

# STUDIES IN THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE (1902 – 1923)

Gordon Daniels (Emeritus Reader, University of Sheffield)

*The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the British Press*

Janet Hunter (Saji Senior Lecturer, Economic History Department,  
London School of Economics and Political Science)

*The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Development of the  
International Economy*

David Steeds (formerly Department of International Politics, University  
of Wales, Aberystwyth)

*The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and American Hegemony*

Ian Nish (Emeritus Professor of International History, London School  
of Economics and Political Science)

*The Historical Significance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance*

Discussion Paper  
No. IS/03/443  
January 2003

The Suntory Centre  
Suntory and Toyota International Centres  
for Economics and Related Disciplines  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
Houghton Street  
London WC2A 2AE  
Tel.: 020-7955 6698

## Preface

The centenary of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902-1923) was celebrated during 2002 and its demise eighty years ago has to be recorded in 2003. During the centenary various conferences were held, the papers heard at the one at STICERD being included in International Studies pamphlet IS/02/432. A further conference was held in Tokyo under the auspices of the Japanese Research Group on 25-26 May 2002.

Some of the British papers at the conference, two of which were written by members of STICERD, have been revised and extended and now appear with the permission of their authors and the conference organizer. They are intended to look beyond the narrow diplomatic aspects of the alliance and interpret it from the perspectives of media coverage, economics and global international relations. It is hoped that the papers will be useful for those who were not fortunate enough to attend the conference.

January 2003

© Gordon Daniels, Janet Hunter, David Steeds and Ian Nish. All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit, including © notice, is given to the source.

Contact address: Dr Janet Hunter, STICERD, London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, UK. email: [j.e.hunter@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.e.hunter@lse.ac.uk)

## Abstracts

Daniels examined British media views of Japan by sampling local and national dailies, with emphasis on *The Times* and *The Economist* and magazines like *Punch*, *The Graphic* and *The Illustrated London News*. While the metropolitan papers were broadly supportive, some provincial journalists, favouring free trade, were critical of Japan and the alliance.

Hunter contrasted Britain's dominance in the international economy in 1902 with her weakened position commercially and financially after the first world war. While economic factors were a secondary consideration in the formation of the alliance, it probably led to the growth of the Japanese economy overall.

Steeds pointed to the contrast that, while the alliance started in the days of the Pax Britannica, it was brought to an end in the days of growing American hegemony. After 1905 the United States increasingly looked suspiciously at the alliance as a bulwark protecting and encouraging Japan whose wartime activities in China and Siberia had antagonized the US.

Nish looked at the Japanese enthusiasm for the alliance in its early stages and the disillusion which crept in between her and Britain because of Korea and China. When the big decision on continuing the alliance had to be made in 1921, it divided opinion in both countries between League of Nations enthusiasts who wanted the alliance to end and more pragmatic politicians who were ready for it to continue.

**Keywords:** British trade, first world war, British overseas investment, Anglo-Japanese tariff agreement, Takahashi, Japanese immigration, British Press, cartoons, illustrations, trade relations, American hegemony, open door in China, Washington Conference (1921), Paris Peace Conference (1919), China, Korea, Russia, League of Nations.

# The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the British Press

Gordon Daniels

The British press – the only significant medium of mass communication in the alliance years (1902—1923), was then a very different phenomenon from today. Not only were local and provincial newspapers still important commentators on national and international events, but the popular daily press was less pictorial, more literate and less frivolous than in the early twenty-first century. Consequently a comprehensive study of the British press's treatment of Japan and the alliance during two decades would be an enormous undertaking. This brief paper is far less ambitious. It is based upon some sampling of local and national dailies and magazines, with particular emphasis on *The Times* and *The Economist*; and such satirical and illustrated magazines as *Punch* or *The London Charivari*, *The Graphic* and *The Illustrated London News*. However, none of these publications were mass circulation dailies or weeklies.<sup>1</sup> Despite this caveat one can detect several major themes and features from such a limited survey.

The first conclusion one might reach is that coverage of Japan was surprisingly full across a wide range of publications. One example is the London based satirical weekly *Punch* or *The London Charivari*. In the years 1903 to 1905 it published over thirty major cartoons relating to Japan, while in 1904 the title pages of two volumes of *Punch* were devoted to the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>2</sup> In the same period issues of *The Illustrated London News* in which the cover page was totally devoted to a Japanese theme or personality were also surprisingly numerous.<sup>3</sup> Density of coverage was often shaped by particular events – such as the Russo-Japanese War, and the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910.<sup>4</sup> However it is likely that press interest in Japan in these years was not only the spontaneous product of the alliance relationship.

Influential government leaders were socially linked to leading figures in major newspapers, and domestic issues probably exerted a degree of influence. Interest in Japan was in part a by-product of multiple crises in British domestic and colonial politics and society: the threat of civil war in Ireland, the conflict between the Lords and the Commons, the prolonged guerrilla war in South Africa, the deployment of troops in labour disputes, and debates on tariff reform. All

combined to make many aware of real and threatened fissures in the British imperial system. Consequently it is understandable that journalists saw Japan as a significant model, or object of study. Above all Japan appeared to suggest positive gains from government-led social engineering. Furthermore it appeared a state in which unity and patriotism were sources of remarkable national achievement.

Indeed even before the formal signature of the alliance on 30 January 1902 Ito Hirobumi's visit to Britain produced reactions indicating remarkable enthusiasm for Japanese modernization. Of Marquis Ito himself the illustrated weekly *The Graphic* declared:

'to Ito is due more than to any other living man, that remarkable transformation which in the course of a generation has brought Japan from the dark ages and placed her socially and politically on an equality with the Great Powers of the civilized world. He was really the head and brain of the movement which abolished the Chinese Calendar and brought about the adoption of European dress, and generally substituted Western ideas and modes of life for those of the Chinese.'<sup>5</sup>

Although the adoption of European dress – particularly by the Japanese elite – may appear a relatively superficial aspect of the Meiji achievement, its importance in British press coverage was undeniable. In the 1850s and 1860s *The Illustrated London News* had dwelt upon Japanese exotic dress and, at times, near-nakedness.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century it dwelt upon Japanese in Western dress in much of its coverage of Anglo-Japanese events. Not only did this include army and navy uniforms but also the dress of British or European high society. Events such as Marquis Ito's reception at the Mansion House provided spectacular examples of sartorial Westernization.<sup>7</sup> Similarly *Punch* cartoons often represented Japan as a figure in Western military uniform, or Western formal dress – on one occasion even the Emperor Meiji was depicted in European style military costume.<sup>8</sup>

Such sartorial and social links between Japanese and British elites were often given particular importance by an Imperial or royal dimension. Naval Reviews off the English shore, Japanese enthronement ceremonies, Imperial funerals, or the visit of Crown Prince Hirohito all suggested common points of reference in the two societies – and possibly a growing convergence.<sup>9</sup> The merging of diplomacy,

royalty and high society in Anglo-Japanese relations gave them a special public aura which, arguably, even the improving relationship with the United States did not possess. Emphatically this was a diplomatic world which popular magazines could effectively portray; what is more, popular illustrated magazines were probably more widely circulated and retained for longer periods than less physically attractive daily newspapers.

If royal, imperial and high society links provided one public dimension of the alliance, another was a tendency to demonstrate the two societies' sharing of skills, problems and challenges. Clearly the notion of shared pride in naval power – and of shared admiration of the Nelson touch were present in Naval Reviews and visits by Japanese warships.<sup>10</sup> In the early years of the alliance the concept of a shared antipathy to Czarist expansionism was also spread in cartoons and suitably captioned photographs.<sup>11</sup> A further common element in the two societies was suggested by a depiction of the feminist Seitō society in *The Illustrated London News*, at a time when the movement for female advancement was significant in British politics.<sup>12</sup>

A further bond which the press suggested was that of Japan as a specific model in military matters. In July 1904 the patriotic cartoonist Bernard Partridge depicted John Bull – commenting to a kimono clad Japanese woman who was viewing a map of North East Asia 'your army system seems to work splendidly'. To which the Japanese replied 'Every man is ready to sacrifice himself for his country and does it'. John Bull's reflective response was 'I must try to introduce that at home'.<sup>13</sup> In line with this suggestion of common patriotic ideals was the use of Japanese traits to ridicule British left wing pacifism. In July 1910 the Labour leader Keir Hardie had suggested that, on retiring from politics, he would like to retire to a rural village in Japan. In response a *Punch* cartoonist, E. T. Reed, depicted Hardie in *geta* and *hachimaki* as the 'Professor of Anti-Jujitsu' – or the 'noble art of lying down' – the absolute opposite of patriotic Bushido.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly, newspapers and serious weeklies provided accounts and analyses which were of greater complexity than anything which appeared in satirical or illustrated magazines. What is more serious newspapers and magazines presented a mixed response to the signing of the alliance in 1902. Perhaps a small paper in the North

Wales seaside resort of Rhyl – *The Rhyl Record and Advertiser* - typifies some provincial liberal responses to the agreement. In a leading article it declared:

'We all admire that gallant and progressive country which has known how to raise itself in a generation from a retrograde medieval empire to the status of a great power with a formidable army, a liberal constitution and systems of law and education which in some respects surpass those of any European power – but the conclusion of a treaty of this kind is very much more than a merely sentimental question. We have bound ourselves to the fortunes of a power whose interests are very far from being ours.'<sup>15</sup>

The London *Economist* – at that time a less political journal than now – condemned the alliance on quite different grounds. Perhaps being most concerned with the maintenance of open trading among European states, and perhaps recalling the international expedition against the Boxers in 1901, it declared:

'Great Britain has quit decidedly ... that unwritten alliance of all white Powers against all coloured races and through which alone the supremacy of Europe over Asia and Africa can finally be established.'

It concluded:

'The alliance is described as a grand stroke in Asiatic politics ... but the more we reflect upon its consequences the more inclined we feel to wish it had not been struck. The wisest clause in the Treaty is that which limits its operation to five years.'<sup>16</sup>

Pursuing a similar theme a British ex-employee of the Japanese Government was given space in *The Manchester Guardian* to condemn the alliance for linking a super power to a country of markedly inferior status.

