face Japan unilaterally again. On the twelfth of February he shared his intentions with Simon. The British Foreign Minister, reminiscent of his position in January, wanted to go along with Stimson, but again felt the Secretary was using far too strong language. Over the next few days, moreover, British support continued to deteriorate.  

While the United States and Great Britain haggled over what approach to take regarding the Nine-Power Treaty, the Chinese troops continued to hold their lines, even though they lacked Japan's heavy artillery. In the face of China's stiffening defense, the Japanese offensive began to bog down. After a temporary lull in the fighting during mid-February, the Japanese launched a heavy assault against the Woosung Forts, the Chinese garrison protecting the city. On the same day the Japanese attacked, the battered Chinese turned again to the League; but this time they appealed to the Assembly,

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1Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., February 8, 1932.

where the large European powers held less sway.

Once again, talk abounded concerning the imposition of an economic embargo against Japan. In the United States a group led by President A. Lawrence Lowell of Harvard, Newton D. Baker, the former Secretary of War to Woodrow Wilson, and Raymond Rich, representing the World Peace Foundation, attempted to drum up enough mass support to convince authorities in Washington to support a League boycott. They made a direct public appeal on a February 17 nationwide radio speech. Other groups interested in this goal allied with the Baker-Lowell group and formed a committee, the American Committee on the Far Eastern Crisis for this purpose.\(^1\) Although agreeing to an interview with Rich, Stimson pledged no Administration support, pointing out that the larger members of the League were in no mood to support a boycott. Later Stimson mused to his Diary, "It is very curious now to have a peace man trying to urge action which normally leads to war.\(^2\) Though the Secretary did little to support boycott enthusiasts, he did attribute the general public indignation toward Japan to their outspokenness. Moreover, he based his later actions in part on what he considered to be the most

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\(^1\) Rappaport, op. cit., p. 138; Thorne, op. cit., p. 222.

\(^2\) Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., February 18, 1932.
agitated state of public opinion against Japan thus far in the crisis.\(^1\)

Stimson again consulted Hoover on economic sanctions. The President, however, opposed the concept, indicating that his mind "was as much closed as possible" on any kind of economic sanctions. So Stimson continued to work on a statement utilizing the Nine-Power machinery and by the nineteenth had settled on the language for his statement. But by this time he realized that British support was nearly out of the question. Thus, he decided to forego this stratagem. Nonetheless, he continued to believe that the President should be armed with some sort of plan for dealing with the Japanese in the event their assault on Shanghai succeeded and not be left high and dry as had been the case with President Wilson at the time of the Belgian incident in 1914.\(^2\)

While the Secretary considered possible plans, Hoover sought a new tactic. He proposed suggesting to the League that its members and the United States withdraw all ambassadors and ministers from Japan providing the League Assembly first announced its own nonrecognition of all


treaties or situations brought about in violation of the Kellogg Pact. In other words, he wanted them to repeat the January action of the United States. Stimson approved the suggestion, commenting that it was "a long step towards combativeness for the President."¹

In the midst of a rather philosophical discussion with Stimson on February 21, the President elaborated on his thoughts concerning the League. He assessed the current hitch to be that the League had only deliberated the matter since September; it had not openly castigated Japan or condemned Japanese actions as being wrong. The President determined that before Japan would heed any further League pronouncements, the League had to label Japan a wrongdoer and consider punishment, which he thought should be the withdrawal of ambassadors. He believed that an overt stand would "have enormous and controlling effect upon an oriental nation like Japan,"² quite a statement for someone who a few months before thought the Japanese had just cause for invading Manchuria.

