# THE JAPANESE ARMY IN MANCHURIA: COVERT OPERATIONS AND THE ROOTS OF KWANTUNG ARMY INSUBORDINATION

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# THE JAPANESE ARMY IN MANCHURIA: COVERT OPERATIONS AND THE ROOTS OF KWANTUNG ARMY INSUBORDINATION

by

James Edwin Weland

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I hereby recommend that this dissertation prepared under my direction by James Edwin Weland entitled The Japanese Army in Manchuria: Covert Operations and the Roots of Kwantung Army Insubordination be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read this dissertation and agree that it may be presented for final defense.

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent on the candidate's adequate performance and defense thereof at the final oral examination.

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SIGNED James E. Wold

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## ABSTRACT

It is a well-established fact that a cabal of mid-level army officers plotted and executed the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and engineered the creation of Manchukuo. Why did some of the most promising of Japan's professional officers knowingly enter a conspiracy to disobey their military superiors, subvert the foreign policy of their country, and take this unauthorized direct action? This thesis argues that the immediate cause of their insubordination and the reasons for its success lay largely within the army itself. The army provided the motivation, the means, and the opportunity for these officers to act.

To a considerable extent the Manchurian Incident resulted from the army's attempts to solve its major military problem. Lacking significant heavy equipment, the army developed a tactical doctrine emphasizing rapid mobility, surprise and shock power on the attack. It depended for its success on highly-disciplined, well-trained men, and was designed to fight a short, sharp war, not a long war of attrition.

From 1907 until the China Incident of 1937, every Japanese national defense plan named Russia as the army's most likely adversary. The operations plans called for the decisive battles to be fought in northern Manchuria. The success of the plans depended upon unhampered movement of the army through Manchuria and accurate information about the area. The Kwantung Army was responsible for keeping the lines of communication secure, while the Second Department of the General Staff--Intelligence--was charged with providing the information. The Second

Department developed its own corps of "China Experts" versed in clandestine operations. The early structure of the Kwantung Governor Generalship involved the Kwantung Garrison in the execution of Japan's policy toward Manchuria.

When political power in China became fragmented, the Second Department and Kwantung Army were the army's principal agencies for avoiding civil conflict in Manchuria that could interfere with Japanese war plans. Between 1912 and 1930 the Second Department engaged in a series of attempts to either separate Manchuria from China or to support a stable Manchurian warlord regime friendly to Japan. The Kwantung Army on occasion used its military power to prevent the civil war from disrupting Manchurian stability. While these clandestine activities were sanctioned by army headquarters and were carried out in pursuit of accepted army goals, the actual control of operations lay with Second Department and Kwantung Army officers. Both organizations developed traditions of and capabilities for independent political action in Manchuria.

These traditions became significant in the later nineteen twenties when the increasing intensity of the Chinese civil war threatened to restrict the Japanese army's use of Manchuria. Faced with a major political threat to the army's position in Manchuria, the General Staff accepted into its planning the approaches used by its sub-units specializing in Manchurian political affairs. In 1930 Second Department officers introduced the question of Manchuria into the army's formal planning process, while Kwantung Army officers prepared for possible military action in Manchuria. By 1931 the army had accepted as its official policy the unilateral settlement of the Manchurian problem.

Questions of the preferred operational option divided the officers. Kwantung Army officers urged the overthrowing of the Manchurian authorities, Second Department officers argued for the installation of a compliant warlord, while other officers preferred to pressure the Manchurian government into granting concessions. The Kwantung Army officers who precipitated the Manchurian Incident activated the army's plan at the time and with the option of their own choice, but acted within the bounds of accepted army policy, in pursuit of army goals.

CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

By almost any measure, the Manchurian Incident of 1931 was a major turning point in modern Japanese history. In foreign affairs it marked the end of the long-standing policy of cooperation with the Anglo-American powers and the beginning of a policy of regionalism and autonomy in security affairs. Domestically it signalled the beginning of the end of party government and the start of a long slide into militarism. Viewed in retrospect, the Manchurian Incident marked the beginning of army dominance of Japanese politics and the first step on the road to the Pacific War.

The consequences of the Manchurian Incident have outweighed the event itself, and there has been a tendency to interpret the act in the light of all that followed. Yet as the first major case of insubordination by the Japanese army officers, it stands as an important historical event in itself. Why did some of the most promising of Japan's professional, disciplined, military officers knowingly enter a conspiracy to disobey their military superiors, subvert the declared foreign policy of their country, and take unauthorized, direct action in creating the Manchurian Incident? Professional military officers as a rule deservedly enjoy no reputation for political astuteness, but in Manchuria in 1931 a small group of Japanese officers clandestinely and effectively created a viable new state, Manchukuo. How did they gain the political competence to accomplish this formidable task? This thesis is an attempt to find partial answers to these two questions.

The specific sequence of events leading to the Manchurian Incident are well documented today.[1] However, the causes of the Incident--the motives of the officers who precipitated it and the factors that allowed them to succeed--remain open to interpretation. The old, easy assumption that, as military officers, the perpetrators of the Incident naturally favored expansion and aggression seems rather too simple-minded today. Several of the officers were closely linked with reformist, renovationist, and radical-nationalist societies, and some authors have found the roots of the Incident in the influence exerted by these societies.[2] But the careful, detailed planning that characterized the Manchurian Incident contrasted sharply with the impetuosity of later radical-nationalist activities, and showed a level of professional competence and pragmatism not easily reconciled with emotional, non-rational fanaticism.

Nor, as James Crowley has shown, can the label "radical nationalist" any longer be automatically applied to all who favored an

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1. Sadako N. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), provides perhaps the most thoughtful account of the Incident, while Takehiko Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963) provides the most detailed. Mark R. Peattie, "Ishiwara Kanji (1889-1949) and the Japanese Army" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1972) discusses the Incident as it was viewed by Kwantung Army staff officers.

2. Richard Storry, The Double Patriots (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1957).

independent Japanese policy in Asia.[3] Civilian theorists such as Ōkawa Shūmei and Kita Ikki have been cited as the source of radical ideas and subsequent drastic action by the officers. But there are probably few professional groups in any country more consciously anti-intellectual than the military officer corps. During the Tokyo Trials, although most officers involved in the Manchurian Incident offered detailed explanations for their actions, none claimed to have been inspired or influenced by the ideas of civilian intellectuals. Such outside influences on the officers could explain the success of the Manchurian Incident only if a widespread conspiracy is also posited. This was the position taken by the Prosecution Section during the Tokyo Trials, but it has not provided a credible explanation. Even the Chief Prosecutor admitted in his summation that "one of the difficulties in relation to the analysis of this conspiracy is that it was of such breadth of scope that it was difficult to conceive of it being undertaken by a group of human beings."[4] Perhaps the causes for the actions of the officers and for their success should be sought not in outside influences on them as individuals but in their roles as army officers, and in the nature of the army in which the served.

Judging from their testimony in the Tokyo Trials and from their subsequent writings, the officers responsible for the Manchurian

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3. James B. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

4. Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal, Far East, (hereafter IMTFE), Summation of the Prosecution, p. 19.

Incident did not see themselves as radical or undisciplined men. Rather, the picture they presented was one of dedicated professional officers trying desperately to protect Japanese security under difficult conditions, of military officers performing their sworn duty in an exemplary manner. The portrait is self-serving, of course, but it is not necessarily untrue. They were army officers working within the institutional structure of the army. The problems they grappled with were those of the army, not merely their personal idiosyncracies. The goals they pursued were those sanctioned by the army. But if these men were indeed professional, dedicated officers conscientiously performing their military duty, how could conscientious performance of duty result in insubordinate action? A close examination of the internal functioning of the Imperial Japanese Army may reconcile the apparent contradictions and uncover some roots of the Kwantung Army's insubordination.

## Organizational Structure and Policy-Making: A Conceptual Framework

Strictly speaking, men make decisions and initiate actions; organizations do not. But men working in large organizations are not always free to act independently. They are limited by the organization's goals, its needs and its capabilities. As organizational theorists have shown, the internal structural characteristics of an organization can have a major influence over types of decisions made by its officials.[5] When the organization is a military force, its internal operating characteristics can significantly limit the options open to the national leadership itself, and so have an important impact on foreign and defense policies.[6]

Organizations are created to accomplish particular purposes and goals. These goals and purposes comprise the mission of the organization, its essential reasons for existence. The nature of the mission determines the organization's internal structure. An army is organized as a group of combat units of increasingly larger size bound together by strong command lines. A foreign ministry is composed of numerous small stations in world capitals bound to the home government by carefully maintained communications channels. The different structures of the two organizations reflect their different missions. Whatever the mission, however, the structure of a large organization can impose certain clear-cut limitations on the options available to the leadership. These are inherent in the very nature of large-scale organization, and can exert an influence on policy formulation against the will of the

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5. Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), is the classic discussion of this. Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972) provides an excellent survey of organizational theory. Morton H. Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1974), discusses the process in American policy-making.

6. Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1971), provides profound insights into the influence organizational structures can have on policy. Much of the discussion to follow is based on Allison's Organizational Process Model.

leadership or even without their being aware of it. Three such influential characteristics are routines and programs, the internal information system, and the adaptation mechanism.

Routines and Programs

An army's actual operational capability is created by specialization and routine. Complex operations are broken down to a series of simple steps or functions, and specialized units and sub-units are created to perform those specific parts of the operation. To ensure that each unit performs in a predictable (and so dependable) manner, standard operating procedures are developed and enforced. An infantry squad, for example, is trained to perform well-defined elementary formations--movement in column, in file, skirmishers right or left, etc. An artillery battern specializes in setting up, aiming and firing one particular type of artillery piece. By combining the standard operating procedures of various such specialized units, an organization can produce a unified, complex program of action. By repeatedly practicing the programs until they become routine, the organization can create a smooth effective performance of its entire operation. But it can only perform those programs and routines it has already established and practiced. This limits the options open to the leadership. However complex and unexpected the reality they are facing, they can only respond with programs and operations already in existence. Conversely, the existence of a plan or program makes action possible where it might not otherwise have been.

## Information Systems

The communications system of an organization provides another structural limitation on the decisions that can be made. The internal information system of a large organization is normally designed to carry only information that is directly relevant to the operation of the organization. Other information tends to be filtered out. The types of routines being practiced by the subordinate units and the nature of the programs established by headquarters together determine what information is relevant and what is not. Information reaching the organization's decision-makers is thus highly selective, reflective of the operations of the organization and relevant more to its internal needs than to its external environment. An army's communication system can inform the top decision-makers of the status of programs and plans that have been established and practiced and of the state of training and preparation of the subordinate units whose routines comprise the programs. It will probably not communicate information concerning the possible diplomatic repercussions of military operations, since these are not directly relevant to the routines and programs within the army.

## Adaptation Processes

A third structural feature with policy implications is the manner in which organizations adapt to changes in their environment or to dysfunctions in their operations. These are usually detected first by the specialized subordinate units that are primarily concerned with the area in which the change occurs. Within limits, the men in the subordinate units are also the ones who first attempt to resolve the problem.

