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# *The Case For Japan*

A Dispassionate Study

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## THE CASE FOR JAPAN

I WRITE this paper not only with diffidence and humility, but with profound sadness -- a sadness bred of disappointment and disillusion. Public opinion, with apparently small regard for facts, or small desire to seek them, has seen in the present conflict in the

Far East just another example of Japanese aggression, such as for many years we have learned from California and elsewhere to expect as the one giant shadow threatening our civilization.

That public opinion has also, out of long habit, been totally blind to the huge military machine which foreign assistance (not exclusively Russian) and foreign sympathy (quite largely American) has made it possible for China to call into the field. The League of Nations, smarting, one may suppose, over past rebuffs, has found itself unable to distinguish between its function as an instrument for the securing of even -handed justice for all nations, including the "have-nots" as well as the "haves," and that of protecting the vested rights (however acquired) of certain European nations, especially those in the Far East.

And our own America, which has so decisively repudiated the League and its works in all that concerns itself, and has protested so feelingly its intention for the future to remain deaf to all the blandishments of propaganda and blind to all the seductions of foreign flirtations, has proved, alas, as credulous as of yore and as ready to be stampeded down the steep and slippery way which leads to war and to those even greater ills which are war's inevitable sequel.

## FROM FIFTY YEARS OF STUDY

Nevertheless, unwilling as I am, even on the smallest scale, to essay the role of an *Athanasius contra mundum*, if I am to stand for the integrity of my own mind and the freedom of my own soul, I must risk the crushing confutation of my views which doubtless awaits me by stating, with the least possible resort to surmise or speculation, and with an honest dependence on what is factual, the conclusion to which I have, at this stage at least of a great tragedy, come for myself.

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Let me say, too, that this conclusion is not drawn from merely propagandist material, Japanese or Chinese, but from journals anywhere, which have not prostituted the art of journalism to the desire to mislead and deceive a too credulous and sensation-loving public. And to the day-by-day files of papers with a conscience such as the *North China Daily Herald* (to mention but one of the papers published in China), I think I am entitled to add such knowledge of Sino-Japanese affairs, as I have been able to accumulate in a study of over fifty years.

In order, however, not to make our discussion fruitless from the first through the fanning once again of the fires of old controversies, I shall limit my survey in the main to events which have taken place since the Shanghai Agreement of May 5, 1932, and what is known as the *Tangku Truce* signed by China and Japan in the spring of 1933. These agreements furnish a convenient point from which to start, since they mark the close of the Sino-Japanese difficulties, which we associate with Japan's restoration of the former

Manchu Empire and inaugurate, for the space of two years, for China and Japan, a period of reasonable cooperation and goodwill.

There are, however, two anomalies, which it is necessary to mention. For neither of these can Japan in any wise be held responsible, but they are intimately related to the present situation and without doubt have colored the opinions of a great many who are ignorant of their history.

## HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS

The first of these anomalies is in the existence of what is known as the Foreign Settlements in the Greater Shanghai. The history of these goes back as far as 1843, when an area of 138 acres, purely British, was set apart in order that the foreign merchants and their families might not interfere with the habits and customs of the Chinese population. In 1848 the area of the Settlements was extended to 470 acres, occupied by a hundred representatives of 24 separate firms. At a still later date, 1853, an American and a French Settlement were established on similar lines, but ten years later still the American Concession was amalgamated with the British, under a single Municipal Council, while amalgamation was declined by the French Government. So the French Concession, so-called, was organized as a separate jurisdiction.

In 1899 the International Settlement was again extended, this

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time to embrace 5,584 acres, and, subsequently, the Council enlarged by the election of Japanese as well as British and American representatives of the tax-payers. The Chinese were at first excluded from residence, as well as representation, within the Settlement. They began, however, to flock in at the time of the Taiping Rebellion and have since so appreciated the advantage of foreign sanitation and foreign security as to increase their numbers to something approaching the million. Many of these Chinese in course of time became tax-payers, but their demand for representation was until a decade ago resisted.

At present the total representation, which, of course, varies from election to election, comprises three British, three American, three Japanese and (since 1930) five Chinese. It was in 1928 that the Chinese were awarded three representatives for the first time. From the very beginning it was decided that no Chinese armed forces should be permitted to enter the Settlement area or to menace the Settlement boundaries.

In 1854 (April) an incident occurred which has some bearing upon the present situation. The Chinese Imperial Army camped on the northern boundary of the Settlement and the British Consul, Rutherford (afterwards Sir Rutherford) Alcock, demanded its retirement. On receiving a refusal the Consul used the Settlement troops to fight what is known as the Battle of Muddy Flat, in which the Chinese were forced to withdraw. Like action was taken by the Settlement forces in 1925, when 10,000 Chinese soldiers surrendered and were disarmed; in 1927; and, by the Japanese alone, in 1932.