In contrast *The Times* appears to have been a newspaper which, being close to government circles, consistently championed Japan and the alliance – whatever the circumstances. *The Times'* commitment to Japan was most obvious at the time of the 1910 Japan-British exhibition when it published a voluminous supplement surveying many aspects of Japanese civilization.<sup>17</sup> But such supplements may have been less influential than numerous editorials which used all possible ingenuity to justify Japanese actions. One major example was *The Times'* response to the Japanese annexation of Korea. Despite some ambiguous reservations it noted that annexation was 'the only sound solution of the many

difficulties which have arisen'. It continued, in a vein reflecting the notion of common imperial experience, 'it would ill become the nation which still reluctantly keeps the ex-King of Upper Burma a prisoner in a small town upon the West coast of India to offer any opposition'.<sup>18</sup> A further example of *The Times*' complex sympathy for Japan was its treatment of the suicide of General Nogi in September 1912 – which coincided with the beginning of the Emperor Meiji's funeral. Its leading article 'Morals in East and West' concluded 'although there is a great difference in conduct between East and West yet there is not the same difference in moral values. Both value freedom of the spirit and the courage which secures it'.<sup>19</sup>

Another earlier occasion in 1912 when *The Times* led what seems to have been a semi-official response to an event in Japan, was following the death of the Emperor Meiji. At this time *The Times*' leader writer admitted no flaw in the Emperor's character and saw only a bright and ethical future for Japan. This leading article affirmed that the Emperor Meiji had 'a compassion for suffering, and a realization of the privations of his troops in the field which can have only sprung from a nature touched with true nobility'. Despite lamenting the Emperor's death the author concluded 'Under his successor the Japanese Empire will pursue to high destinies, ... faithful to its friends, determined to maintain the place it has won for itself, but slow to commit aggression'.<sup>20</sup>

The events of the First World War turned British press attention from Japan to continental Europe and the Middle East. However Japanese naval support in the Mediterranean and medical support from Japanese Red Cross nurses received significant attention in articles and photographs.<sup>21</sup> Yet it was Japanese actions, only loosely connected with the war, which precipitated most comment and controversy. The so-called Twenty One Demands which Japan issued to China in January 1915 split opinion between the quasi-official *Times* and the more commercially concerned *Economist*. In numerous articles *The Times* questioned the veracity of reports of the Japanese demands, claiming that Chinese statements were usually unreliable, and were designed to create diplomatic mischief.<sup>22</sup> German mischief making was seen as another possible explanation for possibly dubious stories. Despite these doubts *The Times* concluded:

'We hope that the statesmen of our allies will be careful to avoid giving any reasonable ground for a suspicion so injurious to the fame and to the future prospects of their country. We expect that even now ... they will exert their high abilities to avert a catastrophe, and to justify once again British confidence in Japan and British sympathy with all legitimate development and expansion of her interests in the Far East.'<sup>23</sup>

In contrast *The Economist*, perhaps more concerned with conditions of trade eventually criticized Japanese actions more directly stating 'Japan cannot afford either the cost or the discredit of creating by military aggression fresh chaos in China'.<sup>24</sup>

By late 1917, despite Japan's military support against the Central Powers, *The Economist* was expressing clear disquiet at Japanese commercial policies, which appeared less open than those of Britain. Referring to an article in the Japanese magazines *Taiyo*, by a banker named Hayakawa, it commented 'This little lecture coming from a Japanese is truly remarkable. In India a Japanese has the same rights as a British subject'.<sup>25</sup> In contrast it noted that no parallel freedoms were available to British subjects in Japanese possessions. In fact by the closing months of the Great War *The Economist* was questioning far more than the openness of Japanese trade policies. Reflecting on the profits which Japan had legitimately made from wartime conditions it declared:

'... it is not good for any nation to make great profits out of war. The large indemnity received by Japan as the result of her war with China ... gave a decided impetus to militarism ... It made Japan more ready to go to war with Russia.'<sup>26</sup>

Seeking to condemn the notion that war was financially profitable the article concluded 'With some of Japan's leading publicists we may hope that the doctrine has never gained sufficient strength in this country to involve it in such a catastrophe as has befallen Europe'.<sup>27</sup> In fact the choice which existed for Japan between socio-economic progress and military prowess was one which *The Economist* articulated on several occasions.

Nevertheless despite the changing war situation *Punch* cartoonists continued to hail Japan as an extremely valuable ally. In August 1918 the rising sun – clearly identified as Japan – was shown as a cleansing light, driving a Bolshevik to flee.<sup>28</sup> Another cartoon showed Japan as a barrier to a German advance towards Siberia and Vladivostok.<sup>29</sup> At much the same time *The Times* commented favourably:

'The Japanese have decided to dispatch troops to Siberia, if indeed their forces are not already on the way. The step, it need hardly be said, has been taken in consultation with the Allies and with the United States and has their warmest sympathy ... she is the only power able to act in force with the necessary promptitude.'<sup>30</sup>

With the end of war conditions and the approach of the Washington Conference the British press appeared to coalesce in supporting a new diplomatic system in the Pacific region. This concept apparently attracted previous 'dissenters' and supporters of government policies. Following the signing of the Washington agreements *Punch* hailed the United States as the chef of a new peaceful Pacific pudding.<sup>31</sup> *The Economist* also approved the four power pact, writing:

'To many publicists on the Continent and in Great Britain, Japan has seemed bent on controlling and exploiting China at once, and all Asia by and by. To American and Australasian observers she has seemed eager to flood America and Australasia with her immigrants, and to have an eye on the Philippines and other Pacific islands as stepping stones. A German Professor has denounced Great Britain as betraying the white races by preparing to use the Japanese army for her own ends in the Far East and India, and in return to allow Japan to gain a foothold in China which would ultimately facilitate British ruin. These suspicions, or some of them, might conceivably be justified if Japan were entirely controlled by her militant prophets of expansion. The best proof that she repudiates their policy is her acceptance of the substitution of three Powers for one in a pact blocking a policy of expansion. The Alliance has been beneficial in some respects, but of late it has been a cause of friction, owing to the interpretation placed upon it in America and elsewhere. Its supersession by the new and wider Pact – into which both parties enter in company with the United States and France is one of the most hopeful symptoms of world politics.'<sup>32</sup>

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the British media in the Alliance years it would be necessary to know much more of provincial newspaper opinion, and the links between British leaders, Japanese leaders and the London press. But on the basis of this limited survey one may argue that in formal or informal

ways Anglo-Japanese elites shaped much of the metropolitan press to support Japan and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In contrast many provincial and some metropolitan journalists favoured free trade and Little Englandism. Consequently these writers made cogent criticisms of Japan and the Alliance. Nevertheless the Alliance years were perhaps a golden age of reporting and comment regarding Japan. The journalism of the years 1902 to 1923 may have exhibited complex biases and failings of judgement but worse was to follow. As the popular press increasingly became a vehicle of sensation and entertainment, press interest in Japan often shrunk to little more than floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters.<sup>33</sup> Profit became an even more powerful driving force in the development of popular journalism.

## Endnotes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> In 1910 the circulation of *The Times* was approximately 45,000, that of the *Daily Mail* 900,000, that of the *Daily Mirror* 630,000 – information supplied by the British Library Newspaper Library, Colindale, London, derived from issues of T. B. Browne's *Advertiser's ABC*.
  - <sup>2</sup> *Punch* Vol. 126 (29 June 1904) and Vol. 127 (28 December 1904). Both illustrations were by E. Linley Sambourne.
  - <sup>3</sup> Covers devoted to Japan included that of 23 August 1902 'The Naval Review: The Anglo-Japanese Alliance as Symbolised on Board the Japanese Flag-ship "Asama", August 16' (drawn by F. T. Jane and H. C. Seppings-Wright), and that of 7 May 1904 'General Kuroki: The Victor in the Great Japanese Land Battle at Kin-Lien Cheng, May 1' (drawn by Percy F. Spence).
  - <sup>4</sup> The Japan-British Exhibition was depicted favourably in 'Set Fair: May to October' (by L. Raven-Hill), *Punch* Vol. 138, 11 May 1910, p. 327. The Exhibition's extensive coverage in *The Illustrated London News* included 'An Informal Royal Tour: The Queen in a Japanese Garden at Shepherd's Bush' (drawn by A. Forester) 19 March 1910, p. 416.
  - <sup>5</sup> *The Graphic* 4 January 1902, p. 22.
  - <sup>6</sup> e.g. 'Characteristics of Japan – the United States Expedition' *The Illustrated London News* 13 December 1856, p. 590, and 'Scenes in Japan' *The Illustrated London News* 19 November 1864, p. 504.
  - <sup>7</sup> See 'British Honour to a Japanese Statesman: The Mansion House Banquet to the Marquis Ito, January 3' (by S. Begg) *The Illustrated London News* 11

---

January 1902, pp. 56—57. This illustration showed the high table at which were seated Lord Rosebery, the Marquis Ito, the Lord Mayor, the Duke of Argyll and Baron Hayashi.

- <sup>8</sup> e.g. 'How It Strikes an Ally' (by Bernard Partridge) *Punch* Vol. 125, 21 October 1903, p. 27, 'Too Apt a Pupil' (by L. Raven-Hill) *Punch* Vol. 142, 3 January 1912, p. 3, and 'Pour Le Mérite' (by E. Linley Sambourne).
- <sup>9</sup> For a characteristic depiction of Anglo-Japanese harmony at a Naval Review see 'The King's Departure for Cowes, August 6, ... the Japanese Squadron Saluting His Majesty ... our Japanese Allies at Spithead were the first to accord His Majesty a Salute'. *The Illustrated London News*, 9 August 1902, p. 199. Royal and naval themes were effectively integrated in the cartoon 'A Rough Island Welcome' (by Bernard Partridge), *Punch* Vol. 160, 11 May 1921, p. 371. This depicted Crown Prince Hirohito in Admiral's uniform being greeted by John Bull.
- <sup>10</sup> See the cover to *The Illustrated London News* 3 March 1906 'Togo's Warriors at Nelson's Tomb: The Japanese Sailors at St. Paul's Cathedral' (drawn by Max Cowper).
- <sup>11</sup> A typical anti-Russian feature was 'The Russian Convict Settlement in Saghalién' (drawn by R. Caton Woodville) *The Illustrated London News* 11 October 1902, p. 519. The caption stated 'The officers are brutal and corrupt, and murder is a mere commonplace in the Settlement'. Conversely see 'An Example to Russia: House Cleaning by Law, Remarkable Precautions taken Against the Plague in Japan' *The Illustrated London News* 3 October 1908, p. 479.
- <sup>12</sup> 'The Women of New Japan: Bluestockings of the Far East', an eight photograph feature, *The Illustrated London News* 29 November 1913, p. 887.
- <sup>13</sup> 'A Lesson in Patriotism' (by Bernard Partridge) *Punch* Vol. 127, 6 July 1904, p. 3.
- <sup>14</sup> E. T. Reed's cartoon appeared in *Punch*, Vol. 139, 20 July 1910, p. 50. Hardie's fictional words ended 'Bushido? Bah! Makes me sick!'
- <sup>15</sup> 'Town and Country Notes' in *The Rhyl Record and Advertiser* 22 February 1902, p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup> 'The Treaty With Japan', *The Economist*, Vol. 60.
- <sup>17</sup> The supplement which celebrated the Japan-British Exhibition was published in *The Times* on 19 July 1910. However, significant Japan Supplements were also published by *The Times* on 15 July 1916, 2 September 1916, 14 October 1916 and 16 December 1916.