These attempts normally consist of incremental changes, a reshuffling of existing routines into new combinations. It seldom consists of a thorough-going radical change in procedures. Normally, too, the first satisfactory solution to be found is the one adopted. This may not be the long-term optimum solution, but if it solves the immediate problem it "satisfices," in Simon's term, and further searching will cease.[7] Once accepted, a successful solution becomes part of the normal routines of the organization and may itself be reshuffled as part of a "satisficing" attempt as the next higher echelon in the organization attempts to resolve problems occurring within its jurisdiction. In this way changes can occur within an organization, beginning as adaptation at a relatively low level, but ending as part of the accepted routines, and incorporated into the programs. The changes can occur gradually, by an apparently natural process, and without any awareness of significant change on the part of the organizational leadership.

## Organizational Process in the Japanese Army as a Prelude to the Manchurian Incident

As mid-level professional officers, the men responsible for the Manchurian Incident had spent their entire adult lives within the army, working in pursuit of army goals with the use of military means. They understood military routines and had participated in the planning and programming process. The army itself, as an institution, had as one of its major goals the maintenance of access to Manchuria. Between the

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7. Perrow, Complex Organizations, pp. 148-149.

Russo-Japanese War and the outbreak of the China Incident in 1937, the army was organized, equipped and structured primarily to fight Russia on the plains of Manchuria. Access to Manchuria, and the ability to maneuver freely across it, was absolutely essential to the army if it was to be able to fight the kind of war for which it was prepared. Manchuria was thus extremely important to the army's leadership, and events in Manchuria were legitimate causes of concern insofar as they affected the army's ability to perform its expected function. But Manchuria stood balanced between China, Russia and Japan, its status ambiguous and its future uncertain. Military access to Manchuria depended on political considerations at least as much as on military capabilities.

It was in its attempts to deal with these military-political problems that the Japanese army developed its capability for independent action. As organizational theorists point out, organizations develop institutional structures needed to fulfill essential functions. In the case of the Japanese army's relationship with Manchurian events, two agencies developed, the General Staff's Intelligence Service and the Kwantung Army. These became the army's specialized units for clandestinely dealing with political matters in Manchuria. This was essentially an unplanned development, a "satisficing" response to the organization's military needs, but it in turn had a profound impact on the army itself, and made the insubordination of 1931 possible. The Intelligence Service and the Kwantung Army responded to the politics of Manchuria by becoming themselves politicized, oriented not toward the politics of Japan but to those of Manchuria. As integral parts of the army they, in turn, politicized important parts of the parent organization. Men committed to an organization respond to organizational needs in terms of organizational options and capabilities. Thus officers well versed in clandestine political operations in Manchuria, acting in response to perceived army needs, were instrumental in creating the Manchurian Incident and in the making of Manchukuo.

## CHAPTER II

## THE ARMY: GROWTH OF AN INSTITUTION

By the mid-nineteen twenties the Japanese Army had existed as an institution for over fifty years. Its officers could look with considerable pride at the accomplishments of that half-century. Beginning as a rag-tag collection of warriors it had grown to respectable size, had learned to use modern military techniques and organization, and had proven itself on the battlefields of two victorious wars. It was, by any standard, a successful record.

But the Army paid for its successes. Its solutions to its major problems set a pattern that helped determine how future problems would be defined and resolved. The present state of any large organization is the product of its past decisions. By the nineteen twenties the Japanese Army had developed a set of institutional interests, procedures and values that differentiated it both from traditional institutions and from the other modern organizations in Japanese society. These institutional characteristics grew largely from its response to three major factors that shape all military establishments. These, in turn, helped mold the perceptions and outlooks of its officer corps.

The nature of the military mission was one of those shaping forces. An army intended to quell domestic disorders differs significantly from one aimed at national defense or territorial conquest. The question of legitimacy and social acceptance was another major problem.

When first formed, the Japanese Army was a national military force in a feudal society. Far from being able to rely on nationalism for its ideological support, it had to play a major role in creating that nationalism. The nature of its tactical problem also contributed to the Army's institutional shape. Its officers constantly faced the problem of having to fight a modern war with a not-quite modern army. Finally, the nature of the officer education system insured that the solutions to the other problems would indeed shape the Army. Trained specifically to manage and lead the Army, the officers not only solved their immediate problems but passed their perceptions and solutions on to their younger colleagues through the Military Academy and the service schools.

## The Mission of the Army

In 1868 there was no national army in Japan. The Tokugawa shogunate had been brought to an end by a coalition of *han* armies, still feudal and regional in their organization and loyalties. The Imperial Court had at its direct command a mixed force of only about 400 *ronin* and some samurai on loan from the victorious coalition. They were useful only as palace guards.[1]

The leaders of the new government faced two major military problems, one domestic and the other external. The feudal order could be ended and a strong central government established only if a centrally

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1. Roger F. Hackett, "The Military: Japan," in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. by Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 333.

controlled military force was available to put down uprising or resistance. Externally, the lack of an effective modern force had itself laid Japan open to Perry's coercion and Western pressure. Both domestic unity and external defense depended on the rapid development of a modern effective national military force. The army was created to perform both missions.

The first step was taken in April, 1871, with the formation of the Imperial Guards Division. About 10,000 men, trained in Western weapons, were contributed by Chōshū, Tōsa and Satsuma to the Imperial government. Stationed near Tokyo and commanded by Saigo Takamori, the Guards Division was the first significant force directly under the control of the central government.[2] Within six months three additional battalions were trained and deployed to Osaka, Kumamoto and Sendai. Garrisons at Nagoya and Hiroshima were added soon after. Each of these later became the nucleus of a new army division.[3]

The Conscription Law of 1872 was a key development in the creation of a national army. This law had the dual purpose of destroying the power of the samurai class, and so helping end feudal class distinctions, and of increasing the manpower pool available for military service. While it succeeded in accomplishing both objectives, the conscription law had more far-reaching implications for the army. Conscription

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2. Ernst L. Presseisen, Before Aggression: Europeans Prepare the Japanese Army (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), p. 27.

3. Gotaro Ogawa, Conscription System in Japan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 4-5.

itself implies a fairly small professional army that is devoted primarily to training draftees, a cadre force that must depend on mobilization to reach full fighting strength. By the very nature of its full-time training mission a cadre force tends to be rather narrowly professional, concentrating on technical military matters and trying to make its conscripts reasonably proficient in them. At the same time, however, it is of the utmost importance to a cadre force that its relations with its manpower base be as positive as possible; the population is the source of its recruits and the repository of its trained reserves. It does little good to train apathetic reserves, and it is dangerous to teach hostile ones how to fight. The decision to conscript was thus an important shaping force that influenced the army's later development.

Whatever its future shaping role, conscription did allow the army to fulfill its domestic role. The conscript army proved its value by winning a hard-fought but decisive victory in the Satsuma Uprising of 1877. This success insured that the army would continue to develop as a cadre/conscript force. With its ability to insure domestic order no longer in doubt, the army was thereafter free to concentrate on the far more difficult function of external defense.

The basic prerequisite for external defense was modernization. While the army was modern by Japanese standards it was hopelessly outclassed by European forces, and the Japanese leaders were acutely aware of their military inferiority. This was a problem they never did satisfactorily solve. It had two parts, weapons and techniques.

In the early days the army could and did buy European weapons. But these were expensive, and so long as it relied on imported weapons the army was vulnerable to both blockade and embargo. But modern weapons production demands a modern industrial base, and before World War II Japanese industry never quite caught up with Western Europe. Moreover, in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, weapons development was one of the most rapidly changing parts of Western technology. The Japanese stayed slightly behind throughout the race.

The other half of the problem, military techniques, was easier to deal with. European military advisors were hired to teach European techniques, tactics, and military organization. The French officers who served as advisors from 1872 until 1880 introduced the army to company, battalion, and brigade operations.[4] After 1885 German advisors taught the fundamentals of staff organization, large-unit tactics and field army deployment.[5] By the time of the Russo-Japanese War the officer corps had thoroughly absorbed European military thought and techniques, and demonstrated this in the conduct of the war.

The Russo-Japanese War proved that the army was able to meet and defeat a European power on the battlefield. But in order to maintain that capability the army had to stay comparable with the forces of the advanced industrial nations. This became increasingly difficult as weapons technology advanced and as war became increasingly mechanized. By

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4. Presseisen, <u>Before Aggression</u>, pp. 25-68.

5. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 69-88.

World War I the nature of war itself had changed from a quick clash of armed forces to an industrial-military confrontation that involved entire societies. This was a type of war that the Japanese army was not equipped to fight and that Japanese society was not prepared to face. For the army planners this was a deeply troubling problem, for it called into question the army's ability to perform its most basic mission, national defense. It was a problem that vexed and divided the officer corps throughout the nineteen twenties.

## Legitimacy and Social Acceptance

The second major problem that shaped the army, that of gaining legitimacy and social acceptance, was solved by the device of "spiritual training," seishin kyōiku. "Spiritual training" was the most distinctive characteristic of the army, and probably the most important.

In part it was a throwback to the samurai tradition of Tokugawa days. Whatever the rough-and-tumble reality of earlier times, during the long Tokugawa peace the samurai had gradually been redefined as exemplars of a set of ideals, and not merely as warriors. In the writings of Yamaga Sokō especially, bushidō, the "way of the warrior," became a code that had value in its own right. The samurai's lifestyle and martial skills were seen as the outward manifestations of inward virtues such as loyalty, courage, endurance, obedience, and frugality.[6] By late Tokugawa times the training in martial arts given to samurai boys

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6. Yamaga Sokō, "The Way of the Samurai," in Sources of the Japanese Tradition, Vol. I, ed. by Ryusaku Tsunoda, William Theodore De Bary, and Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 390.

was esteemed more for its "spiritual" than military value.[7] The organizers and leaders of the army were themselves samurai. Not surprisingly, they equated personal virtues with martial ability, and the army's training programs combined both.

But "spiritual training" involved more than nostalgia for a vanished way of life. The virtues of the ideal samurai were, with minor adaptations, the virtues of ideal soldiers everywhere. Courage, loyalty, steadiness under fire, obedience--these are functional virtues; men possessing them make good soldiers. Given equality of equipment and techniques, an army emphasizing those virtues will defeat a larger force lacking them.[8] "Spiritual training" was not merely a traditional carryover; it was a rational response to the specific problem of producing an effective modern army as rapidly as possible.[9]

There was a wider practicality to "spiritual training" too. It provided the all-important means to link the army with the sovereign

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7. Firearms were introduced into Japan by the Portugese in the 1540's, and Hideyoshi used them to good effect in his campaigns. Yet during the Tokugawa peace firearms were contemptuously ignored as "unworthy" of samurai, who much preferred the sword. Swordplay gave ample opportunity to display personal courage and similar virtues; firearms were simply effective military weapons.