It will be obvious that in all this we have an anomaly such as could exist nowhere else save in China, but history is history and this particular piece of history must be taken into

consideration in evaluating the significance of the attack made *upon* the Japanese of the Settlement on August 14 of this year. The 4,000 Japanese Marines in Shanghai at that date were not invaders but present in pursuance of treaty rights and of the necessity of guarding from violence 30,000 of their nationals.

## FOREIGN TROOPS IN NORTH CHINA

The second anomaly is in the presence of foreign troops, including Japanese, in North China. For the explanation of this we have to go back to the days of the Boxer Revolt and the Treaty which followed the suppression of that particular manifestation of

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anti-foreignism. In order that the way to the coast should never again be barred to the foreigners resident in Peking, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Belgium and Japan were charged with the responsibility of maintaining a certain number of troops, proportionate to the number of each resident nationality, at different points along the corridor from Peking to Tientsin.

For the past 37 years these Powers, with the exception of Belgium, have kept their garrisons at Peiping, Tientsin, Shanhaikwan, Chinwangtao, Tangku and other places. It is in line with the permission given to the warships of Great Britain, the United States, Italy and Japan to patrol the waters of the Yangtze for 1,500 miles from the sea and to station marines at certain ports.

It is all, as you will readily agree, an anomaly, but one sanctioned by generally recognized treaties and without which, as at Nanking in 1927, "when war-mad troops attacked foreign residents and entered the city with the definite license, if not intention, to rob and kill foreigners,"<sup>1</sup> much loss of life must at various times have resulted.

Having now drawn your attention to these anomalies, I am under the necessity, before giving my factual summary of recent events, of making some rather general remarks as to the respective policies of Japan and China during the past two years.

## JAPAN'S CHINA POLICY SINCE 1933

First, let us ask what has been the general trend of Japanese policy, so far as China is concerned, during these years. In spite of the general opinion of men to the contrary, I am thoroughly convinced that since 1933 Japanese policy has not been in the direction of aggression or of a developing militarism. Koki Hirota, both as Foreign Minister and as Premier, has repeatedly gone out of his way to be conciliatory to China, and has repudiated the likelihood of war during his terms of office. To Mr. Hirota's sincerity both the Chinese Ambassador to Tokyo and Chiang Kai -shek himself have more than once borne testimony in language equally sincere.

Even if we choose to regard "the affair of February 26, 1936" as a military revolt (which it was not), its failure and the punishment of its principals, together with the subsequent curbing of the army heads, are sufficient to show the baselessness of the theory that

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the Army has dictated the present policy of the nation. The administration of General Hayashi, which went out of power last spring, might seem to give some color to the assumption, but the complete defeat of that ministry at the polls in April and the fact that the General, however unwilling, had to bow to the will of the electorate once again refute the theory of military dominance.

The choice of Prince Fumimaro Konoye to be Prime Minister united all sections of opinion in the nation and the Japanese parties have closed all the gaps between in support of the national policy. This choice was accompanied by the return of Hirota to the Foreign Office and a renewal of his pacific pledges.



## **JAPAN PLANNING FOR PEACE**

During the same period Japan, on the basis of her assurance of continued peace, has planned for the commemoration of the famous Charter Oath of 1868 in 1938, for the holding of an International Exposition in Tokyo in 1940 and for the holding of the Olympic Games in the same year. Furthermore, she has been giving the closest attention to the development of her foreign trade, with China as with other countries. It requires some stretch of the imagination to believe that she would by aggression in Shanghai deliberately proceed to wipe out that trade by the destruction of the huge investments she possesses in the industrial sections of that city.

Such has been Japan's general line of policy as it concerns China, though we must remember that in the same period of time we are considering she has been more than fearful of the danger along the Russian frontier. The "incidents" of a provocative nature which have been more or less regularly occurring along the Manchoukuo and Siberian frontiers are amply sufficient to justify precautions taken by Japan in that direction, even if we choose to think Japan overly nervous as to the danger of communist propaganda within her own borders.

At any rate the Empire has felt itself under the necessity not only of maintaining a large force within reach of the Soviet boundaries but also of cultivating the friendship of those countries like Germany and Italy which are themselves inimical to Russian propaganda. It may be conceded that democratic countries like our own and Great Britain would be slow to align themselves similarly

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and yet, were they in the presence of a menace equally dangerous it might be that of two evils the choice of support from the Fascist side would prove the better for the future of civilization. Russia working for world revolution, has never failed in the past to let down her allies and she can be depended upon to do the same in the future.

## **COMMUNISM HINDERS CHINA, FOMENTS WAR**

Now let us turn to the story of China since the signing of the *Tangku Truce*. I have already pointed out that for the two years following this event the agreement was observed, to the general advantage of China as well as of Japan. Anti-Japanese agitation ceased and

notable progress was made towards the unification of China.