- 
- <sup>18</sup> 'The Annexation of Korea' (leading article) *The Times* 25 August 1910. *The Illustrated London News* celebrated the annexation unequivocally on 3 September 1910, pp. 346—347.
- <sup>19</sup> 'Morals in East and West' (leading article) *The Times* 18 September 1912.
- <sup>20</sup> 'The Death of the Emperor of Japan' (leading article) *The Times*, 30 July 1912.
- <sup>21</sup> e.g. 'Japanese Warships in Mediterranean Accompanied by Aircraft' *The Times*, 23 February 1916, 'The Help of the Japanese Navy' *The Times*, 25 May 1917, 'Japanese Aid for Our Wounded, Arrival of Red Cross Contingent' *The Times*, 23 July 1915.
- <sup>22</sup> e.g. 'Japanese Claims on China' (leading article) *The Times*, 13 February 1915.
- <sup>23</sup> 'Another War Cloud' (leading article) *The Times*, 7 May 1915.
- <sup>24</sup> 'China and Japan' *The Economist* Vol. 80, 20 March, 1915, p. 568.
- <sup>25</sup> 'Japan – Silver Coin Deficiency – Supervision of Exports – Anglo-Japanese Economic Relations' *The Economist* Vol. 85, 17 November 1917, p. 808.
- <sup>26</sup> 'Japan's Profit and Loss by the War' *The Economist*, Vol. 87, 3 August 1918, p. 141.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> 'The Rising Sun' (by L. Raven-Hill) *Punch* Vol.155, 14 August 1918, p. 99.
- <sup>29</sup> 'The Imperial Bagman's Joy Ride' (by L. Raven-Hill) *Punch* Vol. 154, 6 March 1918, p. 147.
- <sup>30</sup> See the leading article 'Japan Decides' in *The Times*, 5 August 1918.
- <sup>31</sup> 'Peace Pudding' (by L. Raven-Hill) *Punch* Vol. 161, 21 December 1921, p. 483. American policy had been interpreted as an attack on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in an earlier cartoon 'The Washington Hatchet' (by L. Raven-Hill) *Punch* Vol. 161, 14 December 1921, p. 463.
- <sup>32</sup> 'The Pacific Pact and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty' *The Economist*, Vol. 93, 17 December 1921, p. 1057.
- <sup>33</sup> The British popular press's obsession with Japanese natural disasters is referred to in J. M. R. Pardoe, *Captain Malcolm Kennedy and Japan, 1917—1945* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1989, University of Sheffield), pp. 165—166. Kennedy spent the years 1925—1934 in Japan as Reuters' correspondent.

## **THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY**

Janet Hunter

The years of the alliance spanned a watershed in the relative economic strengths of the two countries. While Britain's industrial supremacy was increasingly challenged by both Germany and the United States prior to 1914, Britain remained dominant in the international economy, accounting for the largest share of world trade and serving as the pivot of the international payments system. Japan was no more than a bit-part player, an economy still in the early stages of industrialisation as yet unable to claim a high profile in the international economy. The disruption consequent on the First World War undermined the established position of British manufacturers and exporters, and brought to an end the gold standard regime that had sustained London's position as the undisputed centre of the world's financial dealings. It offered Japan the opportunity not only of increasing her production, but also of enhancing her position in a changed international economic order more and more dominated by the United States. However, many of the wartime gains were not sustained. In many respects the Japanese economy remained internationally weak, and Japan throughout the period of the alliance was constantly engaged in a fight to secure what she considered to be her legitimate place in the international economy, particularly in Asia.

It is clear that in the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 commercial and financial considerations were for both countries at most a secondary consideration.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the nature of the international economy was integral to the international order and the global balance of power, and neither Britain nor Japan could remain unaffected by the growing globalisation of economic interaction and the nature of their own integration into the global economy. This was a period in which commodities, money and people increasingly transcended national boundaries, enhancing the scope for both cooperation and conflict. The aim of this short paper is to identify some of the economic issues that had a specific bearing

on the existence and continuation of the alliance, but which also characterised broader trends in the international economy.

### **Movement of Goods**

World trade was expanding rapidly in the years up to the First World War. Between 1870 and 1913 world exports were growing at an estimated 3.4% per year. Export growth in Britain was 2.8% per year over the same period, while that of Japan was 8.5%.<sup>2</sup> However, while Japan was able to draw considerable benefits from the British-dominated international trading and financial order, even in 1913 Japan's share of world trade remained very small by comparison with that of Britain. The pattern of commodity trade was not a consideration when the alliance was initially concluded in 1902, or when it was revised in 1905, but renewal of the agreement in 1911 was closely tied to discussions over Japanese tariff reform and the conclusion of a new commercial treaty to replace the one that had been concluded between the two countries in 1894. The tariff issue was an acrimonious one, and generated a considerable element of anti-Japanese sentiment both among the British mercantile community in Japan and within some sectors of British industry. Under the 1894 treaty tariffs on imports into Japan from the Western powers had continued to be fixed at a low rate. Japan announced her intention of abrogating the existing tariff agreement in February 1909. The initial proposals for a bilateral tariff agreement that followed were thought to be likely to raise tariffs on British goods by up to 500%.<sup>3</sup> Aware of British concerns, the Japanese side sought to be conciliatory, but were determined for both economic and political reasons to assert their right to tariff autonomy.

The tariff issue raised fears that it might jeopardise a new alliance, but tariff levels were also at the core of debates on the development of the world's commodity trade, embodying the conflict between the advocates of free trade and protection. Britain, which had been a strong advocate of free trade since the repeal of the Corn Laws, found the doctrine coming under increasing pressure from British manufacturers who feared losing domestic markets to more competitive foreign producers. The use of protection by Britain's major competitors, including Germany and the United States, deprived Britain of the benefits that might accrue from mutual free trade, and the chance of reciprocity in bilateral trade dealings. At

the time of the tariff revision negotiations with Japan, these domestic debates had become increasingly passionate, and the Japanese tariff issue was for some protagonists a symbol of the problems of a continuing free trade regime. Speaking in favour of protection at Manchester's Free Trade Hall in November 1910, Andrew Bonar Law, later cabinet minister and conservative prime minister, pointed to Japan as evidence of Britain's need to shift her policy. Firstly, he argued, the existence of free trade was an impediment to reciprocal negotiations. The proposed new tariffs in Japan were likely to have serious implications for British trade, but despite the close relations between the two countries 'the Japanese Minister said openly in the Japanese Parliament – and in existing circumstances how can we blame him? – that though Japan was prepared to make special treaties with other countries she could make no such treaty with us, because as we are a 'Free' Trade country there was nothing we could give in exchange'. In a prescient warning of the future, he also drew attention to the potential benefits of introducing a system of tariffs associated with imperial preference:

'Japan is creating very slowly, and any one who looks into the figures will see, very surely, a great cotton trade, and any one who realises the power of the organisation of the Japanese people, who recognises the unlimited supply of labour, which we cannot compete with, must admit – it might be in five, ten, or twenty years – we shall have on the Indian market from Japan a competition which is bound to be serious, and which may become deadly. Give India preference in our market, and you make it her interest as much as ours to be assured in all time to come that foreign competition will not be a danger to us.'<sup>4</sup>

While the foundation for a return to protection in Britain was not laid until the introduction of the wartime McKenna duties in 1915, the tariff issue even at this time symbolised the growing acknowledgement within Britain itself that its international economic dominance was increasingly under threat and existing policies had to change

For the Japanese, tariff autonomy and the ability to protect domestic industry was not just a political desideratum, but an economic imperative. While some Japanese manufacturing sectors had managed to survive and even grow in the absence of tariff barriers dictated by the unequal treaties, the principle of using

tariffs not just for revenue purposes but for the development of the national economy had been well established by countries such as Germany. Tariffs and other forms of protection were increasingly seen as a means of protecting vulnerable infant industries, and tariffs were to be skilfully used by Japan in the years after 1911 as a weapon to help protect uncompetitive industries, as well as to sustain supplies of essential imports and restrict those deemed less necessary, including luxury goods. The tariff issue was integral to the desire of less industrialised economies to protect their interests in the face of domination of the international economy by the more industrialised ones, particularly Britain. The growth of tariffs also heralded further moves down the more protectionist and autarkic road that characterised the international economy by the time the alliance ended, and accelerated thereafter.