8. Sir John Winthrop Hackett, The Profession of Arms (United States Air Force Academy, 1970), pp. 45-46.

9. Note the emphasis given to personal virtues by the U.S. Air Force, probably the most self-consciously "modern" force in existence. The Air Officers Guide lists the necessary virtues of the Air Force officer as: Patriotism, honor, courage, loyalty, discipline, readiness, frugality. The samurai would doubtless have approved. Air Officers Guide, 22nd ed. (Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1971), pp. 278-282.

state power on the one hand and with the populace on the other. From its beginning the army served as an important unifying force within Japan by helping create a modern sense of nationalism. The Emperor served as an ideal focal point for loyalty to a populace not yet familiar with the concepts of nationhood and citizenship. Beginning in 1872 the soldiers' handbook, issued to each recruit, listed as the first rule to be obeyed:

> The army is established for the purpose of executing the will of the Emperor, to strengthen the foundations of the country and protect the people and the nation. Thus, those who become soldiers must make loyalty to the Emperor their guiding principle.[10]

Loyalty to the Emperor remained the cardinal rule in "spiritual training." For the army, the link with the Emperor was of supreme importance, for it was the source of the army's legal and moral legitimacy. It was, by law, the Emperor's army. Article XI of the Meiji Constitution stated unequivocally "The Emperor has the supreme command of the Army and Navy."[11] This was given practical effect even before the Constitution was promulgated. In 1878 the Chief of the newly created General Staff was granted the right of direct access to the Emperor, forming a chain of command technically linking the Emperor with the army's internal command line.

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10. Cited by Hackett, "The Military: Japan," p. 338.

11. Cited in Paul M.S. Linebarger, Djang Chu, and Ardath W. Burks, Far Eastern Governments and Politics, (Princeton: Van Nostrand Co., 1954), p. 586.

The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors, issued by the Emperor Meiji in 1882, was perhaps the most important moral link between army and Emperor. It stated in part:

> The Supreme Command of Our forces is in Our hands, and although We may entrust subordinate commands to Our subjects, yet the ultimate authority We Ourself shall hold and never delegate to any subject. . . . Soldiers and Sailors, We are your Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Our relations with you will be most intimate when We rely upon you as Our limbs and you look up to Us as your head. Whether We are able to guard the Empire, and so prove Ourself worthy of Heaven's blessings and repay the benevolence of Our Ancestors depends upon the faithful discharge of your duties as soldiers and sailors.[12]

This was followed by exhortations to pursue the personal virtues of loyalty (first, as the essential duty), propriety, valor, faithfulness and righteousness, and simplicity of living. The inculcation of these virtues lay at the heart of "spiritual training." The army's concern with the personal moral characteristics of the individual soldiers was sanctioned by the Imperial Rescript. For the Japanese soldier, acceptance of the proper private virtues thus became a public duty.

This emphasis on moral training played an important role in winning popular acceptance for the army and military services. Since the days of Hideyoshi, commoners had not been allowed to bear arms in military service. In 1872, at the time of the first conscription law, the bulk of the population seem to have felt that military service was still the exclusive right of the samurai, something they neither expected nor wanted to perform. The wording of the conscription law added to this

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12. Cited in Hillis Lory, Japan's Military Masters (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1943), p. 184. The entire Rescript is reproduced as an appendix, pp. 183-188.

reluctance to serve by referring to conscription as a "blood tax"; some peasants allegedly expected literally to have their blood taken if drafted.[13] The army could not establish a stable recruitment base if fear and hostility separated it from the populace. It was in this context that "spiritual training" provided a link between the army and the people.

The personal virtues extolled in the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors were also those highly valued in the villages of traditional Japan. They provided a common ground upon which both army officers and village parents could comfortably stand, and gave the army an opportunity to prove to the villagers that it was really "their" army their sons were entering.

The identification between the villages and the army was assiduously pursued by the army. Except for the Imperial Guards Division, each division recruited its men from the surrounding area; local conscripts served mostly near home with other local conscripts.[14] By the nineteen twenties virtually every village in Japan had several generations of service in the same division, with veterans ranging from grandfathers to newly released twenty-two years olds. The young draftee was thus not entering a wholly strange world so much as continuing an

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13. E. Herbert Norman, Soldier and Peasant in Japan (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1965), p. 49.

14. Ogawa, Conscription System, p. 42. The Imperial Guards were an elite unit, with outstanding men drawn from all the other divisions. Selection into the Guards was recognized as a high honor.

established tradition. The barracks were, in some degree, an extension of the village.

The role moral training played in winning popular acceptance for the army is illustrated by the standard letter sent by the regimental commander to the family of each draftee just before induction:

> Greetings to the Father and Elder Brother,
>
> We have learned that your son and brother will shortly experience the greatest joy and satisfaction possible to one of our nation by joining soon our __________ company. We congratulate you.
>
> When your son and brother enters the barracks, the officers of the company will take your place in looking after his welfare. We will be to him as a stern father and a loving mother. We will always be concerned with his twofold training, body and mind, so that in belonging to the Army he may become a good soldier and a loyal subject of the Emperor. We want to be able to teach him in such a way that he may be able to realize the highest hope of a member of our race.
>
> With the company and your home forming a complete circle we wish to cooperate with you to the fullest extent in order to administer his education and guidance along the most rational lines. In order to do this, we wish to learn as much as possible from you with reference to his personal history and character and the environment of his home. This information will be kept in confidence. If you have any misgivings, fear it will be difficult to learn your son's exact condition after his enlistment, or that he will not be able to advance in rank, or any other misunderstandings, rest assured we will be glad to discuss the matter with you. That our efforts to guide the young man will not be hindered, we beg you to fill out the enclosed form with the greatest care and return it to us as soon as possible.
>
> The regiment, however, is not concerned entirely with the past life of your son, but in guiding his development--wishing unselfishly to emphasize his good points and strengthen his weak points--to develop all his powers to the end that he may become a good and faithful soldier, maintaining a first-class record in the Army, and put his whole heart into fulfilling the mission of the Imperial Army.

On the day your son enters the barracks, we trust that you will accompany him in order that we may meet you and have an intimate talk with you.

Respectfully yours,

(Commanding Officer)
Imperial Japanese Army.[15]

Every effort was made to insure that induction day and mustering out day were memorable events. These attempts to gain popular acceptance were not just an elaborate charade performed by the army. Officers were indeed expected to act as "elder brothers" to their men and to know them so intimately that they could weave them into the web of personal loyalties that was so important in traditional Japan. Men who responded could indeed "advance in rank"; unlike civilian society, advancement in the army was determined by demonstrated ability and dedication, not family background or connections. Even a farmer's son could earn a commission and enhanced status, and could do so by hard work, obedience, loyalty, etc.[16] The value of virtue, for both the army and the individual, was high.

Moral or "spiritual" training thus played a key role in the operation of the Japanese army. It linked the army with the samurai tradition and all its military virtues; it connected the army with the Emperor, and so provided legitimacy, and it joined the army with the populace, providing social acceptance and a manpower base. It was

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15. Cited in Lory, Japan's Military Masters, pp. 13-14.

16. Shuichi Kato, "Taisho Democracy as the Pre-Stage for Japanese Militarism," in Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy, ed. by Bernard S. Silberman and H. D. Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 227-228.

functional and practical. But this stress on absolute moral values, on dedication and loyalty, helped imbue the army with a sense of semi-sacred mission that increasingly separated it from the secular culture of the rapidly modernizing cities.

## Tactical Doctrine

From its beginning the Japanese army faced a tactical problem of immense proportions. Almost every military force it might have to fight was either larger, more advanced technologically, or both. Japan could not afford to maintain a large army; even during World War I it stood at only twenty-one divisions, about 400,000 men. Nor could the nation devote enough resources to the army to give it the most modern equipment in large quantity without seriously slowing its rate of investment in industrialization. As a result the Japanese army lagged behind the major powers in artillery, mechanized forces, aviation, etc. Tanks, for example, had proved their value in 1916 during World War I, but it was not until 1925 that the Japanese army even began planning for its tank corps.[17]

What it lacked in size and equipment, however, the Japanese army made up in the quality of its men. Mostly of peasant stock, inured to hardship and in superb physical condition, the Japanese soldier was the army's main asset. From this human material the officer corps created a first-class fighting force.[18] "Spiritual training" lay at the heart of

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17. Malcolm D. Kennedy, Some Aspects of Japan and Her Defense Forces (London: Keagan Paul Inc., 1928), p. 115.

18. Small Wars and Border Problems. The Nomonhan Incident, Japanese Studies on Manchuria, Vol. XI (Tokyo: Hq. USAFFE and Eighth US Army, 1956), p. 469.

the army's tactical doctrine; officers and men were both taught that victory in battle was won by motivated men, not machines. Infantry manuals stressed the importance of careful preparation, resolute execution and firmness of will.[19]

Training was realistic and tough; no-notice forced marches of forty miles were not exceptional. During winter the troops maneuvered in Hokkaido; during the heat of summer they marched in southern Japan. Officers repeatedly made a point of ordering their men to double-time near the end of an exhausting march to show them that they could always go another mile or so if necessary.[20] Commanders were known to have kept their units on the march steadily for a month, averaging twenty-five miles per day.[21] Foreign military observers unanimously agreed that the Japanese army could march farther, faster, and in better order than any other in the world. This gave the army incredible mobility over difficult terrain; not tied to roads by heavy equipment, they could move cross-country to appear in unexpected places at unexpected times, and despite the overall small size of their force they could bring superior numbers to bear at places of their own choosing.

Once in position, the standard order was to attack, regardless of terrain, weather, or the existence of supporting forces.[22] It was in

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19. Infantry Operations, Japanese Studies in Manchuria, vol. V. (Tokyo: Hq. US Army Forces Far East, 1956), p. 81.

20. Lory, Japan's Military Masters, p. 55.

21. Ibid., p. 53.

22. Infantry Operations, p. 47.

the determined attack that the "spiritual training" of the soldiers had its military payoff. The army made up for its lack of artillery and supporting arms by substituting motivated men, and achieved shock power with bayonets instead of tanks. These tactics were expensive in men, but they won two wars for Japan.

This dependence on spiritual training and motivated men was not mere fanaticism or anachronistic samurai bravado. Between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I, French military doctrine proclaimed the supremacy of esprit and declared that victory in battle went to the side with the greater moral strength. That greater moral strength was displayed in the infantry charge, in always seeking to seize the offensive and drive the fight into the enemy's lines.[23] These were the modern European tactics taught the Japanese by their first European military advisors, French officers. Replacement of the French by the Germans after 1885 simply reinforced this emphasis on offensive spirit and esprit; Major Mecklin, the chief German advisor, was a firm advocate of the determined attack by disciplined troops.[24]

The lessons of the Russo-Japanese War both confirmed and modified these tactics. Motivated men, charging into almost certain death, were largely responsible for the victory at Port Arthur in January, 1905. The forced march of General Nogi's army from Port Arthur to

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23. See Stefan T. Possony and Etienne Mantuox, "Du Picq and Foch: The French School," in Makers of Modern Strategy, ed. by Edward Mead Earle (New York: Atheneum Press, 1967), pp. 206-233.