The only obstacle to this unification came from the communist elements in different parts of the country, notably in the north and west. Against these Chiang Kai -shek, assisted by a group of conciliatory ministers (later, for their efforts, branded as pro -Japanese), waged unremitting war and received from Japan only the friendliest cooperation, so far as she was permitted to aid. It was indeed for the equipping and maintaining of the armies dispatched for the suppression of communism that Chiang Kai -shek was able to obtain those huge supplies of armament and munitions which the pacifically -minded altruism of the industrial West was so glad to manufacture and sell.

Affairs were at this stage when the Seventh International Congress of Soviets was held and made it a chief feature of its program to foment a new drive for the sovietization of China and for the promotion of war between China and Japan. Thereupon things began to happen in rapid sequence. First, in November 1936, came the shooting by a reactionary of the conciliatory Acting Foreign Minister, Wang Chiao -ming, who fortunately was not killed. But a few days after Wang's right -hand man, Tang Yu -jen, was assassinated, and reactionaries came in to fill the vacant places.

A month later, in December, 1936, the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai -shek, was kidnapped by that somewhat tarnished patriot, Chang Hsueh -liang, who after his expulsion from Manchoukuo, carrying some \$60,000,000 extorted from the exploited peasantry, had been sent abroad for his country's good, but had now returned to play

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his part in the revival of the fortunes of communists. A captive at Si -an, Chiang was (according to the general account) given the alternative of war with Japan (together with the calling off of the anti -communist campaign) or death.

We can only surmise as to the negotiations carried on through the medium of Madame Chiang Kai -shek and judge them by their results. For immediately afterwards, and without notice, we find the completest reversal of policy.

## CHINA STARTS ANTI-JAPANESE ACTIVITIES

The operations against the communists ceased abruptly and the face of the Chinese armies was turned towards the north and the Japanese garrisons. Instead of the old ministers, reactionaries, hostile to Japan, found a welcome at Nanking. The man who helped raise Chiang Kai -shek to power in the old revolutionary days, General Vassili Bluecher, also known as Ga -Lin, is once more hovering behind the battle -fronts, lending his military genius. Other foreign military experts, at least thirty in number, who had learned the secrets of modern trench warfare in the battlefields of France and Flanders, proceeded to build their concrete redoubts, with wire-entanglements, sandbags, and the like, right on the borders of the International Settlement adjacent to the Japanese residential section.

The *Blue -shirts* and other anti -Japanese societies recommenced their activities in the land. And the Primary Schools began again the carrying out of their program of training the youth of the nation to hate. It was again:

COMPOSITION: Children shall be required to write anti -Japanese essays and verses.  
PENMANSHIP: Children shall be required to copy anti -Japanese slogans. DRAWING: Children shall be required to draw pictures representing atrocities committed by Japanese - and so on, through the entire curriculum.

Thus while a credulous world was hailing the well -nigh accomplished unification of China as a modern miracle, men failed to see that the *unification was a unification of hate* and that the success of this kind of unification was merely the *success of red propaganda*. It was but a stage in a program which was intended to sweet) away the one Power in Eastern Asia which had proved an obstacle to sovietization as a prelude to the main effort in the direction of

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world revolution of which Russia had never lost sight or touch.[2](#)

So the stage was set for the incidents about to occur and while the Generalissimo kindly removed a restraining hand by going off to his holiday at Kuling, where he hobnobbed with the American missionaries, the things began to happen which I will now proceed to catalogue.

I will mention first those which took place in the neighborhood of what are known as the demilitarized zones of the north, that is, the regions south of the Great Wall extending all the way from the borders of Inner Mongolia to the coast and north to Shanhaikwan. This region, as already mentioned, the Chinese had pledged themselves to respect by the Tangku Truce

and by subsequent agreements.

## THE OUTBREAK IN NORTH CHINA

On July 7, then, occurred what is known as the Lukouchiao affair, when, without provocation or previous warning, 150 Japanese soldiers, drilling on their accustomed drill-ground, were suddenly attacked by a portion of the 29th Route Army. The Japanese were unarmed but for one musket ball apiece, and this in possession of the commanding officer, so had no alternative but to concentrate and send for reinforcements, when the assailing force was driven off. *There is no dispute as to this being the first clash and those who maintain the theory of Japanese aggression will be hard put to at to illustrate their view from this first episode of the undeclared war.*

It should perhaps be added that at this time the total Japanese force in the Peiping area consisted of something over 4,000 men, there by treaty for the protection of their 16,000 scattered nationals. The other Powers had 4,449 troops for the protection of 10,338 of their own people.

Omitting several encounters on the days immediately succeeding July 7, encounters which were readily enough apologized for by the civil authorities, we come to the Langfang incident of July 23, when, after notice given, a party of Japanese signal corps men, sent to repair a cut telegraph wire, were attacked by an entire regiment of Chinese with machine-guns and hand-grenades, and only escaped annihilation through the timely arrival of reinforcements.