### **Movement of Capital**

In the 1890s and 1900s significant amounts of capital found their way from more industrialised to less industrialised economies. For Japan the door to the acquisition of foreign capital, something that had been largely avoided up to the turn of the century, was opened by Japan's accession to the gold standard in 1897. For potential lenders to Japan, tying the yen to gold meant greater financial credibility and reserves making loans more likely to be repaid. The period of the alliance was characterised by the Japanese government's raising loans on the London market, and also by other forms of borrowing, notably by municipalities and local governments, agencies such as port authorities, and public utilities. Overall, though, the extent of the capital flow from Britain to Japan remained limited. In 1914 Britain accounted for 43% of all foreign investment, but almost all of it went to the United States, Latin America, the British Dominions and colonies such as India. Only a minute part, 1-2.5% at most, reached non-empire territories such as Japan.<sup>5</sup> Japanese government loan issues during the years 1900-13 amounted to just over £65 million (c.¥650 million), around 20% of all foreign government loan issues in London over this period, but there was no further government borrowing in London over the remainder of the alliance years.<sup>6</sup> Municipal loans from 1902 up the First World War totalled just over ¥177 million, and a further ¥200 million was raised for Japanese companies. Two-thirds of the company loans went to the South Manchurian Railway, and the Oriental

Development Company (Tōyō Takushoku), a government-supported developmental agency in Korea, borrowed ¥20 million.<sup>7</sup> Bodies of this kind continued to attract money from overseas in the 1920s, notwithstanding the Japanese government's attempts at monetary restraint, but it was not until 1923 that private corporations, including the South Manchurian Railway, returned to raising money overseas. Municipal borrowing, for earthquake reconstruction, resumed only from 1926.<sup>8</sup>

Ian Nish has noted that in the early years of the alliance its existence may well have facilitated the procuring of capital from Britain. Japan's enhanced status in 1902 reflected well on its creditworthiness, but there was no automatic surge in foreign borrowing.<sup>9</sup> It is also evident that for Japanese borrowers, including the government, raising money in London was not easy.<sup>10</sup> When Takahashi Korekiyo was sent to London in 1905 to negotiate government loans, initial circumstances did not give rise to optimism about Japan's ability to obtain money on favourable terms. It is clear from Takahashi's diary (written in English) that in loan negotiations with British bankers what was really important was general confidence in the financial status of the Japanese government and the fluctuating course of the war. The day to day price of Japanese bonds in London or New York was far more influenced by the likelihood of Port Arthur's falling to the Japanese or the Russian Baltic Fleet's unfortunate attack on trawlers from Hull, although the existence of the alliance clearly served to generate goodwill. In his diary entry for April 13<sup>th</sup>, Takahashi noted concerns over the Japanese government's ability to maintain the gold standard, commenting 'the people in heart think the Russians will be the final victor in the war. This scares the people for Japanese bonds'.<sup>11</sup> With the British government unwilling to intervene to put pressure on financial circles regarding the terms of a second loan later the same year, Takahashi noted on September 13<sup>th</sup> the advice of the banker, A.A.Shand, that 'no body can make market, but submit and go in'.<sup>12</sup> Financial authorities remained concerned that Japan was borrowing beyond its means, and this contributed to Japan's limited involvement in the enormous flow of capital out of London. Even before the First World War, moreover, French financiers were gradually undermining Britain's dominance of the loan issue business, and it is apparent that after the war it was the US that became the important player,

reflecting the growing importance of the United States in global capital flows. Efforts to promote greater portfolio investment appear also to have been hindered by the Japanese government's desire to retain control over investment flows through the Industrial Bank of Japan, the speculative nature of some of the attempts to promote the use of British capital by enterprises in Japan, and general concern over the riskiness of such investments.<sup>13</sup>

This concern over risk applied even more to direct investment and the activities of British business in Japan. While the end of extraterritoriality in 1899 paved the way for more foreign business activity in the country, legal impediments remained, including restrictions or prohibitions on foreign involvement in activities such as financial exchanges, insurance, mining and coastal trade.<sup>14</sup> British multinationals were active in Japan in a range of industries – engineering, steelmaking, rubber production, and thread manufacture – and in production worked mainly through joint ventures with Japanese counterparts to found foreign affiliates. Many British firms, particularly in commerce, established branch offices in Japan. British firms played a key role in the carrying trade to Japan. However, the existence of the alliance gave British firms no predominant position among foreign business in Japan. Of the foreign-affiliated manufacturing companies established during the period of the alliance (1902-1923) only five were linked with a British company, as compared to seven with a US corporation, four with Germany and one with France.<sup>15</sup> By the mid 1920s the US was clearly a greater presence in Japanese manufacturing than Britain, although in trading Britain remained of importance. One estimate in 1931 cited 21 major cases of British direct investment in Japan, as opposed to 36 for the United States.<sup>16</sup> Much of the carrying trade was wrested from British hands by Japanese firms during the 1914-18 conflict.

Even so, it may be suggested that the existence of the formal link offered by the alliance may at least early on have been an agent in Japan's increasing involvement in international capital flows. It supported the Japanese government loan issues required for the Russo-Japanese War, and the substantial flow of funds into the South Manchurian Railway took place under the auspices of the British government. Government leadership is also likely to have encouraged the raising of money overseas by other bodies. The considerable sums raised for

infrastructure and utility investment by Japanese municipalities helped to compensate for the shortage of capital that hindered such investment, particularly in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. Moreover, the existence of the alliance was also a prerequisite for Japan's positive response to Britain's need for additional funds during the Great War. As part of her lending to the allies, Japan loaned over ¥283 million to Britain between 1916 and 1919 through the medium of both treasury bills and exchequer bonds. All the loans had been repaid by January 1921.<sup>17</sup>

### **Movement of People**

The late nineteenth-early twentieth century was characterised by an acceleration of international migration, within regions and between continents, a process facilitated by the growth of steamships and improved means of long distance communication and information flow. Much of the migration consisted of individuals leaving the nations of Europe, particularly Britain, most of them destined for the countries of northern and southern America. A much smaller number headed for the Australia and New Zealand, and Britain's other Empire territories. Japan became a major participant in Asiatic migration. Over half a million Japanese left Japan between 1885 and 1907, and a further 643,000 between 1908 and 1924. Major destinations were Hawaii and the United States, but over time Korea and Asiatic Russia became more important, while others went to China, Brazil and Peru.<sup>18</sup> Many went initially as indentured labourers, and then remained, while others were attracted by the prospects of business opportunities, underpopulated territories, and streets said to be paved with gold.

The issue of Japanese migration became an important one for the predominantly white dominions of the British Empire, and put the alliance under some strain. Australia had adhered strongly to an all-white immigration policy, but after the conclusion of the 1894 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation the prospects for trade with Japan increased, and there was pressure for closer commercial ties and a better knowledge of Asia. On the conclusion of the alliance in 1902 the government, headed by Edmund Barton, suggested that it offered substantial commercial benefits to Australia, as well as protection for the northern parts of the Commonwealth. There were even sporadic advocates for Japanese and Asian

settlement of its northern territories during the alliance period. These views, however, conflicted with the nationalist vision of Australia as a model white democracy and recurrent fears of an Asian invasion, and ultimately the emphasis on a white Australia took precedence over the promotion of international commerce.<sup>19</sup>

The tensions between dominion fears over Japanese immigration and the alliance emphasis on preserving good relations with Japan became particularly prominent in the case of Canada. By 1900 there were close on 5,000 Japanese in British Columbia. Fuelled by an exodus from Hawaii and the demand for low cost labour, particularly for railway construction, between 1900 and 1915 around 16,000 Japanese were admitted to Canada, over 80% of them settling in British Columbia, though many did not remain there permanently.<sup>20</sup> Japanese residents rapidly came in for criticism. Japanese fishermen, for example, were accused of undercutting their white counterparts. Even those who became naturalised Canadian citizens faced discrimination and disenfranchisement under local legislation, and objections were raised to Japanese immigrants becoming Canadian citizens.<sup>21</sup> Local tensions erupted in 1907 in rioting in Vancouver. The dominion government was caught between local anti-immigration sentiment and the pressure to maintain goodwill between the Empire and Japan coming from Britain and articulated in the alliance. Canada had on its own initiative adhered to the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 1894, which provided for the entry of Japanese nationals, and to abrogate that treaty would have meant losing a lucrative trading partner. The issue was resolved, as in the case of California around the same time, through the reaching of a 'Gentlemen's Agreement', whereby Japan agreed voluntarily to limit the number of migrants going directly from Japan to Canada, a quota that was further reduced in 1922.<sup>22</sup>

From the turn of the century the Empire was of growing importance in economic relations between Britain and Japan. Dominion concern with potential and actual Japanese immigration persisted through the early twentieth century, and was increasingly fed into discussions on the continuation of the alliance during the years of the First World War. It was a major element in the existence of a general

hostility towards Japan in the British Empire, which caused many to question whether the alliance should be continued.<sup>23</sup>

### **International Activities of Merchants and Firms**

Much of the economic interaction between Britain and Japan in the period of the alliance came in the form of competition in third countries as the nationals and agents of each country jostled for position in newly opened and expanding markets. British merchants had long been active across the global economy, and Britain had spearheaded Western economic penetration of China from the 1840s. Japanese commercial involvement in Asia had a long history, but the scale of Japan's international mercantile activity increased dramatically in the late nineteenth century. Even before the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5 Japanese commercial activity in parts of the Asian mainland was conspicuous, and it spread quickly from Korea into Manchuria and other parts of China. The Open Door Policy first articulated in 1899 in the context of a scramble for concessions provided for the powers to have equal commercial opportunities in China, but during the period of the alliance Manchuria became a breeding ground for hostility between Japanese and British commercial interest, a hostility that drew in the governments of the two countries.

The terms of the alliance appeared to offer support for a strengthening of Japan's commercial position in Northeast Asia. The 1902 and 1905 agreements both acknowledged the predominance of Japanese interests in Korea. The nature of this acknowledgement, in which 'interests' were widely interpreted, differed from the reference to British India in the 1905 agreement, which stemmed from strategic considerations. The existence of these provisions, one writer has argued, weakened the global link between Europe and Asia, giving Japan a freer hand in the East Asian region.<sup>24</sup> This greater freedom to act was accentuated by the war of 1914-18, which preoccupied the attention of Britain and the other powers, and was exploited by Japan, as shown, for example, in the issuing of the Twenty-One Demands to China in January 1915.

Commercial tensions in Manchuria were apparent well before war broke out in Europe in 1914. Notwithstanding the British government's willingness to

guarantee considerable funds for the development of the South Manchurian Railway, there were ongoing disputes about other railways, notably the line between Beijing and Mukden, and proposals to build routes running parallel to the SMR. In November 1907, the regime in China concluded an agreement with a British firm to build a line between Hsinmintun and Fakumen, which would have had the effect of channelling to the Chinese port of Tianjin some of the goods currently flowing through Japanese-controlled Dairen in Manchuria. The Japanese protested vigorously on the grounds of a secret protocol in a 1905 Chinese-Japanese agreement. The British response, according to one German academic writing in the early 1920s, was a distinctly weak one, and even British merchants in the area fell in behind acquiescence to Japan's demands, albeit at a cost to their personal profit. 'Japan knew that the limits of her freedom of action in Manchuria were very broad, for England had at the time other important things to consider.'<sup>25</sup> Railways continued to be a source of discord, notably in 1911 when Japan requested Britain to agree to Japanese control of the Beijing-Mukden line after the start of the Revolution.<sup>26</sup>