24. Presseisen, Before Aggression, pp. 83-84.

Mukden was credited with the Japanese success in that battle the following month.[25] But the cost was incredibly high; 100,000 men died in attaining victory. Machine guns, rapid-fire artillery, and entrenched troops with repeating rifles took a heavy toll. To avoid such wastage in the future, Japanese officers began using envelopment, night attacks and surprise as basic tactics.[26] Motivated men were still needed to do the marching and carry the attack; "spiritual training" still was regarded as the key to success.

World War I brought this belief into question. The carnage that was the Western Front showed conclusively that the mechanization of war had made simple esprit suicidal as a weapon. Henceforth, victory would go to the nation that could most readily organize its total industrial capacity to fight a war of attrition. But Japan's industrial capacity was far less than the countries of Europe or North America; Japan could not possibly fight mechanized war with a major power and hope to win; yet just such a capability was the military requirement for great power status.

The response to these changes circumstances within the officer ranks was twofold. Some of the younger officers who had observed the war in Europe advocated preparations for the total mobilization of

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25. Presseisen summarizes the tactics used, Ibid., pp. 145-147.

26. Japanese Study on Manchuria, Volume XI, Part 3, Book C. Small Wars and Border Problems: The Nomonhan Incident (Concl.). Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army,n.d.

27. Nobutake Ike, "War and Modernization," in Political Development in Modern Japan, ed. by Robert E. Ward (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 88.

Japan in a future war. Lt. Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan was the most active advocate of such a policy, and he won the support of War Minister Ugaki Issei to his efforts.[28] Nagata and his colleagues were in a distinct minority during most of the nineteen twenties, however. In the political climate of the times Nagata's plans must have seemed unlikely of fulfillment in the near future, and military plans must be based on realistic appraisals of conditions. For most officers the army's most likely future opponent was Russia, and for a while at least Russia might still be defeated by using motivated men. Thus even after World War I, "spiritual training" received continued emphasis; if anything, it was emphasized more than in earlier days, for it was more desperately needed. Given the political and military realities of Japan, it was not an unrealistic short-term policy.

## The Officer Corps

By the nineteen twenties the Japanese officer corps was a thoroughly modern professional one. Entrance into it was not restricted to any one social class or geographic area, and advancement was based on proven ability as judged by other officers. Until about 1900, officers from Chōshū had effectively dominated the army, but in the years between the Russo-Japanese War and the end of World War I the officer education system produced an increasingly professional orientation. By

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28. James B. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 88.

the mid-nineteen twenties only vestiges of Chōshū domination remained, and the outlooks of the officers were shaped primarily by their professional education.

That education began early. Most future officers entered one of the Chihō Yōnen Gakkō, regional military preparatory schools, at about age fourteen.[29] Those who entered did so on the basis of a stiff competitive examination; only about one of every sixty applicants was accepted.[30] Academic performance was the main criterion. During the three years in Chihō Yōnen Gakkō the future officer studied the same subjects as a student in the normal Japanese middle school, but the methods and approaches to instruction were military. Each year all the students in all the Chihō Yōnen Gakkō joined together for military training and a "Great March."[31]

Graduates of Chihō Yōnen Gakkō began their serious military education in the Rikugun Yoka Shikan Gakkō, Junior Military Academy. For eighteen months the cadet was put through a rigorous conditioning program and taught the fundamentals of military operations, to be capped by six months actual service in the army as a private first-class or corporal.[32]

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29. There was a Chihō Yōnen Gakkō in each divisional garrison area in Japan.

30. Lory, Japan's Military Masters, p. 69.

31. Robert J.C. Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 8.

32. Lory, Japan's Military Masters, p. 71.

Those who showed promise during their troop duty were entered in Shikan Gakkō, the Military Academy, in Tokyo. Study at the Academy focused heavily on purely military subjects: tactics, fortifications, topography, "science of arms," etc. It included heavy doses of field training, special maneuvers, horsemanship, and drill.[33] Upon graduation the future officer spent an additional six months as a probationary officer before finally winning his commission as a second lieutenant.[34]

It was not easy to win a commission in the Japanese army. Those who perservered and entered the officer corps were rewarded with low pay, an austere life-style, and hard work. But the officer corps offered a path to social mobility based on personal ability and effort, not family connections. Between 1920 and 1933 about forty percent of the students at the Military Academy were sons of farmers, and another ten percent came from officers' families.[35] These were groups for whom hard work and austerity were no strangers, and the prestige of a commission was high.

The opportunity to reach the highest rank in the army was also based largely on demonstrated ability. The surest path to promotion was through the Staff College. Lieutenants who had served satisfactorily for at least two years in the field were eligible to take the annual

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33. Ibid., p. 71.

34. Butow, Tojo and the Coming of the War, p. 8.

35. Cited in Kato, "Taisho Democracy as the Pre-Stage," p. 228.

preliminary examinations at division headquarters. This difficult exam concentrated on military subjects: tactics, weapons, topography, communications, military organization.[36] About half of the original testees took the final entrance examination at the Staff College; about fifty officers a year succeeded in entering the three year program. Graduates of the Staff College normally spent a year or two with the regiments or in duty overseas, and then were recalled to the General Staff. These officers were an acknowledged elite within the army. They had successfully passed through an extremely rigorous selection process that ruthlessly weeded out both the intellectually mediocre and the insufficiently motivated. Intelligent, dedicated, thoroughly versed in the needs and possibilities of the army, they were a professional and knowledgeable group, the main source of strategic thought and planning in the army.

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36. Hackett, The Military: Japan," p. 337.

## CHAPTER II

## THE POLITICS OF MANCHURIA

To the Chinese, Manchuria was simply the "Three Eastern Provinces."[1] Since at least 1644 it had been a recognized part of China. But it was a distinctive part, on the frontier, not subject to the normal civil service administration and not wholly integrated into the rest of China. This somewhat hazy and ill-defined status of Manchuria persisted until 1931, and was an important part of the "Manchurian Question" that plagued the Japanese government and the army in the late nineteen twenties.

### Traditional Manchuria

Manchuria in the early twentieth century was underpopulated and undeveloped, making it an attractive area for both Russia and Japan. Its lack of development sprang directly from Ch'ing policy. The thriving Chinese colony that had settled in Liaotung in Ming times was largely driven out or absorbed by the Manchus before their conquest of China in 1644. Later, in an attempt to lure penniless Manchu bannermen off the public payroll and back to self-sufficiency, the Ch'ing court set Manchuria aside for Manchu settlers. Few bannermen were willing to leave the attractions of Peking for the rigors of Manchuria, however, and the practical effect of the policy was simply to prevent

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1. These were Fengtien, later renamed Liaonin, Kirin, and Hielunkiang.

further Chinese settlement. In 1644 the estimated population of Manchuria was two million Chinese and a million Manchus and others. Two hundred years later it was still about the same.[2]

Despite its failure this policy of restricting Chinese settlement in Manchuria was not changed until the mid-nineteenth century, and then only as a by-product of other events. Czar Nicholas I of Russia had a personal interest in Russian control of the Amur River valley. The Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, Nicholas Muraviev, enthusiastically pursued that interest. During the 1850's Muraviev built a series of forts and towns down the valley on the north side of the river. China, ravaged by the Taiping Rebellion, was in no position to resist. The embroilment of China with Britain and France in the Arrow War in 1856 enabled Russia to solidify and add to Muraviev's gains. In 1857 the Czar asked for the cession of Manchuria.[3] Peking refused, but in the Treaty of Aigun of the following year the Ch'ing court accepted the loss of the lands north of the Amur. The Anglo-French occupation of Peking in 1860 provided another golden opportunity. With adroit diplomacy and at little cost, Russia gained the land lying between the Ussuri River and the Pacific coast, the modern Soviet Maritime Provinces.

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2. Kungtu C. Sun, The Economic Development of Manchuria in the First Half of the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 3.

3. C. Walter Young, Japan's Special Position in Manchuria (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1931), p. 11.

This increasing Russian presence to the north of Manchuria may have alerted Peking to the dangers of further Russian encroachment on the empty land. Of more immediate consequence, however, was the financial squeeze the rebellions and wars had caused. In 1860 the military governors of the Three Eastern Provinces petitioned the court for permission to sell land to Chinese in order to meet provincial government costs. Permission was granted, and Chinese settlement began.[4]

The flow of Chinese settlers into Manchuria both helped improve governmental revenues and materially increased China's claim to the region. This opportunity was not lost on Peking, and by the twentieth century settlement was not only tolerated but encouraged. Still, by 1930 Manchuria's population had reached only 31 million.[5]

Long before it approached even that figure, however, the increased population had surpassed the capability of the provincial administrations to govern it. Traditionally, government in Manchuria had been divided among the three provinces, each having both a civil and military governor who reported to different Boards in Peking. Confusion and corruption were the result. In 1876 a military governor-general for the entire region was appointed. He answered directly to the court, and had authority over the provincial military governors.[6]

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4. Sun, Economic Development of Manchuria, p. 11.

5. Ibid., p. 21.

6. Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 11.

The fact that the governor-general was a military, not a civil figure, was a reflection of the frontier nature of Manchuria. Unlike the other parts of China, in Manchuria there was no long-established society with a deeply-rooted political and economic infrastructure. Manchuria was newly settled, open, underpopulated. In other parts of China, Chinese sovereignty and rule were firmly established; in Manchuria China had to enter into competition with both Russia and Japan to establish de facto control over a part of its own territory.

The unclear status of this frontier province gave Manchurian politics a unique and dangerous characteristic. Political relationships within the region became a complex interweaving of the foreign policies of Russia, Japan, and China with the domestic politics of Manchuria. Manchurian politics itself was a rich mixture of intra-Manchurian political warfare and of relations between Manchuria and China proper. Foreign policy initiation by any of the three nations toward either of the others had repercussions in Manchuria's and China's domestic politics; changes in China's domestic political situation influenced Japanese and Russian foreign policy. In turn, each power could influence the others' policies by influencing the course of Manchuria's domestic politics. Manchuria was thus a peculiarly volatile area, giving rise to a process of action and reaction that culminated in the events of 1931.

## Foreign Interest: The Russian Initiative

After the successes of 1858 and 1860, Russia showed no further interest in Manchuria for thirty years. Instead, attention was focussed on the Maritime Provinces. Muraviev built the grandly named city Vladivostok, "Queen of the East," and the Czarist government made strenuous efforts to settle the area. It had little success; the overland journey from European Russia could take as long as two years, and even after the opening of the Suez Canal the sea journey was forty-five days. By 1880, population in the Maritime Provinces was less than 110,000, and many of these were Koreans and Chinese.[7] It was partly to remedy this slow rate of growth that the Russian government decided upon a Trans-Siberian Railroad. Construction was begun in 1891.

The building of the Trans-Siberian Railroad enhanced Russia's strategic position in East Asia at an opportune time. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 made shockingly clear just how weak and defenseless China really was. It showed also that Japan was emerging as a possible rival in Northeast Asia. With the Triple Intervention of 1895, Russia was able to check Japanese expansion by forcing the return of the Liaotung Peninsula to China.[8] By posing as the protector of China, Russia was also able to make substantial gains in Manchuria. A loan to China after the Triple Intervention was followed, in 1896,

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7. Sidney Harcave, Russia: A History (Chicago: Lippincott Co., 1956), p. 342.