The Japanese attack on the Woosung Forts on the twentieth angered Stimson because it meant that the mid-month peace gestures of the Japanese had been nothing more than a stall tactic. While desiring to demonstrate his

¹Ibid., February 21, 1932.
²Ibid.
indignation, Stimson realized that his options were quite limited: the President categorically ruled out the use of force; the Kellogg Pact had proved ineffective in October; and the British refused to invoke the Nine-Power machinery. At the suggestion of Rogers, he chose to write a public letter to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator William E. Borah of Idaho. In The Far Eastern Crisis Stimson related that he meant the document for the attention of five unnamed parties: for China "as a message of encouragement"; for the Assembly of the League of Nations as a possible course of future action; for the general American public "as an explanation of policy"; for the Conservative Party in control of the British Government as a reminder of their obligations to the Open Door policy and Nine-Power Treaty; and finally, for the Japanese, as a warning.

In the letter, Stimson contended that the agreements reached in 1921-1922 at the Washington Conference, of which the Nine-Power Treaty was a part, were linked together and that the United States had agreed to the self-denying promise not to add further fortifications to its base on Guam only because other nations had agreed to delimit their operations in and around China. Because Japan's moves in Shanghai

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1Stimson, Far Eastern Crisis, op. cit., p. 258.
2Ibid., p. 175.
appeared to negate one of the interdependent treaties, the United States might have to reevaluate its stand on defense measures in the Orient.¹

Hoover saw the draft of the Borah letter on February 21 and approved it wholeheartedly. Stimson took it as one of Hoover's "rare" compliments when the President asked that the letter might include a reference to the part he played in issuing the nonrecognition notes.²

The letter met a receptive audience in the United States. Edwin L. James of the New York Times claimed the letter to have "assumed an importance which may prove to be even beyond that which the Secretary of State and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee attached to it," and that it might wind up "dominating and controlling our participation in world affairs for some time to come."³ The Christian Science Monitor claimed:

Unquestionably Mr. Stimson's communication is not only a faithful interpretation of the meaning and obligations of the series of agreements concluded at the Washington Conference, but at this troubled period in the life of the Pacific it is a most useful expression of the sentiments of the American people.⁴


²Stimson, Diaries, loc. cit.


⁴Christian Science Monitor, February 26, 1932.
Judging from The Des Moines Register, the typically conservative Midwest also supported Stimson's action.

...the American stand is, so far as present knowledge can gauge it, splendidly firm, splendidly right, and splendidly hopeful.\(^1\)

As this favorable response to the Borah letter became more apparent, the President began to reconsider his original approval of the statement. He feared that the letter implied too much as far as possible United States retaliation was concerned and that some individuals in America (especially the Big Navy people) and abroad (the League) were coming to the conclusion that he would support an embargo. More than once Stimson found the President penning qualifying statements intended for publication to the effect that the United States meant no forceful threat in the letter, and just barely managed to persuade Hoover not to revise the wording.\(^2\)

The publication of the Borah letter led to a divergence in the policies advocated by the President and his Secretary of State. At stake was the question of the wisdom of resorting to use of a bluff in diplomatic affairs. Hoover wished to state in no uncertain terms that the only force behind the letter was moral suasion. In reality, this was the case, but Stimson depended heavily on the implied bluff

\(^1\)The Des Moines Register, February 25, 1932.

\(^2\)Current, op. cit., p. 100; Ferrell, op. cit., p. 186; Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., February 25, 26, 1932.
that he hoped might give the Japanese cause to reconsider their tactics. Stimson claimed he had made no outright threat in the letter, but he did hope to get as much mileage out of an implied threat as he could without actually committing the United States to a specific policy. He knew full well that Hoover would never endorse force, but for the time being, he succeeded in preventing Hoover from publicly renouncing the use of force.