Discontent at Japan's apparent disregard for the interests of other nationals, and of the Open Door Policy in general, went far beyond concern over railway strategy. Western merchants operated in Manchuria under tight restrictions, disadvantaged by preferential railway rates and customs exemptions for their Japanese competitors. Evidence was gathered that Japan was seeking to achieve a monopoly on trade. Japanese merchants in Manchuria were said to 'possess a formidable advantage over British competitors'.<sup>27</sup> The Twenty-One Demands further strengthened Japanese economic interests in both Manchuria and the rest of China, and there was growing concern that Japan was pushing her interests in the Yangzi area long dominated by Britain.<sup>28</sup> Few Britons would have been prepared to accede to the view expressed by the British socialist H.M. Hyndman that new policies were needed to acknowledge Asian rights and equality, but they might well have recognised his argument that the position of Britain and the other powers in Asia was being steadily undermined.<sup>29</sup> The alliance, by acknowledging the existence of Japanese rights in mainland northeast Asia not only helped Japan to extend those interests, but confirmed the growing unwillingness and inability of Britain to sustain her pre-eminent position in the global economy in the

face of competitors not just in Europe and North America, but in Asia as well. The situation was summed up by one writer in 1912:

‘Many prominent Englishmen living in the Far East hold the opinion that British prestige, not only in China but also in other Oriental countries, has declined in a marked degree since the close of the Russo-Japanese war. Whatever view may be entertained on this aspect of the question there can be no doubt that in consequence of the interpretation placed by the Foreign Office upon the obligations of the Alliance, the commercial interests of Great Britain have not advanced to the extent that was anticipated both at the time when the provisions of the Alliance were disclosed, and, in a still more confident degree, when the first-fruits of the Alliance were realised.’<sup>30</sup>

By the end of the 1914-18 war opinion among the British community in China was distinctly unhappy with Japanese economic policy in the region, and this impacted on its view of the benefits of the alliance. ‘From every point of view the Alliance has served Japan admirably and it is fair to say that she has obtained her present position among the Powers of the world very largely through its instrumentality’, wrote one businessman, but Japanese designs in China were clearly incompatible with the conditions of the alliance. ‘Japan, to put it plainly, has been taking advantage of us behind our backs, and for this reason there has grown up among British residents in China, who have seen at close quarters what the Japanese were doing, the feeling that the Alliance had ceased to serve any useful purpose and might as well be ended.’<sup>31</sup> Unlike their Japanese counterparts, British merchants in China were among the most vocal critics of the Alliance.<sup>32</sup> The extent to which this strand of opinion carried weight with British policymakers is, however, debateable. It certainly did not bring to a halt further British investment in Japanese development in Manchuria.

## **Conclusion**

The period of the duration of the alliance was one of the increasing international movement of goods, capital and labour. In both Britain and Japan firms were increasingly involved in international activity. In short, there was an ongoing process of economic globalisation. This process had ramifications that went far beyond the balance of economic power between the two individual countries. These international economic trends were more than just a backdrop to the operation of the alliance. On the one hand, the alliance’s existence had the

potential to promote greater mobility within the international economic system, facilitating and encouraging certain flows of capital and patterns of trade. On the other, shifts in the movement of goods, capital and labour influenced debates over the continuation and scope of the alliance, in some cases generating frictions that caused many to question whether it should continue.

## Endnotes

---

I would like to express my thanks to Professor Ian Nish for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper, and also participants at the symposium for discussion of issues important for further research in this area.

<sup>1</sup> I.H.Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: the Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907* (London: Athlone, 1966), p.255.

<sup>2</sup> A.Maddison, *The World Economy: a Millennial Perspective* (Paris: Development Centre, OECD, 2001), p.362.

<sup>3</sup> A.Hotta-Lister, 'The Anglo-Japanese Treaty Revision of 1911', *International Studies Discussion Paper IS/99/377* (STICERD, LSE, 1999), p.43.

<sup>4</sup> 'Tariff Reform and the Cotton Trade', *The National Review* 56, Dec.1910, repr. In P.Cain (ed.), *Free Trade Under Pressure, 1904-13*, vol.4 of *Free Trade and Protectionism* (London: Routledge/ Thoemmes Press, 1996), pp.179-80.

<sup>5</sup> A.G.Kenwood & A.L.Lougheed, *The Growth of the International Economy, 1820-1990* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, London: Routledge, 1992), pp.27-9; S.Nicholas, 'British Business Interests in Japan before 1941: Origins, Evolution and Operations', in T.Yuzawa & M.Udagawa (eds.), *Foreign Business in Japan before World War II* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990), p.62.

<sup>6</sup> Calculated from T.Suzuki, *Japanese Government Loan Issues on the London Capital Market, 1870-1913* (London: Athlone, 1994), p.11. Japan made two loan issues in London in the interwar years, in 1924 and 1930 (T.Suzuki, 'Japanese Government Loan Issues on the London Capital Market During the Interwar Period', in J.Hunter & S.Sugiyama (eds.), *History of Anglo-Japanese Relations* vol.4, *Economic and Business Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Calculated from Suzuki, *Japanese Government Loan Issues*, appendices C and D, pp.200-3.

---

<sup>8</sup> H.G.Moulton, *Japan, an Economic and Financial Appraisal* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1931), pp.377-8.

<sup>9</sup> Nish, *Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp.253-5.

<sup>10</sup> This is apparent from Suzuki's book and article noted above. See also my paper 'The Limits of Financial Power: Japanese Foreign Borrowing and the Russo-Japanese War', in A.H.Ion & E.J.Errington (eds.), *Great Powers and Little Wars* (Westport CT: Praeger, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> *Takahashi Korekiyo Bunsho – Techō 22.2.Meiji 7 – 18.12.Meiji 7* (National Diet Library).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> For more detail on this see Suzuki, *Japanese Government Loan Issues*, ch.8.

<sup>14</sup> M.Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan: the Political Economy of Japanese Capital Controls, 1899-1980* (Cambridge MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1992), p.25.

<sup>15</sup> Calculated from M.Udagawa, 'Business Management and Foreign-Affiliated Companies in Japan before World War II', in Yuzawa & Udagawa (eds.), *Foreign Business in Japan before World War II*, pp.6-10. See also R.P.T.Davenport-Hines & G.Jones, 'British Business in Japan since 1868', in Davenport-Hines & Jones (eds.), *British Business in Asia since 1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Mason, *American Multinationals and Japan*, p.44. These figures take no account of the substantial British involvement in the carrying trade, and British commercial representatives in Japan, consideration of which lie beyond the scope of this paper. For more details on British investment in Japan, see S.J.Bytheway, 'Nihon Keizai to Eikoku Shihon: 1897-1922-nen', *KeizaiKenkyū Nenshi* 22, Feb.2001.

<sup>17</sup> See Moulton, *Japan, an Economic and Financial Appraisal*, p.395; U.Kobayashi, *The Basic Industries and Social History of Japan, 1914-18* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp.269ff.

<sup>18</sup> Kenwood & Lougheed, *Growth of the International Economy*, pp.56-8.

<sup>19</sup> D.Walker, *Anxious Nation: Australia and the Rise of Asia, 1850-1939* (St.Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1999), pp.68-76, 113ff..

<sup>20</sup> N.Kelley & M.Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: a History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p.143.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.143-4, 159.

---

<sup>22</sup> H.H.Sugimoto, 'The Vancouver Riots of 1907: a Canadian Episode', in H.Conroy & T.Scott Miyakawa (eds.), *East Across the Pacific* (Santa Barbara CA & Oxford: ABC-Clio Press, 1972), pp.95-6, 114; Kelley & Trebilcock, *Making of the Mosaic*, p.146. In the US case the 'Gentlemen's Agreement' of February 1908 paved the way for the Root-Takahira Agreement the following November (C.E.Neu, *An Uncertain Friendship* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1967)).

<sup>23</sup> P.Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-15* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp.267-92.

<sup>24</sup> H.Nakanishi, 'The Impact of the Great War on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *International Studies Discussion Paper IS/95/291* (STICERD, LSE, 1995), p.4.

<sup>25</sup> O.Franke, *Die Grossmächte in Ostasien von 1895 bis 1914* (Braunschweig u.Hamburg: Verlag Georg Westermann, 1923), pp.290-1.

<sup>26</sup> Y.Inouye, 'North China Railway Problems (1897-1901) and their Consequences for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *International Studies Discussion Paper* (ICERD, LSE, 1980), p.35.

<sup>27</sup> 'Manchurian Trade', *British Chamber of Commerce Journal – China* 1, 5, 1 Jan.1916, p.98. The mounting hostility to Japan of British mercantile interests in Manchuria 1910-11 is noted in A.Hotta-Lister, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1911', in *Anglo-Japanese Alliance* (STICERD *International Studies Discussion Paper* IS/02/432: LSE, 2002), p.34.

<sup>28</sup> Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan*, pp.147, 220-5.

<sup>29</sup> H.M.Hyndman, *The Awakening of Asia* (London: Cassell & Co.Ltd., 1919), pp.278-9.

<sup>30</sup> L.Lawton, *The Empires of the Far East* (2 vols., London: Grant Richards Ltd., 1912), vol.2, p.1114.

<sup>31</sup> 'A Diary of the Affairs of China: China, Great Britain and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', *British Chamber of Commerce Journal – China* 6, 7July 1920, pp.250-1.

<sup>32</sup> Harumi Gotō-Shibata has noted that this changed after the Alliance had ended. With the rise of Chinese nationalism there was growing concern over the security of British individuals and their property and interests, and in this context British-Japanese cooperation became increasingly attractive (*Japan and Britain in Shanghai, 1925-31* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), ch.2.

## The Anglo-Japanese Alliance and American Hegemony

David Steeds

The concept of hegemony is much used, and indeed abused, at the present time. What do we mean by it? *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* speaks of 'leadership' and the 'predominance of one state of a confederacy'. This may have been so in ancient Greece, from where the word originates, but modern usage goes beyond this. Hegemony today is still about leadership and predominance, but it is also about domination, laying down the rules, the standards, the values for a region or for the globe. It can be about imperialism, although not necessarily of the territorial kind.

The current global hegemonic power is the United States. An article in a recent issue of the *Beijing Review* gives the Chinese view: 'The United States has become the sole world superpower since the end of the Cold War. Its recent anti-terrorism campaign has in fact strengthened its standing as such. Many U.S. strategists are now devising a method of imposing the will of the "New Rome" on the world so as to maintain U.S. hegemony.'<sup>1</sup>

American scholars, while accepting the notion of United States hegemony, argue that it is rather different from other examples from the recent past. G. John Ikenberry, in an article in 2001, argued that, 'The United States is indeed a global hegemon, but because of its democratic institutions and political traditions it is - or can be - a relatively benign one.'<sup>2</sup> Peter Van Ness looks at it from a different perspective: 'The United States today dominates the globe and many regional geographical subsystems in an unprecedented way, maintaining a hegemonic order that is in no way similar to the "anarchy" assumed in realist analyses. The global system today is not simply unipolar; it is a hegemonic system that is increasingly globalised the U.S. hegemonic system.'<sup>3</sup>

The Chinese and American perspectives on what form American hegemony takes may differ, but there is agreement that the United States is the hegemonic power of the day. How did it happen? More important for this paper, when did it

happen? Was it happening during the years 1902 to 1923, the period of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance? If it was, what effect if any did it have on the Alliance?