8. The Treaty of Shimonoseki called for the cession of the Liaotung Peninsula to Japan, but the intervention of Russia, France and Germany forced Japan to return the territory. C. Walter Young, The International Relations of Manchuria (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 4.

with a military pact between Russia and China directed at Japan.[9] This, in turn, was followed by the Li-Lobanov Treaty, granting the Russian-controlled Chinese Eastern Railway Company the right to build a shortcut for the Trans-Siberian Railroad across northern Manchuria to Vladivostok.[10] The Chinese Eastern Railway Company was granted "absolute and exclusive right of administration" over railroad right of way and associated lands. Thirty-six years after the line's completion China was to have the option of buying it; after eighty years it would revert to China without payment.[11]

The rush to grab concessions that followed the Sino-Japanese War brought Russia even deeper into Manchuria. When Germany coerced China into granting a ninety-nine-year lease at Kiaochow Bay, Russia demanded "compensation," and in 1898 received a twenty-five-year lease on the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula, the very land Japan had been forced to disgorge only three years earlier. Here the modern naval base of Port Arthur and the commercial port of Talien--renamed Dalny--were rapidly built up. In addition, Russia was granted the right to build and operate a railroad connecting Liaotung with the Chinese Eastern Railway, with the same rights of administration and control.

The Boxer Uprising of 1900 provided Russia with yet another opportunity to secure a hold on Manchuria. Reacting to attacks on the

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13 for a detailed analysis of the agreement.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

railroads and on Russians living in Manchuria, the Russian army occupied the entire region and disarmed the Chinese troops there.[12] As a condition to the withdrawal of the army, St. Petersburg demanded concessions that would have made Manchuria into a virtual Russian protectorate.[13] Peking "used barbarians to fight barbarians" by leaking the demands to the other powers; pressure from Britain, Germany and Japan caused the Russians to withdraw the demands, but not the army. Despite later agreements to do so, the Russians refused to end the occupation of Manchuria. October, 1903, had been the date agreed upon for the final evacuation of Russian troops; the deadline was ignored, and the Russians gave every indication they intended to remain in Manchuria indefinitely.

This intransigence, together with Russian attempts to incorporate Korea into its sphere of influence, helped spark the Russo-Japanese War. Striking without prior warning the Japanese navy demolished the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, while the army waged an expensive but successful war on Manchurian soil. The terms of the Treaty of Portsmouth, ending the war, reflected the Japanese success. Japan became heir to

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12. Harry Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins and Commissars (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1973), pp. 73-74.

13. These demands included: the mandatory consultation with Russia on the number of Chinese troops to be stationed in Manchuria, the prohibition of Chinese arms shipments into the region, the right of Russia to secure the dismissal of any high-ranking Chinese official in Manchuria, and a Russian veto over any concessions to any other country near the Russian border from Manchuria to Sinkiang. Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins, p. 74.

all Russian rights in South Manchuria, although the Chinese Eastern Railway remained in Russian hands.

## Foreign Interests: The Japanese Initiative

At first, Manchuria was of no concern to the Japanese, but Korea was. From the Meiji Restoration through the end of the nineteenth century, Japan's great foreign policy objectives were treaty revision and national defense. It was the concern for defense that eventually brought Japan into Korea and Manchuria.

Traditionally, the sea had protected Japan. Only once in its long history had any power seriously threatened invasion--the Mongols under Kublai Khan in the thirteenth century. They had embarked from Korea only to be destroyed on the beaches of Japan by a typhoon that swept out of the sea. By the nineteenth century the age of steam and steel had ended the protection granted by the sea, however; in the new world facing the Meiji oligarchs the facts of geography became important.

The most important fact was the location of Korea. A peninsula jutting into the Sea of Japan, it lay athwart the sea lanes to north China. Pusan, Korea, was only 125 miles from the entrance to Hakata Bay in Kyūshū. Korea, in the hands of a strong hostile power, would be a permanent and very real threat to Japan's security. A sea-power based in Korea could threaten the whole western coast of Japan, and hold the cities of Kyūshū hostage. The southern part of Korea was the only place on the mainland from which an invasion could realistically be mounted. It was essential for Japan that Korea be kept out of strong hostile hands.[14] An independent, stable, neutral Korea posed no threats.

The Meiji oligarchs generally worked toward encouraging just such an independent, neutral Korea. Traditionally, Korea had sought security within the bounds of the Chinese tribute system. Toward China, the Korean court punctiliously played the role of vassal, while Japan was kept pacified by occasional missions and a sporadic trade through Tsushima.[15] The Meiji Restoration made this traditional mode of intercourse impossible; the modern Foreign Ministry of Japan adopted Western concepts of international relations that breeched Confucian decorum. The Treaty of Kanghwa of 1876 put Japanese-Korean relations on a more modern basis and seemed to lay the groundwork for the development of a neutral, independent Korea.

Unhappily the treaty resulted in the opposite effect. Korean domestic politics were characterized by bitter partisan splits and

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14. That Korea's strategic importance is a fact of geography rather than a figment of the Japanese military imagination was illustrated in June, 1950, with the Korean War. Despite an earlier lack of interest in Korea, the American government responded with alacrity when the implications of Russian dominance of all Korea were considered. See Allen S. Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 37.

15. C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 12-13.

interminable plots and counter-plots.[16] The in-fighting between court factions was increased as a pro-Japanese reform faction was countered by a pro-Chinese conservative faction, which in turn were opposed by those favoring complete anti-foreignism. In addition, the Chinese government, represented first by Li Hung-chang and later by his protege Yuan Shih-k'ai, began exercising an increasing control over Korea as a counter to the foreign influences flowing into the country.[17] China and Japan were both drawn deeply into Korean domestic politics. Nevertheless, the Japanese government made no serious attempts to gain control of Korea or hegemony over it. The worries of Yamagata Aritomo notwithstanding, the oligarchs seemed willing to tolerate Chinese dominance of the peninsula.[18]

This situation ended in the 1890's, as China became visibly weaker. The danger, as the Japanese saw it, was not from China but from Western powers eager and able to take what they chose from an impotent China. According to Yamagata, the power to be feared was Russia; as soon as the Trans-Siberian Railroad was completed, he feared, Korea would be threatened.[19] He argued for an increase in Japanese military strength to prepare for the coming dangers.

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16. Ibid., pp. 33-58.

17. Ibid., pp. 38-40; 64-65.

18. Marlene Mayo, "Attitudes Toward Asia and the Beginnings of Japanese Empire," in Imperial Japan, 1800-1945, ed. by Jon Livingson, Joe Moore, and Felicia Oldfather (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), p. 215.

19. Roger F. Hackett, Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838-1922 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp.138-139.

The one-sided Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War not only drove Chinese power from Korea but temporarily placed the Liaotung Peninsula in Japanese hands. Forced from Liaotung by the Triple Intervention, the Japanese then watched Russia encroach on Manchuria and, as Yamagata had warned, penetrate into Korea itself. It was this penetration of Korea that sparked the Russo-Japanese War, and that war gave Japan a firm entry into Manchuria.

The Treaty of Portsmouth, ending the Russo-Japanese War, gave Japan substantial rights in Manchuria. Russia's twenty-five year lease on the tip of Liaotung, the Kwantung Territories, was transferred to Japan, as was the lease on the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway running from Talien to Changchun. Along with the leases came important ancillary rights: the right to mine coal at Fushun and Yentai, the right to control Kwantung, with its valuable ports of Dairen and the naval base at Port Arthur, and the right to station troops in Kwantung.[20] China consented to the transfer of these rights by the Treaty of Peking in 1905. In addition, this treaty gave Japan the right to improve and operate commercially a light military railroad between Antung and Mukden.[21]

To exploit these economic and administrative rights, in 1906 the South Manchurian Railway Company was formed by Imperial decree.

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20. Young, International Relations of Manchuria, p. 11.

21. This was a narrow-gauge line that had been quickly laid down during the war. When improved to commerce-carrying quality it gave Japan a continuous rail line from Pusan in south Korea to Mukden and Dairen.

It was granted authority to operate the railroads, to administer the railway zone, and to collect taxes within it. It was also authorized to engage in such ancillary commercial enterprises as operating the mines, warehouses, and electrical enterprises.[22] The company was a quasi-governmental organization; in return for the railway and its properties, the government received half the stock in the company, and the right to appoint the director.[23]

The South Manchurian Railway Company quickly became the chief Japanese instrument for the economic development of Manchuria. Its activities were not confined to the carrying trade. Under Yamamoto Jōtarō's directorship especially, the Central Laboratory of the company actively researched ways of using Manchurian resources and set up new companies to develop them. New enterprises that were spin-offs of this research included the Anshan Iron Works, Anshan Iron Mining Co., Manchuria Electric Power Co., Dairen Oil and Fat Co., South Manchuria Glass Co., and the Dairen Ceramics, Ltd. In addition, the company financed the South Manchuria Flour Co., and operated commercial gas plants at Dairen, Anshan, Mukden, Antung, and Changchun.[24] Independent Japanese-owned businesses and industries also grew. By 1929 the South Manchurian Railway Company was enjoying an annual profit of over 74 million

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22. Lytton Report, as cited in the Transcript of the International Military Tribunal, Far East (IMTFE), p. T 1758.

23. Lytton Report in IMTFE, p. T 1758, also Takemori Kazuo, Mantetsu Kōbōshi (The Rise and Fall of the South Manchurian Railway) Tokyo: Akita Shōten, 1970), pp. 21-22.

24. Sun, Economic Development of Manchuria, pp. 68-72.

yen, while the gross value of Japanese-controlled industrial production in Manchuria was over 260 million yen.[25] These were very substantial economic interests, valuable in themselves and not to be lightly discarded.

Of at least equal importance was the strategic value of the Kwantung Leased Territories and the South Manchurian Railroad. The war made Korea into a virtual Japanese protectorate, and by 1910 that country was absorbed into the Japanese empire. This ended any possible danger to Japanese security from Korea, but now Korea itself needed protection. The one practical route of invasion into Korea was from Manchuria, on the plains near Antung. Liaotung dominated that area; so long as Japanese sea-power maintained a strong base in Liaotung the Japanese army could threaten the flank of any power moving by land into Korea. Liaotung together with Korea insured the security of Japan from any Asian threat.

## The Chinese Response

The Russo-Japanese War was fought largely on Manchurian soil, and the rights Japan acquired were in Manchuria. Despite this, China was not a party to the Treaty of Portsmouth; it was informed of the agreements, but was not consulted in the making of them. Although the Ch'ing government acquiesed in the arrangements, it took steps to strengthen the Chinese position in Manchuria.

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25. Ibid., pp. 67, 94.