Thirdly, on July 28, occurred the Kuangan-men affair, at one of the wall-gates of Peiping, when a number of Japanese belonging

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to the garrison, on their way to barracks, with the knowledge and permission of the Chinese authorities, found themselves suddenly trapped by the clanging to of the outer gate and attacked with guns and grenades. The men cut off only saved themselves from extermination by the forcible opening of the gate, after serious loss.

Fourthly, comes the attack of the 29th Route Army on Tientsin, on the early morning of July 29. The attack was made at four different points, the Japanese barracks, the Japanese Concession, the Field, and the East Station. There was only a single Japanese company in the Concession, but, assisted by reinforcements, they succeeded in driving back their assailants.

So far there had been no retaliation on the part of the Japanese, though the Cabinet at Tokyo, seriously perturbed over the situation, was forced to consider the sending of military

help to the North China garrison, just as in 1927, under circumstances of considerably less menace, the Treaty Powers had considered the sending of (and sent) their forces to Shanghai.

The next incident showed clearly enough the need for this help, and is one of the blackest spots in the entire story, though it has not attracted the sympathy of the world. This was the massacre at Tungchow, a city on the borders of the demilitarized zone, of several hundred Japanese civilians, men, women and children, murdered in cold blood, after torture and mutilations of an indescribable nature.

All through these incidents, it must be remembered, the local civil authorities show themselves conciliatory and anxious to maintain the peace but from the first it was equally obvious that the army was resolved on provoking war. Chiang Kai -shek expressly refused permission to the civil authority to conclude negotiations unless it was understood that the movements of the 29th Route Army were not in any wise to be hampered.

So the Communist armies, released from all pressure and free from any restraint on the part of the Generalissimo, were now in full cry northwards. As many as 30 Divisions, if we include the 29th Route Army, were on the move and (possibly to the surprise of those who insist that the Japanese, not the Chinese, have all along been the breakers of treaties) were treating the demilitarized zones as though the *Tangku Truce* had never been signed.

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It was under these circumstances that the Cabinet of Prince Konoye deemed it necessary to send an expeditionary force to relieve the hard -pressed garrisons and to punish, not the Chinese people but the Government, which had over and over again broken faith with Japan. It is satisfactory to know that, with the sympathy of a great many Chinese in these regions, the five northern provinces are now in a fair way of being cleared of the presence of the Chinese armies.

## TENSION INCREASES IN SHANGHAI

Now let us turn south to the Shanghai area and take in the situation which was there maturing. In this region, apart from the few soldiers who were just enough to take their share in the international patrol, there were just 4,080 marines to protect the 30,000 Japanese residents (one -half of the foreign population), while the British had 2,000 and the Americans 1,000 to protect a very much smaller contingent.

It is inconceivable by any sane mind that the Japanese had any doubt as to the absolute inviolability of the International Settlement at this tune, much, less that they were themselves planning an attack whose first consequence would be the destruction of property in which they had invested millions of yen.

There had been a number of isolated cases of outrage stretching back to Nov. 1635, but the first indication that trouble was actually at hand came with the kidnapping of a Japanese sailor named Miyazaki. Even this brought with it only a temporary increase of precaution. Real alarm appeared when a Japanese naval officer, Lieutenant Oyama, was slain a few hundred yards from the Shanghai aerodrome, together with his chauffeur, Saito. Oyama was shot and his body pierced with forty -one bayonet thrusts, surely an unnecessary piece of thoroughness.

The outrage, which caused a panic in the Japanese section of Shanghai, naturally led to an immediate increase in the number of Japanese war -craft in the Whangpoo, while other Powers took, on a lesser scale, similar precautions. While some of the Japanese vessels were transferred to Shanghai harbor from Japanese bases because of the increased tension, a large number of the gunboats were

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from the fleet patrolling the Yangtze, which had aided in evacuating Japanese refugees from the interior. Nevertheless, steps in the direction of peace were taken by the Japanese Consul -General, Mr. Suemasa Okamoto, whom some of us will remember as a former Consul in Seattle.

On the same day as the Oyama murder Mr. Okamoto requested Mayor Yui to remove the sand -bags and other preparations for war, which had been placed around the Japanese residential quarter and to withdraw the Chinese forces, which had practically encircled the same section. The Mayor agreed but found himself powerless to carry out the agreement.

On August 12, at the request of Consul -General Okamoto, the Joint Committee of the

Powers, which had been created on May 5, 1932, and included representatives of the United States, Great Britain, Italy and France, as well as of China and Japan, moved to stop the violation of the pact by the Chinese. The Committee met, recognized the situation, warned the Chinese of the consequences of their violation, but failed to secure any withdrawal. Mayor Yui refused to guarantee compliance and said the matter was one for settlement directly between China and Japan alone. The Japanese thereupon ordered all their nationals into the district for protection and posted guards.