### **The Formation of American Hegemony**

It can be argued that the roots of American hegemony go right back to the Founding Fathers and the Declaration of Independence. There were positive signs in the way the United States viewed developments in Central and South America in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. And in the 1830s, an acute observer like Alexis de Tocqueville could comment that Americans 'daily quit the spots which gave them birth to acquire extensive domains in a remote region' (he was referring to the West), and he went on, 'The Americans are destined by nature to be a great maritime people. They will become, like the English, the commercial agents of a great portion of the world'.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1850s, the West was on the way to being won, and the perspective was becoming broader. Beyond the West was the Pacific and beyond the Pacific was Asia. The American approach was influenced by a mix of factors which were to recur again and again in the next one hundred and fifty years: high moral endeavour, personified in the Nineteenth Century by missionary activity, the development of trade and commerce, the spirit of adventure, and the first signs of imperialism. The Pacific-Asia region provided plenty of opportunities. In the case of China, the Americans initially appeared to be willing to follow in the footsteps of the British, victors in three opium wars. In the case of Japan, the United States took the lead, in the persons of Commodore Perry and the diplomat, Townsend Harris.

United States interest and activity in the Pacific-Asia region picked up after the ending of the Civil War in 1865, and following the Alaska Purchase in 1867. An early attempt to provide leadership, and arguably an unsuccessful one, was made by Anson Burlingame in China in the 1860s. More effective in promoting American interests and strengthening the American position was the acquisition or occupation of a succession of islands in the Pacific: Johnston Island 1858, Midway 1867, Samoa 1889, Guam 1898, Hawaii 1898, the Philippines 1898, and Wake 1899. Opinion in the United States, whether official or public, did not of

course see this as imperialism, following the British, French or Russian examples, but to a detached observer it looked rather like it.

Apart from a preoccupation with the Americas, the main focus of United States attention by the end of the Nineteenth Century was the Pacific-Asia region. There was trouble with Japan regarding the take-over of Hawaii, the liberation of the Philippines (at least to begin with!) from Spanish imperialism, concern about the Scramble for Concessions in China, and the attempts by the Secretary of State, John Hay, to uphold the principle of the Open Door in China.

The main driving forces behind American policy have links with the 1850s, and reach forward to the 1930s and beyond. They include the insistence on the freedom of the seas and the need for a strong naval presence, the importance of trade with the need for an Open Door in China, hostility to the imperialist ambitions of the European States with the search for commercial and territorial concessions and spheres of influence, and continuing support for missionary activity in the broadest sense, including medical and educational work. In addition, you have the beginnings of something akin to a special relationship with China, which reaches maturity in the 1930s. It all adds up to what might be called the first steps in the formation of an American hegemonic approach to the region, although anything like a finished product was still some way off, and was not available until the Washington settlement of 1921-1922.

The period between 1900 and 1914 can be described as a frustrating one for United States policy-makers in the Pacific-Asia region. Whatever ideas and ambitions the United States had, it remained what might be called a second division player in the international political game. The first division players were, in alphabetical order, Japan, Russia and the United Kingdom. The Americans could do little but watch and accept the four key events which transformed the international politics of the region: the first Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1905, and the diplomatic revolution of 1907 which brought France, Japan, Russia and the United Kingdom together. The more realistic American policy-makers, like Theodore Roosevelt, accepted this, worked within the system and were able to

play positive roles, as in 1905 over the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth. The less realistic players, such as Taft, Knox, Harriman and Straight, tried to challenge the system, as in Manchuria from 1908, and failed.

Two major issues were of increasing concern to the United States in this period, and were to affect the American view of the Alliance, and American policy in the region until after the Second World War. The first was the souring of relations with Japan. There were many reasons for this, including immigration, discrimination in California, naval rivalry, a possible threat to the Philippines, and Japanese policy towards China in general and Manchuria in particular. The second, which also had implications for the Alliance, was the American view of what was happening in China, particularly after the revolution of 1911-12. It was a matter of concern and frustration to the United States that the major outside influences on what was happening in China came from Japan and the United Kingdom.

The climax of this first stage in the formation of American hegemony came with the presidency from 1912 to 1920 of Woodrow Wilson. American policy-makers were able to take advantage of World War One to promote American ideas and leadership on a global scale. The Fourteen Points, the attacks on 'old diplomacy' and the part played at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, demonstrated the new role and importance of the United States.

As a matter of record, the Americans were not particularly successful in promoting their ideas and influence in the Pacific-Asia region. They did not handle the affair of the Twenty-one Demands in 1915 with any great assurance, and it was left to Britain to play the major outside role in resolving the affair. They had to accept the secret treaties in the Far East involving the major imperialist powers, and in fact showed a willingness to play along with that diplomacy with the 1917 Lansing-Ishii Agreement. They were not able to dominate Allied policy-making over the question of intervention in Siberia in 1918, and at Paris, they were unsuccessful on issues such as Shantung and the future of various Pacific islands.

It was left to Wilson's successor, Warren Harding, and his Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, to achieve the greatest success so far in pushing

American ideas and leadership in the Pacific-Asia region, at the Washington Conference in 1921-1922.

### **American Hegemony and the Alliance, 1902-1922**

There are a number of major issues that need to be addressed in trying to assess what impact the formation of American hegemony had on the Alliance:

(i) The souring of American-Japanese relations in the early years of the century.

- This process initially had little to do with the Alliance, concluded in 1902. Relations between Japan and the United States were becoming strained and edgy before that date over such issues as the Japanese in Hawaii, and a succession of problems arising from Japanese migration to California and the West Coast. Relations became more strained with the San Francisco school question in 1906.
- From 1905 onwards, there were indications of competing imperialisms in the Pacific. One such was the growing naval rivalry. Theodore Roosevelt decided to send the Atlantic Fleet into the Pacific in 1907, and early in 1908, there were a number of war scares between the Americans and the Japanese. The tension eased following the visit paid by the American fleet to Japan in the autumn of 1908 and the warm welcome the sailors received from the Japanese public. The British viewed the situation with some concern, but as Sir Edward Grey put it in July 1907, 'The Americans talk angrily, but they have no means of getting at the Japanese unless they build a much larger fleet.'<sup>5</sup>
- Theodore Roosevelt was willing to play a mediatorial role in the latter stages of the Russo-Japanese War, but he was not over-enthusiastic about the outcome: a clear, if limited, Japanese victory. In sporting parlance, he would have preferred a draw. But he was willing to accept the new Japanese position in Korea and, by extension, in southern Manchuria. He may have toyed with the idea of constructing an Anglo-American coalition, but the Taft-Katsura exchanges of 1905 and the Root-Takahira note of 1908 demonstrate his realistic approach to Japan.

- A further deterioration of American-Japanese relations occurred after 1908. It can be argued that much of the responsibility for this can be placed at the door of the new Taft-Knox administration in Washington. There was certainly a lack of Rooseveltian realism in the new approach to Manchuria. American policy ran into something of a brick wall, not just that resulting from the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1905, but also resulting from the agreements of 1907 which brought France and Russia onside.

(ii) The generally amicable relations between the United States and the United Kingdom in the years before 1914.

- Tensions between Britain and the United States, over such issues as Latin America and the second Anglo-Boer War lessened and faded in the early years of the new century. Moreover, Britain was increasingly preoccupied with what was happening in Europe. The possibility, however, of a much closer relationship, even possibly an alliance, as raised by Joseph Chamberlain in 1898, and initially welcomed by John Hay, was never a serious proposition.
- The United Kingdom was willing to respond to the arbitration proposals which were made in 1910 by the United States. This must be seen against the background that by 1910-11, there was certainly an awareness in London that the Alliance with Japan was having an adverse effect on relations with the United States. By 1910, Britain was becoming the target of resentment for its support of Japan, particularly over Manchuria. But given the situation in Europe, which dominated opinion in Whitehall, the Alliance was more necessary than ever.
- The question of an arbitration treaty with the United States was consequently a big factor in the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the Third Alliance in 1911. What price the value of the Alliance now for Japan? The United States was appearing more and more as her most likely opponent in the Pacific-Asia region, and here was her ally wanting approval of a proposal which would mean that the revised Alliance would only work partially against the United States – support but short of war.

- The arbitration treaty, of course, lapsed in 1912, following opposition in the American Senate, and consequently article IV of the 1911 Alliance (the article providing for arbitration) did not come into effect. But what had happened between 1910 and 1912 was a massive blow to Japanese confidence in the Alliance. It was clear that Britain had no intention of going to the assistance of Japan, in the event of war with the United States. However, it was not until 1917 that Japan publicly acknowledged this.

(iii) The Alliance was under increasing strain in the years 1910-1911. There were a number of issues, most of which had little direct relationship to the United States but rather, were Anglo-Japanese issues.

- There was growing unease, and indeed in some cases, hostility, to Japan in what might loosely be called commercial circles. It was partly because of Japanese discouragement of foreign competition in the regions under its control, but rather more because of what was happening in the negotiations for a new Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1910-11.
- While the United Kingdom was willing to accept what Japan was doing in Korea and southern Manchuria, problems arose with Japanese policy south of the Wall, particularly over the Yangtse region by 1912-13. There was a clash of imperialisms.
- There was a gap in the two countries in their perception of what was happening in China with the Revolution of 1911-12 and after. Japan had no great regard for Yuan Shih-K'ai (shades of 1894-95), and arguably was out-manoeuvred by the British and Yuan in 1911-12. The two countries also differed in their perspectives on what happened in 1913.
- There was growing anti-Japanese feeling in the Empire. The dislike of Japan, which was particularly marked in Canada and Australia, was partly because of suspicions of Japanese naval developments and possible imperialist ambitions in the Pacific, and more because of racial hostility to Japan.
- By 1914, influential political and military groups in Japan were beginning to question the value of the Alliance. The attractions of an alternative German road, or possibly even a Russian one, were being aired.

(iv) World War One created a number of problems for the Alliance. Overall, it worked well, and, it can be argued, was a significant factor in the final victory in 1918. Throughout, the American factor was not particularly important.