In 1906 the Chinese Minister of the Interior, Hsu Shih-ch'ang, toured Manchuria, and recommended a major administrative reform in that region. This was effected in 1907. The military governor-generalship was abolished, as were the posts of provincial military governor. Civil officials were brought in, and all Manchuria was united under the control of a civil Viceroy.[26] The provincial civil governors were retained, but were subordinate to the Viceroy. For the first time, effective power was concentrated in one office. The first Viceroy was Hsu himself; for the key post of governor of Fengtien, at Mukden, he chose T'ang Shao-yi, one of the ablest administrators in China.[27] Their job, recognized as such, was to balance out the Russian and Japanese presence in Manchuria, to enhance local Chinese control, and to replace the Russian and Japanese railway guards as rapidly as possible.[28]

This policy was continued until 1911, and was on the whole successful. By April 1911 the capable ex-Viceroy of Szechuan, Chao Ehr-hsun, was Viceroy of Manchuria. He was to be the last Viceroy, however,

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26. Young, Japan's Special Position, pp. 12-13.

27. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

28. The secret annex to the Treaty of Portsmouth had given Russia and Japan the right to post railway guards at the rate of fifteen per kilometer of track, to be maintained until the other power withdrew its guards and China was capable of providing adequate protection. Young, International Relations of Manchuria, pp. 89-90, and Kenneth Asakawa, "Japan in Manchuria," Part I, Yale Review (August 1908), p. 212.

for in October, 1911, the Wuhan garrison rebelled, and revolution swept China.

The turmoil of revolution threatened the very integrity of Manchuria itself. Manchuria was the part of China most open to foreign control. Japanese troops were stationed in Kwantung, and Japanese and Russian railway guards patrolled their respective rail rights-of-way. The disintegration of local government could serve as an excuse for the occupation and division of Manchuria. The Japanese-owned Dairen Manchuria Daily News editorialized: "The time is ripening hourly for the declaration of independence of Mukden, in order to serve the interests of the Manchus."[29]

No civil disorder occurred in Manchuria, however, and no revolutionary armies entered it. With the aid of an obscure garrison commander, Chang Tso-lin, Chao was able to maintain strict order. Manchuria remained loyal to the Ch'ing dynasty until it became obvious the dynasty was doomed; thereafter Chao and Chang threw their support to Yuan Shih-k'ai.[30] There was no attempt to secede.

When Chao resigned as Viceroy in 1913 the Viceroyalty itself was abolished, an accurate reflection of the loosening of controls from Peking. A civil and a military governor were appointed to each of the three provinces of Manchuria, with the governor of Fengtien, with his capital at Mukden, acknowledged as having primacy. Chang Tso-lin was

29. Cited in Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 19.

30. Ibid., p. 17.

the military governor of Fengtien. The story of Manchuria from 1913 is the story of Chang Tso-lin's politics and maneuvers.[31]

The Rise of Chang Tso-lin

Chang Tso-lin began his military career in the services of Japan. During the Russo-Japanese War he was reputedly one of several Manchurian "bandits" picked up by the Japanese Army for spying, and condemned to be shot. A young Japanese officer, Tanaka Gi'ichi saw promise in Chang, however, and ordered him freed.[32] Thereafter Chang organized and led a band of Chinese irregulars operating in support of the Japanese army, and paid by it.[33] After the war he settled into the routine of battalion commander in a small garrison of the traditional Chinese army.

The revolution gave Chang his chance. It had begun when idealistic officers and men of the New Army had revolted at Wuhan.[34] The

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31. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

32. The story is reported in Nobuya Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972), p. 311.

33. Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 17.

34. The New Army was a result of China's desire to modernize the army. Equipped with Western weapons, trained in modern tactics, and officered in large part by nationalistic and educated men, it was a modern force in a traditional society. Like the Turkish army and numerous later ones, its officers saw the New Army as a modernizing force, and were prepared to use it to support change and modernization. For a discussion of this type phenomenon see Lucian W. Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries, ed. by John J. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 69-90.

garrison at Mukden was the Second Regiment of the New Army; not trusting it, Chao ordered Chang Tso-lin and his battalion to Mukden as a "preventive measure."[35] To supplement this force, Chao and Chang encouraged the organization of "Peace and Order Societies" in the major cities. An old Chinese form known by various names, these societies were basically local self-protection societies formed by merchants or gentry in times of trouble. Normally non-political, they functioned primarily to protect property and maintain essential local services until government could function again.[36] In 1911 Chao used them as a political force, however, by making himself their supervisor and Chang Tso-lin their military commander.[37] This combination of armed civilians and old-style army gave Chang enough strength to easily quell the Second Regiment's attempted mutiny in 1912. Following the mutiny, Chang's battalion was expanded to become a division.[38]

Chao's resignation in 1913 removed Chang's patron, but the new civil governor appointed to Mukden, Chang Hsi-luan, was an old friend, and for two years Chang Tso-lin remained quietly at his post as military governor. When Yuan Shih-k'ai made his bid for the imperial throne,

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35. Li Chien-nung, The Political History of China, 1840-1928 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, Co., 1956), p. 346.

36. Such groups did not always work to maintain order, of course. They could and frequently did evolve into private governments commanding a band of thugs to dominate the locality. See Owen Lattimore, Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 226, for an example.

37. Young, Japan's Special Position, p. 17.

38. Li, Political History of China, p. 346.

however, he appointed his own man as civil governor of Fengtien, and this led to conflict with Chang Tso-lin. At this juncture Chang showed his political acumen. Yuan's plans were meeting with opposition from provincial leaders across China, but Chang Tso-lin's response was a congratulatory telegram to Yuan, accompanied by an offer to lead a punitive expedition into Hunan against a particularly vocal opponent. The civil governor of Fengtien agreed wholeheartedly; it was an excellent way of getting Chang out of Manchuria. So eager was he that he acceded to Chang's demands for huge amounts of funds and provisions. After building up his forces, Chang turned to his merchant associates of the old Peace and Order Societies; they telegraphed Yuan demanding that Chang stay in Fengtien, and other troops be sent to Hunan.[39] This left Chang Tso-lin the undisputed power in Manchuria, with a military force far larger and stronger than any other. By 1916 he was both civil and military governor of Fengtien.[40]

In China proper, the death of Yuan Shih-k'ai in 1916 signalled the start of the warlord period of the republic. In north China the military leader Tuan Ch'i-jui, who was then prime minister, came almost immediately into conflict with Yuan's successor as president, Li Yuan-hung. The political struggle between the two came to a head over

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39. Li, Political History of China, p. 346.

40. Lytton Report, IMTFE, p. T 1744.

the issue of China's declaration of war on Germany in March, 1917.[41] Tuan favored the declaration and pushed it through parliament. Li opposed it, and dismissed Tuan as prime minister. Chang Tso-lin, alert for opportunities, threw his lot in with Tuan by denouncing his dismissal by Li and by declaring Manchuria independent of Peking.[42] The declaration of independence was later withdrawn. Tuan emerged from the conflict as master of Peking, and as the leader of the "Anfu Clique" of warlords. Chang, in turn, was given his reward. In January, 1918, Tuan informed Chang that a shipment of arms in a Japanese ship would arrive at the dock at Ch'inhuangtao in early February. The arms were supposedly to be used to equip Chinese forces for participation in the European war. Forewarned by Tuan, Chang's forces seized the entire shipment of 27,000 rifles, several field guns, and associated ammunition.[43] It was a major re-equipping of Chang's army, and allowed him to play an increasing role in the evolving pattern of China's warlord politics.

Tuan's generosity to Chang was his own undoing. Wu Pei-fu, the rising leader of the "Chihli Clique" of warlords challenged Tuan in 1920. Chang joined Wu with a surprise drive against Tuan's forces.

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41. Lucian W. Pye, Warlord Politics: Conflict and Coalition in the Modernization of Republican China (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 17.

42. Lytton Report, IMTFE, P. T 1744.

43. Chi Hsi-hseng, The Chinese Warlord System, 1916 to 1928 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Research in Social Systems, American University, 1969), p. 26.

Tuan Chi-jui's army dissolved; he withdrew from warlord politics for a period of "Buddhistic studies," leaving Wu and Chang in command of north China.[44] This alliance in turn dissolved; in December, 1921, Chang attempted a coup in Peking. By April, 1922, outmaneuvered and defeated in the field by Wu and his other allies, Chang retreated to Manchuria.[45] The victorious coalition stripped Chang of all his official titles and honors, but were careful not to challenge him militarily on his own grounds. Chang again turned to his old allies, the merchant associations of Manchuria. They "unanimously" passed a resolution:

> The lives of 30,000,000 people in Manchuria depending on the fate of Chang Tso-lin, no order dismissing Chang Tso-lin from the important offices he holds in Manchuria shall be approved.[46]

Using these resolutions for his political legitimacy, Chang again declared Manchuria independent, in May, 1922. Like his first declaration in 1917, this was transparently a ploy to strengthen his own position. The *de jure* authority of the capital was not challenged by Chang, or by any power.[47] To emphasize his *de facto* authority, however, in 1924 Chang repudiated the agreement just reached between China and Russia concerning the Chinese Eastern Railway, and insisted that the Russians renegotiate it with his Manchurian regime. The resulting pact was virtually

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44. Pye, Warlord Politics, p. 21.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

46. South Manchurian Railway Company, *Third Report on Progress in Manchuria, 1907-1932* (Dairen, 1932), p. 27.

47. Young, Japan's *Special Position*, p. 3.

identical with the repuditated one.[48] Its only effect was to emphasize Chang Tso-lin's autonomous position in Manchuria.

By the autumn of 1924 Chang was ready to reenter the Chinese political scene. The ruling Chihli Clique in Peking was divided and squabbling. When Chang's army swept south of the Great Wall in October, one of Wu Pei-fu's dissatisfied allies, the "Christian General" Feng Yu-hsiang, joined with Chang against his former leader. Wu withdrew, leaving Feng and Chang joint masters of north China. Little love was lost between the two; neither was strong enough to eliminate the other, but both could prevent the other from ruling alone.[49] Tuan Chi-jui was invited to lead the new government as a compromise and a balance between the two warlords.

For reasons of their own, the Japanese had supported Chang with advisors, and Japanese economic activity in Manchuria gave Chang an enviable financial position. Partly to weaken Japan's position, in 1925 the Russians approached Feng with offers of support.[50] Feng accepted Soviet help and prepared for a showdown.

The conflict broke out in November, 1925. In the middle of the campaign Chang discovered that one of his most trusted generals, Kuo Sung-lin, had secretly joined forces with Feng. Kuo commanded the troops at

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48. Lytton Report, IMTFE, p. T 1746, and Young, International Relations of Manchuria, pp. 224-225.

49. James E. Sheridan, Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yu-hsiang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 142-148.

50. Michael Borodin did the negotiating. He had originally hoped to win Feng's support for the Canton regime; when that was not forthcoming he settled on simply using Feng to counter Chang. Pye, Warlord Politics, p. 32.

Shanhaikuan, in preparation for a thrust at Tientsin. Instead, he turned about and drove for Mukden itself, where Chang Tso-lin disposed of a distinctly inferior force.