The next day, August 13, the foreign ambassadors, not including the Japanese, held a mediation meeting. But even while their offer to mediate was being considered the Chinese regulars fired upon the Japanese and these not unnaturally returned their fire. The result was a brief skirmish, during which the mediation meeting adjourned, but even yet people were slow to believe that open war on the Japanese was intended.

## **CHINESE ATTACK FOREIGN SETTLEMENT**

Then, on Saturday, August 14, without warning, Chinese bombers started out to drop bombs on the International Settlement with terrible loss of civilian life, and this Chinese, at crowded corners of the Nanking Road and the Avenue Edward VII. Of the several hundred lives thus sacrificed three were those of Americans, a tragedy, however, which has apparently been speedily forgotten. An editorial in the *North China Daily News* spoke of it as "A Tragical Debut" which would do more harm to the cause of Chinese nationalism

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than months of diplomacy could remedy. But diplomacy was now put out of countenance. The bombs seemed to have been deliberately dropped on the International Settlement to bring the whole world into the fray, since both the Japanese Consulate and the Flagship *Izumo*, which were supposedly the objectives were a long way from the spots actually bombed. Yet the whole incident seems to have passed out of the memory of a *press bent upon making Japan the aggressor from first to last*.

The following day an emergency conference of consular representatives of all the Powers met and invited Mayor Yui of Shanghai to consider two points, namely: (1) The matter of restricting bombers from flying over the International Settlement, (2) The offer of a mediation attempt by the consular body.

To these points Japan replied: (1) Japan's policy now and previously had been to keep airships from flying over the International Settlement. (2) Japan will be happy to consider any mediation suggestions.



China's reply was: (1) The air over the Settlement is Chinese. (2) Any mediation effort which may result is bound to be disadvantageous to the Chinese, and we do not favor the suggestion.

So the Chinese, confident in their newly acquired strength, renewed the attack on Japanese objectives and for one can hardly blame the Japanese that they now took the matter seriously and decided to do what the British had done as far back as 1854, and the Allied forces in 1925 and 1927, namely, to compel the retreat of the Chinese army beyond the lines into which they had of set purpose dug themselves in preparation for this very situation.

It must be remembered, too, that the Japanese were fighting against tremendous odds, both numerically and otherwise, and were obliged in self -defense to sacrifice millions and millions of *yen* in their factories and other buildings, which went up in smoke. Sheer folly, of course, if one is convinced that Japan was only carrying out a policy of deliberate aggression.

Now it is obvious that it would be impossible, within the limits of a paper, to give any connected account of all the separate incidents

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which have taken place since that tragic day in August. Thousands of people, Chinese fugitives as well as foreign merchants, realized that day for the first time that the security of the International Settlement and the French Concession was but an illusion. That in itself marks the incident as ending a period which had begun as long ago as 1843.

But instead of commenting on the startling character of this revelation, one which immediately placed in jeopardy the vast investments of Great Britain in Shanghai, to say nothing of the property of other Powers, it is necessary to deal briefly with two important aspects of the situation, one the question of the bombing of civilians, the other that of propaganda and the falsification of news.

## REGARDING AERIAL BOMBINGS

On this first question it must, to begin with, not be forgotten that the bombing of civilians was without doubt commenced by Chinese and has since been continued by them. The horrible details of the Nanking Road massacre are in themselves sufficient to prove this. That there has since been no let-up in the practice is shown by the deliberate bombing, on August 30, of the *S.S. President Hoover*, with further loss of American life. That this was deliberate, and not an accident, is shown on the testimony of the ship's officers and on that of eye-witnesses.

The bombing machine circled the vessel four times before releasing its deadly missiles and had it not been for the arrival of Japanese assistance the ship would very likely have been sunk. This is affirmed by Mr. P. V. Reeves, of the staff of the High Commissioner of the Philippine Islands, who was a passenger. He adds to the account of what he calls "the willful, wanton, merciless, inhuman, savage-like" attack on the ship the words: "China's claim that the bombing was an accident is contrary to all facts."

Moreover, as I have said, China has continued ever since the bombing of civilians. As recently as October 20, United States Ambassador Nelson Johnson "made written representations to the Chinese Government asking that Chinese planes quit flying over the Shanghai International Settlement and dropping bombs in foreign areas. The ambassador said previous Chinese assurances that planes would not fly over foreign areas had not been fulfilled."

In the next place one cannot but discern a certain element of

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hypocrisy in the protests of nations which are themselves largely responsible for the retention of bombing for warfare or for police purposes. At the *Hague Conference* of 1923 Japan herself pressed for the abolition of aerial warfare but her proposals failed of adoption through the opposition of France and Great Britain. Great Britain has within a few months employed bombing for the destruction of civilian life in Waziristan. Russia has assembled a huge fleet of airplanes at Vladivostok for the express purpose, should war break out, of wiping out the commercial cities of Japan without distinction of military or civilian.