- The strategic importance of the Alliance was demonstrated at the very beginning of hostilities in 1914, although London did have mixed feelings about Japanese entry into the war. Japan took advantage of the war to present China with the Twenty-one Demands in January 1915. Whatever reservations Britain had about the Demands - especially Groups III and V - she wished to avoid any prospect of a Sino-Japanese war, and in May, Sir Edward Grey offered British mediation in order to secure agreement between Peking and Tokyo.
- Germany put out peace feelers to Japan in 1915, 1916, and 1917. The nightmare scenario in London was that Japan might leave the war and make a separate peace, or, even worse, change sides. 1941 might have happened, in a modified form, twenty-five years earlier. The record shows that Japan remained faithful to the Alliance.
- The Russian Revolution of 1917, the collapse of Russia and the ensuing Civil War, led to a mix of agreement and disagreement between Tokyo and London as to how to respond. Both behaved as imperialist powers, the Japanese in Siberia, the British in Siberia, Central Asia, and the Caspian region.
- Both parties to the Alliance took advantage of the war to pursue their own ambitions, Japan regionally, Britain globally. There were clashes over China, the German Pacific islands and Siberia, but the Alliance worked.
- There is little evidence of an American hegemonic approach to the Alliance, or indeed to the problems of the Pacific and East Asia between 1914 and 1918. The United States, despite not being involved in the world war, played a minor role in the Sino-Japanese crisis in 1915. It objected to the secret diplomacy which was such a feature of the period, and to what was happening in Siberia from 1918 onwards. But it also played along with that secret diplomacy with the Lansing-Ishii agreement of 1917.

(v) What happened at the Peace Conference of 1919? The diplomacy of

peace- making was not a great triumph for the Alliance, but the differences between the United Kingdom and Japan owed little to American influence and pressure.

- The United States unveiled what might be called its blueprint for international relations at the Paris Peace Conference. The international mood appeared to be supportive; the results, as expressed in the terms of the various treaties, were at best mixed. Point One of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points talked of 'Open covenants of peace openly arrived at' but the peacemakers were forced to accept the results of secret diplomacy in the Middle East, Europe and Asia.
- The peace negotiations and the resulting settlement did little to strengthen the Alliance. Britain was on Japan's side on the Shantung issue, she was a reluctant opponent on the question of racial equality, and her attitude on the retention of the German Pacific islands was somewhat equivocal. If Japan played the role of faithful ally during the war, Britain can hardly be said to have reciprocated at Paris. But if the negotiations and the settlement did little to strengthen the Alliance, United States influence was a minor contributory factor.

(vi) The debate over the future of the Alliance, 1919-1921, and what happened at the Washington conference.

- Article VI of the Third Alliance of 1911 laid down that the 'Agreement shall come into effect immediately after the date of its signature and remain in force for ten years from that date'. It went on to set out the procedures for extending or terminating the alliance after ten years. The Allies were able to indulge in reflection and debate in the new international environment, which came with the Paris Peace Conference and the setting up of the League of Nations, as to whether they wished to continue the Alliance as it stood, change it, or terminate it.
- The process of debate over the future of the Alliance was prolonged and intensive, culminating in the United Kingdom with the discussions at the Imperial Conference in 1921. The War to end Wars had been fought and won, Germany was defeated, a new international order was in place and the Paris settlement had changed the world. Was the Anglo-Japanese

Alliance needed in this Brave New World? If it survived, it had to be changed to bring it into line with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

- Alongside the idealism there was scepticism about the new order, considerable cynicism, and a good deal of hard-nosed realism. Germany was gone, but there was the new global challenge of international communism following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The United States had opted out of the new order. There was evidence of a deteriorating relationship between the United States and Japan, and one manifestation of this was an American-Japanese naval race.
- There were also complications in the Empire. Canada was hostile to continuation of the Alliance, Australia and New Zealand wanted to maintain it. - The result of the lengthy period of discussion and reflection was that both Japan and the United Kingdom appeared to want to maintain the Alliance, albeit in an amended form to bring it into line with the new obligations incurred under the Covenant of the League. What becomes clear with the advantage of hindsight is that behind the scenes in all this lengthy process of discussion and reflection was the brooding presence of the United States.
- The denouement came at the Washington Conference in 1921-1922, and can be seen as a considerable triumph for American policy. The Alliance was not renewed, even in an amended form, but was replaced by the innocuous Four Power Pact. The Nine Power Treaty laid down, at least in theory, a new approach to China. The Naval Limitation agreement gave the United States much of what it wanted.
- Washington follows on from Paris. Both can be seen as attempts to impose a United States view on the international situation – global at Paris, regional at Washington. From the perspective of the United States, Washington, while more limited, was the more successful. But the success was short term. By the 1930s, the Washington arrangements were contributing to a longer term disaster.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

There is little to add by way of conclusion, other than to underline some of the points which have been explored earlier in the paper.

The Alliance was under pressure from 1910 onwards. The main reasons for this pressure had little or nothing to do in the early stages with any American view of the Pacific-Asia region. It was about commercial issues, differing perspectives on events in China, unease within the British Empire, and something of a clash of imperialisms over China. But the Alliance was renewed in 1911; it continued to work, it was the cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy and a very important buttress of British foreign policy, it delivered in the First World War, and both Allies accepted the case for further renewal in 1921.

The United Kingdom's attitude and commitment to the Alliance were always more affected by American policies and criticism than were those of Japan. Moreover, Britain was closer to the United States on issues such as arbitration, and the Open Door in China. However, there could be no real questioning of the Alliance until after the transformation of the European scene that followed the defeat of Germany.

The beginnings of serious United States hostility to the Alliance go back to soon after the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War and the signature of the Second Alliance in 1905. There were fundamental difference of opinion and policy between Japan and the United States as to what should happen in the Pacific-Asia region. The American view clashed with that of Japan. The United States saw the Alliance as a bulwark protecting Japan, and, more than that, as encouraging Japan. Whatever the issues that separated the countries after 1905 – from railways in Manchuria, differing approaches to China, the future of the Pacific islands, intervention in Siberia, the resolution of the Shantung question, the developing naval race – the United States saw, alongside Japan, the United Kingdom, standing shoulder to shoulder.

Although there was a long way to go, the beginnings of an American hegemonic approach to the Pacific-Asia region can be seen in the years before 1921, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was identified as an obstacle to that approach. American opposition to the Alliance had a limited effect before 1918; by 1921, it can be seen as the most important factor in the destruction of the Alliance.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> Pang Zhongying, 'U.S.Fights to Maintain Its Sole Superpower Standing', in *Beijing Review*, Vol.45, No.17, 25 April 2003, p6-7.

<sup>2</sup> G.John Ikenberry, 'Getting Hegemony Right', in *The National Interest*, No.63, Spring 2001, p17-24.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Van Ness, 'Hegemony not Anarchy: Why China and Japan are not balancing U.S.unipolar power', in *International Review of the Asia Pacific*, Vol.2, No.1, 2002, p131-150.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Walter Lafeber, *The Clash. A History of U.S.-Japan Relations*, New York: W.W.Norton, 1997, p3-4.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline. A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23*, London: The Athlone Press, 1972, p23.

## THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE

Ian Nish

The historical significance of the Anglo-Japanese alliance has to be measured in two dimensions: for the countries directly involved; and internationally. For Japan, the alliance was overwhelmingly beneficial, giving her great power status from 1902. For Britain also, it had its benefits. As Julian Corbett, her great naval historian, wrote: the alliance 'gave Britain respite from having to defend everything everywhere'. Internationally the alliance was more mixed in its benefits. It failed in its professed long-term objectives: to give peace in the 'Extreme East' (though the Russo-Japanese war was the only serious exception); and to maintain the independence and territorial integrity for China and Korea.

The alliance lasted for almost the first quarter of the twentieth century. It consisted of three separate and distinct treaties. The original alliance treaty was a great leap in the dark, especially for Britain where it was a leap from isolation which by 1902 could no longer be described as 'splendid'. The British cabinet was nervous about its conclusion. There were doubts and divisions too on the Japanese side. But these were resolved by the important keynote speech which Prince Ito Hirobumi made at the Mansion House, London, on 4 January 1902 in which he expressed the sincere hope that 'the friendly feelings which have existed between us in the past shall be daily more strongly cemented in the near future.' This coded message surely implied that his opposition to the alliance in the past had been publicly removed.<sup>1</sup>

When the mantle of secrecy was withdrawn and the alliance was published on 12 February, there was great joy in Japan. The students of Keio University staged a candlelight procession through Minato-ku from 1800 to 2200 hours on the following day. 1500 officials and students surged through the main gate and marched with lanterns (kantera) to Shiba Park, thence to Hamamatsu-cho, Shimbashi and Nihonbashi. At Nijubashi, they shouted Banzai to the emperor. Leaving Sakuradamon, they moved to the British legation and cried Banzai to the British minister. Thence to the Gaimusho, Toranomom, and finally past Ikura back to the campus.

As the students went along they sang a song which I shall try to translate.

'Japan where the morning sun rises and Britain where the sun never sets have hitherto stood apart in east and west. Today when an alliance is reached between them is a time of great celebration and raises the flag for world peace.

The objective of the two countries in linking hands is to help China and Korea and create a paradise of peace in the orient. It is a courageous spirit to show the world [tenchi] a compact of which we do not feel ashamed.

We who were born in this ancient land of Japan and grew up during the reign of Meiji have received blessings greater than our ancestors. When this news came to our ears, we joyfully blessed the emperor anew.

Our two empires founded on independence and self-esteem [dokuritsu jison] have published this alliance before the eyes of the nations and have nothing to fear again. Such a bold action confirms our independence and self-esteem.'

2

Student songs are not regarded as first-class historical sources, certainly not in UK university circles. British students did not take to the streets for the alliance. The Keio song, however, is interesting for several reasons: there is no mention of a smaller power joining a major one, they see it as a compact between equals; there is a strong emphasis on peace; they stress the need for protecting China and Korea, presumably from Russia (which is not mentioned). All the Japanese dailies deployed similar liberal arguments in the great space they devoted to it after the publication of the alliance. By contrast, the British dailies hardly mentioned it at all, a relief for the government of the day which feared an unfavourable press reaction.

The second treaty of 1905 which was probably the strongest of the three alliances and conferred most advantages on the signatories, including an explicit undertaking by Britain to aid Japan if Russia tried to fight a war of revenge. That of course never materialized. The Japanese were asked to send troops to India in an emergency. But it was soon recognized in Britain that the Japanese should not be drawn into India's defence problems; and the clause was in effect removed. The treaty must be judged a relative success insofar as it deterred any Russian idea of revenge. But please note that, if it induced Russia to give up her territorial ambitions in Manchuria and Korea, it did not deter Russia from an expansive policy in central Asia and Persia and, in spite of the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, the Russians were active there right down to 1914 and continued to present a threat to British India.