Japanese troops finally captured the Woosung Forts on March 2, which to them represented a respectable point from which to negotiate a settlement to terminate the Shanghai episode. Western diplomats in the Far East formed an ad hoc committee to mediate in April and on May 5 the two countries signed an armistice, signifying the conclusion of this part of the Far Eastern Crisis.¹

However, the Japanese had no intention of pulling out of Manchuria, and throughout the Shanghai affair they had been quietly consolidating their gains, taking direct control over the civil administration of the three provinces.² At almost the same time as they took the Woosung Forts, the Inukai Cabinet approved the change in Manchuria's name to "Manchukuo." Eight days later, on March 9, Henry

¹Ferrell, op. cit., p. 187.
²Thorne, op. cit., p. 203.
Pu-yi became regent of the puppet state. Although the seizure of Manchuria was a flagrant violation of its treaty commitments with the rest of the world, Japan still endeavored to retain a degree of respect from the League of Nations. To postpone confrontation with the League, Japan waited until September 15, almost a year exactly from the capture of Mukden, to recognize the "independent" state of Manchukuo. Nevertheless, throughout the spring of 1932, the Japanese gave every impression of intending to control Manchuria and using it as a base for future expansion. In response, the League took a firmer stand. Led by Simon, the League Assembly adopted the nonrecognition doctrine on March 11, 1932. Elated at the news, Stimson rushed to share the good tidings with Hoover: "The President was busy with other things and at first was not ready to rise to the enthusiasm of the occasion. But I stirred him up a little..."

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and told him he would have to be a little more lively."

Shortly thereafter, at the urging of Norman Davis, Stimson journeyed to Geneva to bolster the sagging World Disarmament Conference proceedings. Behind this stated purpose lay his real intention of gaining a firm commitment from Simon not to backslide on the stand he had assumed in March. Conversely, Stimson found it necessary to reassure members of the League of America's firm intention to stand up to Japan.

Hoover used Stimson's absence from the country to further entrench his own interpretation of the nonrecognition doctrine. When seeking out positive achievements of his administration to use in the upcoming presidential campaign, Hoover had appealed in February to Stimson through Secretary Hurley to campaign for the President and credit him with considerable influence in promulgating the nonrecognition doctrine. Stimson declined on the basis that it was not proper for those in the diplomatic service to make political speeches. Early in April Hoover turned to Castle with the same request. For this reason, plus what

1Stimson, Diaries, op. cit., March 11, 1932.
2Rappaport, op. cit., p. 155.
3Current, op. cit., p. 105.
4Ibid., pp. 104-105.
Hoover explained later to Stimson to be the existence of "excited feeling in Japan," Castle delivered two speeches the first week of May which stated categorically that the official policy of the United States did not include any consideration of war or economic sanctions.¹

Speaking before the American Conference on International Justice on May 4, Castle reiterated that the United States had not joined the League of Nations because the Covenant included recourse to the use of force. Instead, the United States placed its confidence in the Kellogg Pact, which relied solely on the use of moral suasion for implementation. However, many people already considered it "weak, a reed already broken before it could be tested." Therefore, Castle contended, to "put teeth into the pact" the President had, through the Secretary of State's January 7 notes to China and Japan and his letter to Senator Borah on February 23, devised the policy of nonrecognition of the fruits of war.² In essence, Castle not only ignored Hoover's promise to Stimson not to say anything that would indicate to the Japanese that the United States had assumed a less adamant stand,³ but also labeled the policy the

¹Ibid., pp. 104-106.
²New York Times, May 5, 1932; see also May 7, 1932.
Hoover Doctrine. According to Castle, the Secretary never forgave him for acting independently of Stimson's orders.¹

The remainder of Hoover's term in office witnessed further Japanese consolidation of control in Manchuria and the futile attempts of Stimson to reiterate his interpretation of the nonrecognition policy. In August he tried to maneuver an implied threat of force into a speech given to the Council on Foreign Relations, but Hoover, in checking it over beforehand, trimmed away the sentence which deviated from his own policy.²

The final indication of the divergence of the two men's views on foreign policy occurred when Hoover bypassed the Secretary as his choice of author to chronicle the foreign policies of the Hoover Administration. Instead, he again turned to Castle. The Undersecretary observed in his Diary: "... the President does not want Stimson to make himself the center of the book because, as he said, 'he would have had us in a war with Japan before this if he had had his way.'"³ Hoover considered himself the final authority on the foreign policy of his administration, particularly as it applied to the Far Eastern situation.