Even an American soldier has spoken of his plan to wipe out the city of Tokyo by means of aircraft carried over to Japan in airplane carriers. Practically every important nation today is, on the one hand, feverishly increasing its air armament and, on the other, providing municipal bomb-proof shelters to afford civilians a modicum of protection.

Horrible as the thought is, I fear that war from the air, necessarily destructive of civilian as well as of military objectives, is part of the technique, which our so-called civilization has decided to accept. Under these circumstances it seems to me that Japan is justified in declaring:

"So long as it is an accepted arm and one employed by the adversary, Japan certainly cannot forego its use. And so long as railways, railway stations, barracks, arsenals and other structures in populous centers are universally ticketed as fit objects for attack - - as indeed they logically must be - - there must inevitably be grave risks incurred by all who live in the neighborhood."

In the third place, in the presence of the most extraordinary falsification of facts (to which I must presently allude) it is not fair to overlook the explicit Japanese statement as to the reasons for using aircraft and for their method of employing them. The official statement of the Japanese Foreign Office runs as follows: "Since Nanking is the central base of the Chinese military operations, with unparalleled land defenses, it is unavoidable for the purpose of attaining the military aims of the Japanese forces that the military airdromes and establishments located in and around

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Nanking should be bombed. The bombing operations of the Japanese forces are not carried on beyond the scope above mentioned. It seems necessary to say that they are not directed indiscriminately at non-combatants. The warning issued in advance to non-combatants serves as a testimony to the above statement."

And again: "Our request to the effect that officials and civilians who are nationals of your countries should take refuge is due to no other thought than our earnest desire to prevent any untoward misfortune befalling the nationals of third Powers, which it is their wish to respect to the greatest extent possible."

And furthermore: "Japanese aviators are under strict instructions to bomb objects of military significance only. There has been no case of ruthless bombing of civilian centers by Japanese flyers. Japanese flyers have been ordered to take every precaution for accuracy before releasing bombs and many times Japanese airplanes have returned to their bases with their bombing racks still fully loaded because suitable military targets could not be approached closely enough to make bombing accurate. Charges of civilians, hospitals and schools being bombed are not true."

It may be added, as a partial explanation of reports as to the destruction of civilian life and property, that China is at present using many thousands of so-called "plain-clothes soldiers" who easily appear, in the event of their being killed or wounded, as civilian casualties. If foreign property has been destroyed it is in most cases because that property, as in the case of the British warehouse at Pootung, from whence the torpedo was fired at

the flagship Izumo, was being used by the Chinese military.

## EYE -WITNESS REPORTS PROVE UNRELIABLE

To come to the question of propaganda and the falsification of news, it might have been supposed that after our experience in the Great War, when avowed eye -witnesses reported every imaginable fable, from the nailing of children's hands to doorways in Belgium to the passage of thousands of Russian troops through Great Britain, the public would have been just a little wary as to the news furnished by eye -witnesses. But, with the assistance of a conniving press, it would seem that men are as gullible as ever. I quote the following from a recently received copy of the *North China Daily News*:

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"Shanghai, August 17, 5:40 p. m. - - Julio Blaminck, a Belgian, who arrived at Cathay Mansions today, stated that he was the last guest to leave Broadway Mansions, where, he said, Japanese sailors, with fixed bayonets, entered his room at 11 a.m. today and ordered him to evacuate. They then took over the building."

In the same paper is a letter from the manager of -Broadway Mansions, as follows: "It is desired . . . to acquaint Mr. Blaminck that the Japanese sailors have never taken over the building, they did not order him to evacuate his room, and finally that under no stretch of his imagination can he claim the self -assumed distinction of being the last guest to leave."

Two or three more of these falsifications may be given and then I must conclude.

ONE: A British newspaper in Hongkong brands as absurd the report that hundreds of civilians had been killed in air -raids in Canton. It says that the civilian casualties were limited to two or three civilians wounded.

TWO: Accounts sent from Hong Kong reported hundreds (one local paper has even said thousands) of fishermen ruthlessly torpedoed off the southern coast. Responsibility for this report was assigned to the captain of the German freighter *Scharnhorst*, who repudiates the story in the following words: "We can't believe that the Chinese we picked up at sea had been attacked by any submarine. I was greatly surprised about the whole thing when I read the account in the newspapers here (Manila). I talked with no newspaper men about the affair. We tried to discover how they had come to be shipwrecked, but failed to get any information, as our Chinese crew and the fishermen could not understand each other because of dialect differences. Upon our arrival at Hongkong we handed the survivors over to the police, and that is all there was to it."