The historical significance of the 1905 alliance treaty is that it led the way to the cluster of treaties entered into in 1907. That was the year when Japan came into convergence with Europe or rather with European colonial empires by entering into the Franco-Japanese treaty and the various Russo-Japanese treaties. It was one of the most important stages in Japan's diplomatic development in the 20th century; and the Anglo-Japanese alliance was the agent for it.<sup>3</sup>

The weakest of the three treaties was that of 1911 which was fundamentally different in character. Because Japan and Russia made up their differences in East Asia after the Asian treaties of 1907, there was less focus for the alliance. And yet it lasted longest and had to respond to many of the critical events of the day: China's Revolution of 1911, the European war of 1914-18, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Paris Peace conference. The alliance was not directly involved in these but was subtly modified by each of them.<sup>4</sup>

There were disappointments and dissatisfactions on both sides in the Anglo-Japanese alliance. In the case of Britain, the question of not renewing it was discussed in 1911 but not pursued. Ambassador Sir Claude MacDonald, a strong Japanophile, did not recommend renewal or at least urged against premature renewal. His argument was that 'the next few years are of vital importance to Japan and her policy in Korea, Manchuria and China' and her actions during those years 'will be a valuable indication to us whether we should renew the alliance'. London, however, went ahead because of global considerations, namely the importance of the American relationship.<sup>5</sup>

For its last 13 years the alliance was in decline. This deterioration should not be a matter of surprise or shame. There is inevitably a falling away from the excitement of entering a new relationship; and mundane disputes arise over trade and territory which an alliance brings in its train. We now know that the Elder Statesmen in Japan were privately sceptical of the British alliance especially after the European war began and thought that Japan should broaden the range of her contacts.<sup>6</sup> But the governments of the day continued to observe the traditional policy that the alliance was the mainstay of Japan's foreign policy.

The question is how far the two allies tried to improve the deteriorating relationship between them. Britain which was in a weak position after 1914 needed Japan's goodwill more than Japan needed Britain's goodwill. She took some steps to improve the relationship, valid steps but not very inspired ones, such as the treaties regarding the peace conference (1917), the military mission to present a Field Marshal's baton to Emperor Taisho, and the publication in Tokyo of the Anglo-Japanese journal, *New East*, under the editorship of JW Robertson-Scott. Japan too did her bit to reverse the decline in the relationship by sending battleships to the Mediterranean, by sending orange marmalade to troops on the western front and the mission of Prince Higashi-Fushimi with General Shiba, GCVO, to Britain in 1918. But the fact was that the Japanese generals' views on Britain as a military nation were very negative.<sup>7</sup> Britain's minister, Beilby Alston, also reported his disappointment that Japanese intellectuals were not impressed with the allied cause during the war. This was not directly a reflection on the British alliance though in effect it was so.<sup>8</sup> But the most important step to reverse the decline in the alliance was the outcome of the war in Europe. Germany's defeat and the scuttling of the German navy at Scapa Flow altered Japan's attitude favourably.

At the same time the situation had radically changed. Japan from being in 1914 a debtor country with an adverse trade balance and suffering from depression of its commerce and industry found herself four years later with her foreign debt greatly reduced and satisfactory trade balances. When the conclusion of an armistice came unexpectedly early for Japan, it was unsettling for the economy and put an end to much of her wartime prosperity. It would have suited Japan well for the war to continue. Meanwhile the turmoil of war had undermined the established position of Britain's manufacturers and exporters and ended London's position as a global financial centre.<sup>9</sup>

Another outcome of the war was the revelation that the United States, by reason of her vast resources, had the capacity to become a most formidable military power at short notice. During the war years the US had shown a growing dislike of Japan's activities in the Asia-Pacific sphere to which the countries of Europe had turned a blind eye. So the comparatively relaxed attitude which the Japanese government had earlier taken had to be re-thought at the end of the war. The American-Japanese disagreements which arose during the allied expedition to Siberia and the delicate immigration disputes led to a further deterioration.

Bringing alliances to an end is never easy and it is sometimes easier to let them continue than to terminate them. The two options - axe it or let it drift - are equally unsatisfactory. Most of the prewar alliances ended automatically in the turmoil of war and peace. But the Anglo-Japanese alliance was a victors' alliance and advanced uninterruptedly but uneasily into the new world of so-called Open Diplomacy, though its contents were never really secret.

There was also the question of compatibility between it and the covenant of the League of Nations. This led to big internal splits on both sides. British Foreign Office bureaucrats through a specially appointed committee by and large accepted this incompatibility and saw no alternative to its termination. The Head of the Far Eastern Department expressed his conclusion that the alliance could not be continued in its present form. He considered it to be 'an unnatural and artificial compact based neither on identity of interest nor on sympathy with common aims and ideals'.<sup>10</sup> The committee were swayed by the majority of the Empire/Commonwealth who were thought to be hostile, wrongly as it proved. And the Chinese who could not be alienated now that Britain wanted to reestablish her commercial position in the east were noisy in opposition to it. But the politicians, Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Curzon, did not accept these views and were in favour in June 1921 of the alliance being renewed - or at least revised and continued in some form.<sup>11</sup>

There was a split too on the Japanese side. Oddly enough, Alston reported that Japan's League of Nations Association to which so many academics subscribed would not allow the Japanese government to renew the alliance. But Prime Minister Hara confirmed that, even if the effectiveness of the alliance is more limited after the League of Nations comes into being, its continuation is a necessity. Eventually a consensus was reached between the politicians of the Gaiko Chosakai and the military party: they wanted the alliance to continue and other powers to mind their own business. But Japan wanted above all that the alliance issue should not be considered in public forum and, in considering whether to accept the American invitation to attend the Washington conference, tried to get concessions from the US to that effect.<sup>12</sup>

In the last weeks before the Washington Conference finally opened in November 1921, agonising uncertainty prevailed in the two allied capitals. They were conscious that the alliance was crumbling. In both allies a spirit of wishful thinking set in: could we not water down the alliance and invite Washington to join? This was the optimum mandate which both the British and Japanese delegates carried with them. It was easier than voluntarily renouncing the alliance treaties. But the likelihood that a formula could be devised whereby the US would join the group was small. It was ruled out of order in informal parleys before the proceedings began. The four-power treaty which was signed on 13 December 1921, laid down that the alliance would come to an end with the exchange of ratifications.<sup>13</sup>

Some alliances come to an end suddenly; others linger on for years and lapse. The Anglo-Japanese alliance falls into the latter category. This was because there was considerable delay in the coming into force of the conference treaties. Ratification was finally accepted by the US Senate at the end of 1922 with the reservation that 'the four-power pact contains no commitment to armed force, no alliance, no obligation to join in any defense'. There were yet further delays because of some expected reservations on the part of France. The technical ending of the 1911 treaty came about when the ratification of the various Washington treaties by the signatory powers was completed and the documents were exchanged in July 1923.<sup>14</sup>

In summing up the alliance, it may be said that in general Britain and Japan were imperial powers operating the diplomacy of imperialism in its heighday. But there was certainly in the first alliance a moral element calling for the independence and territorial integrity of China and Korea, what might be called 'Open Door doctrine'. This feature accounts for the favour shown by the US towards it. But this element was gradually whittled down in the second and third treaties of 1905 and 1911. So far as Japan was concerned, it was the strategic objective - the defense of her territories against threat - that was paramount and by that criterion the 1911 treaty was a disappointment. It gave her no guarantee of British military/naval assistance. Britain too had her strategic objectives: before 1907 she was antagonistic, and militarily vulnerable, to Russia in Asia and even after 1907 she was still suspicious until the end of the alliance. But, because Britain's imperial power depended on the Royal Navy, that meant that the level of naval strength she maintained was vital. That raised financial considerations and, by extension, party political issues. So the naval protection given by Japan was throughout the alliance period important for Britain. There was some truth in Japan's claim that she was Britain's policeman, the custodian of Britain's interests, in the east.

The Anglo-Japanese alliance was historically significant because it lasted almost a quarter of a century, over-arching the period from 1895 to the mid-1920s. In terms of longevity, it compares relatively well with the great nineteenth century alliances: the Dual and Triple Alliances of Bismarck (1882-1918) and the Franco-Russian Alliance (1893-1917). But, like the 'special relationship' which is currently supposed to exist between Britain and the US, it was dogged by minor disagreements which were generally not in the public domain. Yet it survived because of the intangible security considerations mentioned above and the image of modest collaboration between monarchical states which it projected to the world.

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings, Japan Society* (London), 139(2002), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Jiji Shimpō*, 14 February 1902.

<sup>3</sup> John A. White, *Transition to Global Rivalry : Alliance Diplomacy and the Quadruple Entente, 1895-1907* (Cambridge : University Press, 1995), pp. 240-69; Tsunoda Jun, *Manshu mondai to kokubo hoshin* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1967), pp. 527-30; Kurihara Ken, *Tai-Mammo seisakushi no ichimen* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1966); David Steeds, 'The Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Russo-Japanese War' in *International Studies* (LSE), IS/02/432, pp. 17-29, especially p. 25, 'The agreements of 1907 were a triumph for the Alliance of 1905.'

<sup>4</sup> Ayako Hotta-Lister, 'The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1911' in *International Studies* (LSE), IS/02/432, pp. 29-45.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald to Grey, 5 April 1911, in GP Gooch and HWV Temperley (eds), *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914* (London : HMSO, 1932), vol. VIII, no. 417.

<sup>6</sup> FR Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention, 1914-19 : Japan in the First World War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 148ff.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> Beilby Alston, Annual Report on the Tokyo Embassy for 1919, para 1.

<sup>9</sup> Janet Hunter and Shinya Sugiyama (eds), [Anglo-Japanese] *Economic and Business Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 37.

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum by Wellesley, 1 June 1920, in *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-39*, series i, vol. XIV (London: HMSO, 1966) p. 33; see pp. 32-6 for full text .

<sup>11</sup> CJ Lowe and ML Dockrill, *The Mirage of Power : British Foreign Policy, 1914-22* (London: Routledge, 1972), pp. 299-300.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Nish, *Alliance in Decline* (London: Athlone Press, 1972), pp. 289-92.

<sup>13</sup> Kajima Morinosuke, *The Diplomacy of Japan, 1894-1922*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kajima Institute for International Peace, 1980), pp. 564-7 and 572-8.

<sup>14</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922*, vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office), pp. 378-84.