¹Castle, Diary, December 31, 1932, cited in Rapaport, op. cit., p. 160.

²Current, op. cit., p. 107.

³Castle, Diary, August 20, November 16, 1932, cited in Current, op. cit., p. 109.
Although the Japanese consolidated their control in Manchuria and later walked out of the League of Nations, he considered his policies successful because he had restrained the warlike tendencies of his Secretary of State and maintained peace.
This study of the American response to the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1932 falls into three categories: the policy set by President Hoover; the policy devised and executed by Secretary of State Stimson; and the general efficacy of the total American role in the Crisis. The following conclusions emerged from the study.

Although absorbed in the domestic financial crisis, Hoover stayed informed of events in the Orient. Stimson's Diary logged twenty-five calls between himself and the President in the September 18 to January 7 period and fifty between January 7 and March 11. He mentioned stopping by the White House to speak to Hoover on sixty-eight occasions, fifty-five of which prompted him to make specific reference in his Diary to discussion of Manchuria. They saw each other at a total of forty-six Cabinet meetings in this period up to March 11, Manchuria being a topic at seventeen. Stimson also made reference to several other miscellaneous meetings, such as White House dinners, where they had an opportunity to discuss the situation. This type of indicator alone shows that the President received considerable exposure to the
topic, and does not include other kinds of information also at his disposal such as daily newspaper accounts by foreign correspondents (Ben Dorfman, Hugh Byas, Hallett Abend to name a few) and reports from observers abroad that were sent either directly or indirectly to his office. It should be mentioned, though, that these consultations on Manchuria came in spurts, usually when the Japanese mounted another assault or as the League approached a major decision.

The President set the guidelines for American policy during the crisis. He gave the approval for Gilbert and Dawes to participate minimally in League deliberations. He gave Stimson permission to release the nonrecognition notes of January 7, 1932, and the Borah letter of February 23, 1932. And most important, he continually overruled any American consideration of forceful measures against the Japanese. Momentarily, for a day at the most, he toyed with the possibility of supporting the League in a boycott, but

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1 The Presidential Papers at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa, include several communications forwarded to Hoover through Stimson’s office such as: October 13 paraphrase of message sent by Chester Howell, member of the American delegation to the Conference of the Institute of Public Relations and in Mukden in September, 1931; October 15 reports of Hanson and Salisbury and also Nelson E. Wargetts; October 15 and 20 appeals from David A. T. Yui, adviser to the Nanking government, originally sent to Secretary of the Interior Wilbur, Hoover Library, Cont. 669, Presidential Papers, Manchurian Crisis, Official Correspondence, 1930-September 1931.
only until hearing that Japan had proposed a commission of
enquiry. 1 On January 31, moreover, he reinforced American
defensive forces in the Orient, but only to protect American
lives in Shanghai and the Philippines, not to engage in
fighting with the Japanese. Moreover, the President would
not allow even the slightest hint that the United States
might consider forceful measures.

Hoover also contributed to the formulation of Ameri-
can policy in this affair, although he did not specifically
direct it. He was responsible for suggesting to Stimson in
November the idea eventually embodied in the nonrecognition
doctrine. It was not an original plan, as Hoover fully
admitted that Bryan had made a similar move in 1915. 2 In
addition, he proposed the withdrawal of ambassadors and
ministers from Japan in protest, replacing Young Marshal
Chang Hsueh-liang with a viceroy, and direct appeal by him-
self and King George to the Japanese Emperor. None of
these, it should be pointed out, were utilized.

The retaliatory steps Hoover authorized advanced
American foreign policy moves into new, untried ground. As
Castle pointed out in May 1932, the nonrecognition doctrine

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1 Henry L. Stimson, Diaries of Henry L. Stimson in
the Yale University Library, Microfilm copy, Reel 3,
November 19, 1931, Manuscripts and Archives Section, Yale
University Library, New Haven, Conn.