THREE: I will repeat the quotation from the *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury*, which no one will accuse of being pro -Japanese:

*"We have leaned backwards," says this editorial, "and the same is true of others, in striving to get and present the news from the Chinese side. But, in the first place, the Chinese afforded us little contact with authoritative sources; in the second place they issued very little news on their own account;*

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and in the third place they insulted the intelligence of any sane person with the atrocious fabrications they put in. Time after time of late the Chinese have indulged in the most bombastic claims of glorious advances into Hongkew. The Japanese gave the foreign press a chance to come in for discussion, denied these claims, and issued passes so that the correspondents could go and look for themselves. Seeing is believing. Detail after detail could be checked off the Chinese reports, and so far as local investigation within the Japanese lines could determine, most of all these Chinese reports were wrong. A great many foreigners and Chinese think that the Japanese merely hand out a pack of lies. They were never more mistaken. Correspondents at first tended to believe, but when their own eyes showed that they had been getting first-hand truth from the Japanese and second-hand fiction from the Chinese, well, figure it out for yourself."

In this connection it will be recalled that Mr. Hallett Abend, the correspondent for the *New York Times*, has quite recently himself protested to the Chinese against the doctoring of the text of his dispatches, in such matters as the substitution here and there of the word "Japanese" for "Chinese" or the insertion of a convenient "not."

Well, it is all horrible enough, view it from whatever angle we will. One is tempted sometimes to ask whether the world has made any progress since the day when growling cave-men hurled at one another their hymns of hate. These did at least launch their curses from the front lines of the battle, whereas our modern disseminators of poison-gas, physical or spiritual, may lurk in the rear in comparative safety from attack. What is to be the end of it all, in Europe, in Asia, in America - - a whole world involved without escape except through the exercise of an intelligence not at present apparent?

## SHOULD CHINA WIN --

If, in the present instance, China be so strongly supported by the stupidities of popular feeling and international diplomacy as to draw other nations into the conflict, including ourselves – who

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have been most voluble in the expression of our intention to remain neutral - - China may win through the exhaustion of Japanese resources in men and money.

It would, however, from our point of view, be a Pyrrhic victory, the triumph of a Red Russia creating in turn a Red China, and removing the one barrier which at present exists in the Far East against world revolution. It would undo all that has been done in these last years in Manchoukuo and North China towards substituting law and order for the chaos of banditry. It would mark the end of European and American influence in the International Settlement of Shanghai. The Chinese, having made their breach in the foreign control of the great seaport, would not be slow to force British and French and Americans to follow the Japanese and make exclusion permanent.

## SHOULD JAPAN WIN --

On the other hand, should Japan, by a supreme effort of national self-sacrifice prove the possibility of weathering the storm and defeating the present Communist conspiracy which has forced the hand of Chiang Kai-shek, then the situation is by no means hopeless. Japan has absolutely denied any ambition to extend her territorial responsibility or to interfere with the foreign rights in Shanghai of which, by treaty, she possesses a share.

What she needs, and that to maintain her own existence, is obviously not additional territory but freedom to carry on her industrial program with access to raw materials and unmenaced by the disorder, boycotts and anti-Japanese movements which have been due not to the general antipathy of the Chinese people but to a propaganda fomented largely from without and which has now become for certain classes a form of hysteria.

In this case it may be predicted that Shanghai will speedily recover her place as the great emporium of Eastern Asia, with as much benefit to China herself as to the foreign firms which have there invested their money. As for the rest of China, North China will probably find its salvation in a separate autonomous state, while southern and western China will go their own ways. *It will be the first time in the history of China that the land has benefited by decentralisation rather than by an enforced and unnatural unification.*



## IN CONCLUSION

Which end will be reached I cannot, of course, venture to predict. The future is veiled in the thickest of mists. Some have even tended to adopt a kind of philosophic determinism, in affairs of nations as in affairs concerning the individual. As poor Othello was caught in the toils and dragged down to the ultimate tragedy by steps too indiscernible to afford warning or protection, so it may be with the history of nations. Dr. Latourette of Yale seems to have this in mind when he writes of the present course of events as they concern Japan as follows:

"Can a case be made for Japan? Is it possible to give a reasonable defense for Japan's political and military imperialism on the continent of Asia? If one means by that a justification based upon some widely accepted standard of morals, a dogmatic Yes or No would be hard to defend. That way lie endless debate, reciprocal recrimination and much confusion of issues. If, however, the case for Japan be approached historically, the answer must be an unqualified Yes. When one comes to ask, in terms of the colloquial, How did Japan get that way? one is startled to discover that about Japan's actions there has been much of inevitability. The still unfinished story of the modern foreign policy of Japan has a most sobering resemblance to some ancient Greek tragedy. Given the circumstances in which it is set, and certain initial deeds, the main outline of events seems almost predetermined. Only the most resolute action, which no Japanese government could take and hope to survive can change the direction of a course which must lead either to much greater aggrandisement or to ruin. Present -day Japan and

contemporary Japanese statesmanship are caught in a current of events for which they are only slightly responsible and whose direction they may modify but cannot basically alter."<sup>3</sup>

However little I accept this statement in its entirety, and least of all any extreme doctrine of "manifest destiny," for Japan or for the United States, one must feel the force of the words quoted. But if we add to an expression of this the conviction that the doctrine of

moral responsibility is not thereby nullified *we will have to go further and acknowledge that the moral responsibility for the present situation is by no means so completely Japan's as to warrant the representatives of the Powers to sit complacently in the League Council and point a finger of a shocked and outraged righteousness*

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*to Japan as the aggressor.* Only God in the final summing up when the nations are assembled around the throne of perfect justice may rightly assess the blame and divide it equitably among those concerned.