Kuo Sung-lin's mutiny brought the civil war to Manchuria for the first time. It also raised the possibility that Kuo, as Feng's ally, might actually be Russia's opening move to reassert itself in South Manchuria.[51] The instability and disruption that Kuo's mutiny threatened sparked a Japanese response. With the approval of Tokyo, the Kwantung Army commander, General Shirakawa, sent Kwantung Army troops to Mukden to reinforce the railway guards. At the same time he declared a "neutral zone" of about seven miles on both sides of the South Manchurian Railroad right-of-way, and announced that the Kwantung Army would fight to maintain it.[52] While this declaration ostensibly applied to both Kuo and Chang, its effect was to prevent Kuo from entering Mukden, while Chang had time to move reinforcements in from Heilungkiang. Although these troops were delayed by the Russians, who refused to let them use the Chinese Eastern Railroad without paying cash in advance, by December 23, 1925, Chang had become strong enough to meet and defeat Kuo.[53] Feng was forced to evacuate Peking. Chang returned to Peking as the dominant military power in north China. By 1927 he was strong enough to declare himself _Ta-yuan-shuia_, "Dictator."

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51. Pye, _Warlord Politics_, p. 33.

52. Shimada Toshihiko, _Kantōgun_ (The Kwantung Army) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shakai, 1965), pp. 42-44.

53. Lytton Report in _IMTFE_, p. T 1747.

## The Entangling Web

Manchuria in the mid-nineteen twenties retained the duality it had exhibited fifty years earlier; it was part of China, but distinctive, different, not quite wholly integrated. The early attempts by Peking to strengthen the Chinese hold over Manchuria had consolidated power within the region instead; after the revolution this consolidation helped make Chang Tso-lin leader of an autonomous Manchuria. The strength conferred by this autonomy was itself a factor in allowing Chang to then participate in Chinese warlord politics.

The Manchu court's earlier attempt to strengthen the ties between China and Manchuria was partly in response to the advance of Russia in the north. Russian interest in Manchuria was to an extent a preemptive move to establish itself in the area before Japan could do so. Japan, in turn, moved into Manchuria in direct response to the Russian moves. Once established in Manchuria, Japan developed economic and strategic interests much too valuable to endanger or abandon. Stability under Chang Tso-lin served Japanese interests well, but the prosperity this stability brought allowed Chang to build his power and expand in north China; his participation in the civil war then threatened Manchurian stability. Russia, pushed out of South Manchuria, still guarded the Chinese Eastern Railway in the north while attempting to win control of the Chinese revolution by way of the Kuomintang in Canton. The beginning of the Kuomintang's Northern Expedition in 1926 threatened eventually to unseat Chang, and possibly to allow Russia to return to South Manchuria.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE INSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT
## MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AND THE KWANTUNG ARMY

### Military Intelligence and Manchuria

The Kwantung Army's solution to the Manchurian Question began unfolding at about 10:30 P.M., 18 September 1931, when a bomb exploded on the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway just north of Mukden. It was completed on March 9, 1932, with the installation of Pu-yi as Regent for the newly created Japanese client state of Manchukuo. In a short space of six months the threat of both Chinese nationalism and Russian expansion was removed from Manchuria, Japanese interests and strategic position were secured, and Manchuria was ruled by a local government that had accepted Japanese military protection. From the point of view of those responsible for it, the Manchurian Incident was an eminent success.

The credit, or blame, for the Manchurian Incident has long been settled. Kwantung Army staff officers Colonel Itagaki Seishirō and Lt. Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, aided by Major Hanaya Tadashi and Captain Imada Shintarō, planned, executed and directed the operation on their own, without authorization from Tokyo and in fact against the intent of repeated orders from Headquarters. But acting alone no four officers, however talented or well-placed they might be, could have defied their own superiors, led an army to victory in the field against overwhelmingly superior forces, and successfully created a new political entity. Obviously they had allies within the army, who were essential to the success of the Manchurian Incident. A surprisingly large number of those allies were officers assigned to military intelligence duty, especially intelligence directed toward China. For the most part these officers had dutifully performed their accustomed jobs, but in the process they knowingly made the Kwantung Army's insubordination a success.

The army's intelligence system centered in the Second Department of the General Staff. This Department was organized into geographic-based sections, (e.g., Russia, China, Europe and America, etc.), a recognized and effective way to encourage expertise in specific areas. It received information generated by the intelligence sections of the staffs of the field armies, such as the Kwantung Army, the Taiwan Army, and the Korean Army.[1] In addition, the Second Department had its own "eyes and ears" on the mainland in the form of the Special Service Organs. These were small units scattered across Manchuria in cities like Mukden, Harbin, and Kirin.[2] While they were technically under the control of the Commander, Kwantung Army, the Special Service Organs maintained direct communication links with the Second Department in

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1. James B. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 96, and Richard Story, The Double Patriots (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1957), p. 56.

2. For the organization and function of Special Service Organs see the testimony of Aizawa Makato, IMTFE, p. T 28,603-626; Testimony of Ishiwara Kanji, pp. T 22,188-190; T 22,208-209; and Testimony of Itagaki Seishiro, pp. T 30,352-353.

Tokyo.[3] They served both as collection points for social, political and economic intelligence and as support and communications facilities for the Japanese army advisors attached to various warlords and Chinese military governors.[4] Military attaches and agents reported to the Second Department, and special intelligence operations on the mainland were handled by it. Captain Nakamura Shintarō, whose murder by Chinese soldiers in June of 1931 so enflamed the army, for example, was assigned to the China Section of the Second Department.[5]

For the junior or middle-ranking officer, an assignment to intelligence provided one of the few opportunities he would get to work outside the narrow bounds of tactical military operations. With its network of Special Service Organs, agents and advisors spread across Manchuria and North China and its professional attention focused on Russia and China, the intelligence service not surprisingly attracted officers with a personal interest in the area or developed those interests in the officers assigned to it.

At every stage of the crisis, both in Tokyo and Manchuria, the intelligence service provided key activists in the Manchurian Incident.

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3. The operational lines of command for the Special Service Organs are illustrated in Figure 1, p. 57. Japanese Study on Manchuria, Volume I, Japanese Intelligence Planning against the USSR, (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1955), p. 13.

4. Lt. Colonel Osako, advisor to Kirin Military Governor Hsi Hsia, for example, was also the Chief of the Kirin Special Service Organ. Nakamura Kikuo, Manshū Jihen (Tokyo: Nihon Kyobunsha, 1965), p. 101.

5. Nakano Masao, Manshū Jihen to Jūgatsu Jiken (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1973), p. 66.

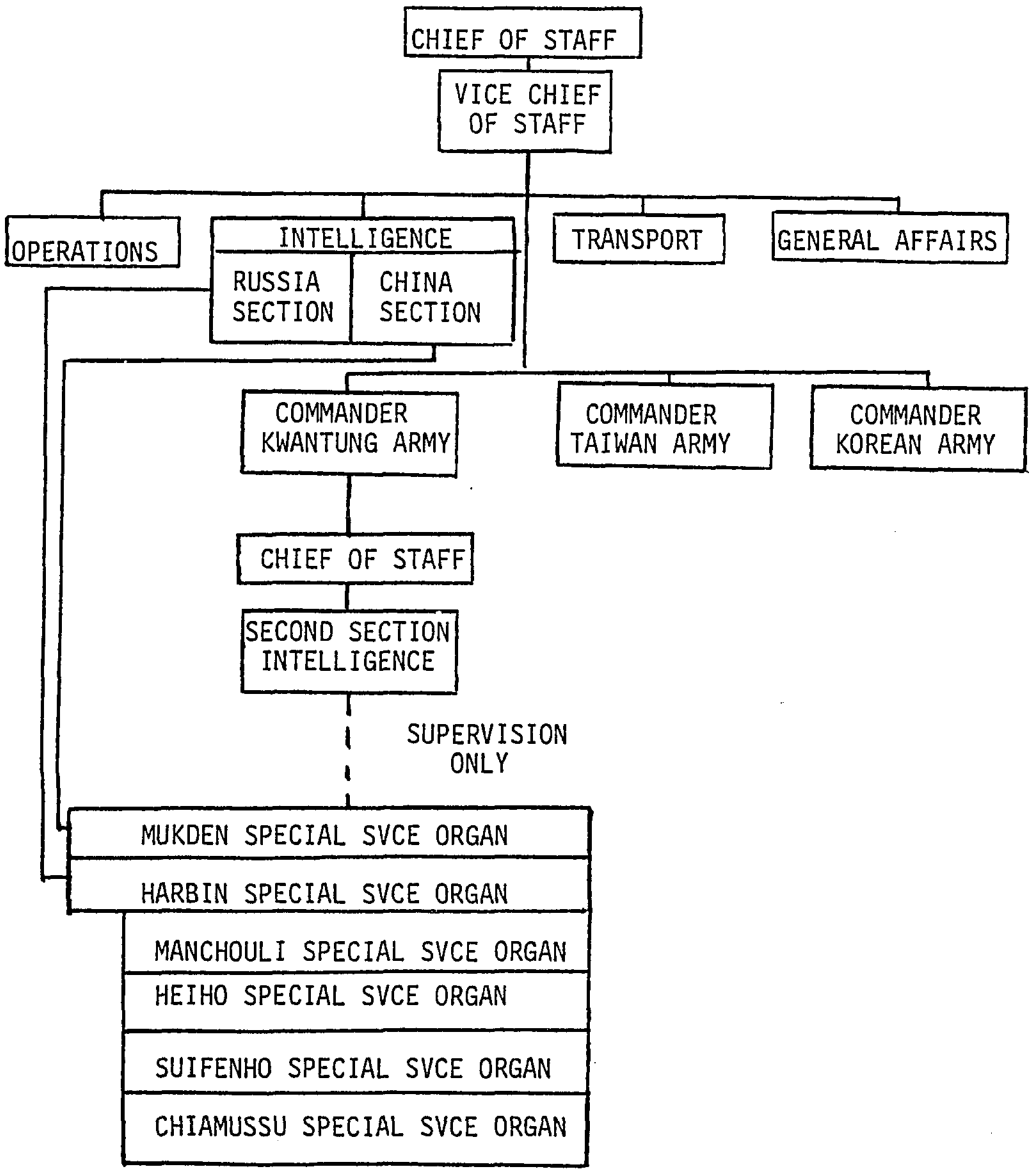


Figure 1. Operational Lines of Command, Special Service Organs

Of the four officers who were directly responsible for the Incident, Ishiwara was an acknowledged China expert who had turned down a proferred assignment to Europe in favor of duty on the Chinese mainland. Itagaki headed the Intelligence Section of the Kwantung Army staff, Hanaya was second in command of the Mudken Special Service Organ, and Imada was an assistant advisor to Chang Hsueh-liang and attached to the Mukden Special Service Organ. Other officers who knew of their plot in advance and supported it included Captain Chō Isamu, assigned to the military attache office in Peking; Lt. Colonel Shigetō Chiaki, Chief of the China Section of the Second Department; his subordinate Lt. Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi, Chief of the China sub-section of the Department; Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingoro, Chief of the Russia Section; and Colonel Doihara Kenji, Chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ. Liaison with the Korean Army was handled through Lt. Colonel Kanda Masatani, a Russian Specialist who had served at the Aigun Special Service Organ during the Siberian Expedition and later in the Second Department. According to three participants in the events--Hanaya, Nemoto and Captain Katakura Tadashi--of the twenty-six officers who either participated in the plot, knew of it in advance, or were actively involved in the illicit creation of Manchukuo, eleven were assigned to intelligence functions, and nine of these were primarily concerned with China. Perhaps more significant, of the ten officers most deeply involved, eight were serving as intelligence officers and seven were primarily concerned with China.[6] Before

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6. In addition to the four main actors, Katakura names the other plotters as Major Kokuma Masahan and Captain Kawashima Tadashi,

September, 1931, the intelligence staff officers of the Second Department played the major role. During the Incident itself the officers of the Kwantung Army staff took the action, while the creation of Manchukuo was largely the work of Doihara Kenji and his colleagues in the Special Services Organs. This strong affiliation with intelligence, and especially intelligence directed toward China, was a major distinguishing characteristic of the Japanese army officers active in the Incident.