2 Ibid., November 9, 1931.
had "put teeth" in the Kellogg Pact, although not very menacing ones. The United States had remained out of the League of Nations because League machinery included the use of forceful measures against a nation deemed to have broken its commitments. The other world peacekeeping mechanism, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, to which the United States did subscribe, depended solely on moral commitments. With the introduction of the nonrecognition doctrine, there appeared a new, more vigorous, method of moral outrage at illegal aggression. Also, Hoover for the first time allowed an American to sit in concert with the League, even though for a limited time and for a strictly circumscribed purpose, on a political question. These moves represented a degree of readjustment in American international participation, but by no means signalled a new era of international cooperation.

As to Hoover's split with Stimson, it is difficult to point to any one factor that precipitated it or any one time when it occurred. In personal terms, neither man fully understood the other, thus providing grounds for misunderstanding. Also, by forcing Castle on the Secretary, Hoover needlessly interfered in Stimson's affairs, ruffled the Secretary's feathers, and established grounds for

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dissension in the State Department and between himself and
Stimson. Stimson's refusal to campaign for Hoover and to
credit him for the nonrecognition doctrine added to their
uneasy relationship. For the most part, however, Stimson's
repeated attempts to have Hoover consider an economic
embargo against Japan convinced the President that his
Secretary of State was not pursuing pacific policies. Stim-
son's belief in the spring of 1932 that the United States
and Japan had entered a situation where the inevitable out-
come was war\(^1\) caused Hoover to have Castle deny fully any
warlike preparations by the United States.\(^2\)

The Secretary, nonetheless, did contribute positively
to American policy during the Far Eastern Crisis. To Stimson
goes the credit for the day-to-day handling of affairs and
for the refinement and execution of policy once Hoover set
the limits. Although Hoover did initiate some discussions
with the Secretary concerning the crisis, usually Stimson
sought out the President's advice and consent. In regard
to this, Stimson acted on his own only on minor actions and
statements. For the major steps, that is, seating Gilbert
with the League Council, sending Dawes to Paris, the non-
recognition notes, consultations with Simon, and the Borah

\(^{1}\) Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson (New Brunsw-

\(^{2}\) Armin Rappaport, Henry L. Stimson and Japan, 1931-
letter, the Secretary acted only after securing the President's full approval. However, he and his advisers provided the words; Hoover merely agreed to them. To Stimson should also go the credit for influencing Hoover to pursue expanded international cooperation; he had been the one to suggest to the President that Gilbert and Dawes take quasi-official positions with the League.

From the perspective of 1931-1932, American Far Eastern policy had two positive attributes. First, it was widely supported by the American public. Second, in 1932 a world war appeared to have been averted, and in a time when people were already suffering from the depression this meant a great deal. Part of the credit for this must be attributed to the peaceful intentions of Herbert Hoover.

However, the "success" of American Far Eastern policy in 1931-1932 is far overshadowed by its negative aspects. Although the Manchurian and Shanghai episodes did not necessarily lead automatically to World War II, they did signal that a serious conflict of interests existed in the Far East. The policy developed in 1931-1932 to meet these problems was stop-gap in nature, designed to temporarily avert a worldwide confrontation, but not necessarily solve the problem. Seen from the vantage point of World War II, American Far Eastern policy in 1931-1932 failed miserably to either stop or slow down the Japanese takeover of Manchuria. Secondly, the League's acceptance of the Lytton
Commission report, with the United States agreeing from the sidelines, brought about Japan's departure from the League to pursue its own independent course of action, unhindered by treaty commitments to avoid warlike actions. Finally, by assuming the initiative with the nonrecognition notes and Borah letter, the United States jeopardized the close relationship it had developed with Japan and provided further proof to Japanese military planners that the United States would be the enemy in the next, inevitable world confrontation.1

Since avoiding Japan's reaching this conclusion had been the guiding consideration behind all of Hoover and Stimson's actions, it must be concluded that their policies were failures.

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