Without attempting to forestall such a verdict it would appear even in the light we have today that China must bear her fair share of the responsibility. China, *the spoiled darling of sentimental America*, without real faith in westernism, without real sympathy for the western Powers to whom she appeals for aid, always ready to use force (and to boast of it) when she feels herself physically strong, and always ready to pose as a pacific people trodden down, abused and helpless, when she meets defeat, cannot forever evade an adverse verdict on the history of the past twenty -five years.

Russia, too, must appear at the bar for judgment, still nursing, even with Sovietism in the saddle, her dream of an Oriental imperialism, with ice -free ports on the Pacific, still intriguing for the break -up of the so -called capitalistic states, and in these last years bent upon provoking a Sino -Japanese clash as a curtain -raiser for the drama to come, still posing as the friend of democracy before a France and a Britain whom she would in the hour of crisis betray without compunction.

Other Powers, again, must answer to the indictment of having allowed their own economic interests to weigh so heavily against the principle of abstract justice that these interests need not be concealed even in the Council Chamber of the League -- League become almost confessedly an organization for the protection of the *status quo* and vested rights gained, sometimes by devious ways, in a past not so very remote.

And, lastly, we, the United States of America, have our own clear measure of responsibility. We brought Japan out into the arena of international life because it was not good for nations to live isolated and alone. We furnished the pattern by which Japan was to emerge from feudalism and in due course take her seat at the high table of international politics. We denied to the nation we had fostered the right of racial, political or economic equality. We showed little or no sympathy with her problems of over -population and industrial expansion. We shaped our laws to discriminate against her people and our tariffs to discriminate against her manufactures.

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We built up our armaments largely on the theory that here was the enemy against the menace of whose rivalry we must some day fight.

Short of some great act of repentance among all the peoples, we at least should see to it that we view her case dispassionately and without prejudice. Out of the passion and prejudice of the present, whether disguised as the belligerency of military and economic chauvinism or the belligerency of pacificism, can only come disaster and ruin for the civilization we have inherited.

Then when at last the exultant victor and the humiliated victim shall find themselves cheek by jowl in the ruin they have made their grave, if feel they can, they must surely feel what fools they have been, how little they have learned the history of the race. Like the young

English poet [4](#) who, at the age of twenty, gave his life in the Great War, they will exclaim to one another, foe to foe,

"You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed, And no man claimed the conquest of your land. But gropers both, through fields of thought confined, We stumble and we do not understand. You only saw your future bigly planned, And we the tapering paths of our own mind, And in each other's dearest ways we stand, And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind. When it is peace, then we may view again With new -won eyes each other's truer form, And wonder. Grown more loving -kind and warm We'll grasp firm hands and laugh away the pain, When it is peace. But until peace, the storm, The darkness, and the thunder, and the rain."

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The Case for Japan by Herbert H. Gowen, D.D., F.R.G.S., F.R.A.S., etc., was first read before the Monday Club of Seattle on Monday, October 25, 1937. Dr. Gowen is professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle, and Honorary Fellow of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, England, as well as author of a number of books dealing with the Far East, among them An Outline History of Japan, The History of Indian Literature A History of Religion, etc.

This paper, written at a time when reason suffers and popular indignation and prejudice nurtured by propaganda would condemn Japan without a hearing, is compiled from material gathered from diverse sources, and culled in the light of more than fifty years of study of the Far East.



# NOTES

1. p. 4: See statement of American Missionaries issued after the "Nanking Affair" of 1927.
2. p. 8: So apparent in the early days of 1937 was China's intention to wage war on Japan that on May 22 an editorial in the *North China Daily News* commences as follows: "At a time when Japanese statesmen have clearly shown their desire to view Chinese affairs by a 'new concept,' it is unfortunate that certain asperities in argument have lately manifested themselves in Chinese comment on Sino Japanese relations." Again, in the June number of *Asia* Mr. Nathaniel Peffer heads an article: "*China must not fight now.*" And again, in *Current History* for November, 1937, Mr. K. K. Kawakami writes: "Last January, immediately after Chiang Kai-shek's release, the third plenary session of the Nationalist Party at Nanking was reported to have resolved that the ideology and technique of the party be so revised as to expedite harmonious relations with the communists."
3. p. 19: See the article by Dr. Latourette, originally in *Amerasia*, as quoted in the *Japanese American Courier*.
4. p. 21: Charles Hamilton Sorley, in *Marlborough and Other Poems*.