These men were not the dissatisfied junior officers who so dominated the scene after 1932, nor were they zealots blinded by an

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3rd Company of Railway Guards; Major Nagura Kan, 29th Infantry Regiment; Major Mitani Kiyoshi, Kempeitai; and Lt. Colonel Osako, Kirin Special Service Organ. Others who knew of the plot, but who were not direct participants, according to Katakura, were Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Brigidier General Miyake Mitsuji and staff officers Takeda Hisashi, Nakano Toshtsugi, Doihara Kenji, and himself, Katakura Tadashi. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, pp. 100-101. Nemoto claimed that approval for direct action in Manchuria was given in June, 1931, by Director of the Second Department Brigidier General Tatekawa Kiyoshi, Lt. Colonel Shigetō Chiaki and Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō, the Director of the Organization and Mobilization Section Colonel Tōjō Hideki, and himself, Lt. Colonel Nemoto. Also informed of the decision but not expressing approval were Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya Haroshige, Director of the Military Affairs Section Nagata Tetsuzan, and Director of the Military Affairs Department Koiso Kuniaki. Sadako Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), pp. 55-56. Hanaya adds that 1st Lt. Kawamoto Suemori of Kawashima's company of Railway Guards helped set off the charge on September 18. Hanaya Tadashi, "Manshū Jihen wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," Himerareta Shōwashi, special issue of Chisei (December, 1956), pp. 44-46. Katakura named those active in the creation of Manchukuo as Itagaki, Doihara, Imada, Osako, Captain Amakusa Masahiko, Reserve Lt. Yoshimura Sokichi, Oya Shinkei, and Wada Kei. Katakura Tadashi, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaki Nikki," Gendaishi Shiryo, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1964), pp. 191-194. Those officers performing intelligence duties among all these were Itagaki, Hanaya, Imada, Osako, Doihara, Tatekawa, Shigetō, Nemoto, Hashimoto, Oya and Amakasu. Those primarily concerned with China included Ishiwara, Hanaya, Imada, Osako, Doihara, Shigeto, Nemoto, Amakasu, and Oya. The ten officers most actively involved were Itagaki, Ishiwara, Hanaya, Imada, Doihara, Osako, Tatekawa, Shigetō, Nemoto, and Hashimoto.

Emperor-centered fanaticism. They were for the most part field-grade officers, mid-level in their careers, and included men already identified as being among the most promising of their military generation.[7] They were at the rank level and had the competence to make them the type of officer that all military forces depend on for innovation and originality, but not insubordination.[8] Nor, for the most part, did they express regret for their actions, either at the time or later during the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. Itagaki and Hanaya reputedly bragged about their roles when they had had a bit too much to drink.[9] These officers gave every indication of believing that their actions were justified and probably even necessary.

During the late nineteen twenties and early thirties a ferment of reformist thought permeated the mid-level and junior officer ranks of the Japanese army, and the officers of the Second Department and the Kwantung Army shared in it. But reform of the army and dissatisfaction with established defense policy were major concerns of officers in the American and European forces as well. The weapons of World War I--the tank, aircraft, machine gun and massed artillery--had

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7. Ishiwara, Itagaki, Doihara, Chō, Imada, Nemoto, and Tojo all became generals.

8. See Vincent Davis, "The Politics of Innovation: Patterns in Navy Cases," in American Defense Policy, ed. by Richard G. Head and Ervin J. Bokke (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 402-406.

9. Saionji-Harada Memoirs, Part II, "From Mukden to Shanghai," Vol. 1 (General Headquarters, Far East Command, Civil Intelligence Section, n.d.), p. 97.

revolutionized the practice of war without necessarily changing the theories of the generals or the structures of the armies that would have to fight. Dissatisfaction with existing policies was not confined to Japanese officers, nor to those who served in the Second Department and the Kwantung Army. But the Second Department and Kwantung Army were unique in their structures. Unlike other units in the Japanese Army (or most other modern armies) they both had long-established traditions of political as well as military activities. In these two organizations the Japanese army inadvertently created the institutional ability and will to take independent political action. And this, in turn, affected the entire army command structure.

## The Intelligence Problem

No army can function effectively without some intelligence information about the enemy. The size of the opposing forces, their deployment, the nature and availability of their weapons, the morale of the troops and the ability of the commanders--this is basic information, necessary for any force. The Japanese army commanders needed this and more. A fairly small force of superbly trained infantry, the Japanese army necessarily depended for its success on rapid movement, surprise, and disciplined shock power at the point of attack. For a force such as this to operate effectively on the Asian mainland against such enemies as Russia or China, an extensive and effective intelligence system was essential. The enemy's weak points had to be identified before they could be hit, and his exact deployment had to be known if unexpected encounters and traps were to be avoided. More than military intelligence was needed. An army that depends so heavily on cross-country movement must have good information on the topography of the region, must know where rivers can be most readily forded, where passes lie in mountain ranges. It must know something about the population; how many, where they live, whether they are friendly, hostile, or apathetic. These were ample sound reasons for the Japanese army to develop its intelligence capability.

Unfortunately, there is no clear dividing line between military and political intelligence. Nor, as other intelligence organizations have discovered, is there a clear line between intelligence and other clandestine operations. An agent who can ferret out information can also subvert officials for other purposes. The line is further blurred by the military payoffs that can come from clandestine political operations. Dissension, carefully and covertly encouraged, can divide the leadership of a potentially hostile government, effectively neutralize it as a military threat, or even cause its overthrow. Army officers competent to collect military intelligence are also capable of gathering political information, indeed, cannot avoid gathering it as part of their daily duty. And, as professional officers in their country's military service, there can exist a strong temptation to use that information to carry out political covert operations that help their military mission. This creates one of the perennial problems of military intelligence.

Professional military officers are, by the very nature of their profession, organization men; they can practice their calling only within the context of their national armed forces. Their entire professional existence revolves around the accomplishment of the military mission of their service; within very broad bounds, whatever helps accomplish the mission is good, whatever interferes is bad. The mission is normally defined in purely military terms: to be able to meet and defeat hostile armed forces. Political considerations are not directly relevant to the daily lives of most officers. Policy, made at the highest level of command, sets the requirements and limits of operations, and is normally accepted as given.

Intelligence officers share the professional outlooks and goals of their fellow officers, but the nature of their duty sets them apart. While they are members of the organization, much of their professional lives are spent in semi-independent operations, necessarily overseas and frequently in civilian clothes. Their daily fare of duty can include acts whose military and political consequences are inseparable. In the process of performing military intelligence duties they learn the techniques of clandestine political operations, but learn them as proper methods for achieving accepted military goals. For most officers, military duty and political activity are sharply separated; for intelligence officers operating overseas the two can become inextricably interwoven. This can create a unique and dangerous capability within the military, a group of men with the experience and ability to use unauthorized political means for military ends. Such was the case in the Japanese army.

## Japanese Military Intelligence

At first, Japanese official intelligence missions were confined strictly to the collection of information, although that information was sometimes put to political use later. One of the first missions was organized in 1872, during the debate over the proposed Korean Expedition. Saigō Takamori secretly sent three men into Manchuria to scout out the strength of Ch'ing forces available to support Korea against Japan. Their report of the administrative disarray and military weakness of Manchuria was used by Saigō as part of his argument in favor of the expedition.[10] The following year, 1873, Saigō chose several army and navy officers and sent them as consuls to Taiwan, Amoy, and South China. Their job was to observe and report on local conditions.

Systematic sustained military intelligence operations on the mainland began, like so many other things in the Japanese army, with Yamagata Aritomo. In 1879 he assigned a young army officer, his protege Katsura Tarō, the job of surveying Chinese military capabilities. Katsura secretly entered north China in the fall. Pleased with the results, Yamagata chose about another dozen officers to travel through China, and began the policy of assigning military attaches to diplomatic posts. The information brought back by Katsura and the others

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10. Marius B. Jansen, The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1954), p. 23.

was evaluated, organized, and in 1880 was published with the title Military Preparedness of Neighboring Countries. It covered the Chinese banner forces as well as the regular Chinese forces, and discussed their disposition, bases, organization, weapons, and standards.[11] The intelligence gathering was continued, and the report was updated in 1882 and again in 1889.

One young officer who was strongly attracted by this type of activity was Arao Kiyoshi. Already fascinated by China, he studied Chinese before the entered the army. In 1882, when the second edition of Military Preparedness was being published, he attempted to join a group of civilian adventurers entering China, but was persuaded to join the army instead. His work at the officers' school was so good he was immediately assigned to the new General Staff. There he helped establish the institutional base for Yamagata's continuing intelligence collection effort; at his suggestion a special staff bureau was organized specifically to collect and analyze intelligence information on China.[12]

By 1886 Arao won approval to go to China and set up a field network. His cover was a legitimate Japanese pharmaceutical store, the Rakuzendō (Hall of Pleasurable Delights) owned by Kishida Ginko. Combining a spirit of Japanese nationalism with Pan-Asian ideals and shrewd

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11. Marius B. Jansen,"Japanese Views of China During the Meiji Period," in Approaches to Modern Chinese History, ed. by Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey, and Mary C. Wright (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 167-168.

12. Jansen, Japanese and Sun Yat-sen, pp. 49-50.

business sense, Kishida, in 1886, was actively searching for motivated young men to set up a branch store, and sell his products in China. His aims and Arao's complimented each other, and Arao assumed responsibility for Rakuzendō's China operations.[13]

Arao began by setting up a branch in Shanghai, and the next year began another deeper in China, at Hankow. There he established a school to train his agents. Dressed in Chinese clothes, wearing queues and speaking fluent Chinese, these agents were sent out to all parts of China disguised as itinerant patent medicine salesmen. To finance their operation and make their cover better, they actually had to sell their products, mostly aphrodasiacs and pornographic pictures, according to one author.[14] They penetrated all parts of China, went to Yunnan, Sinkiang, Mongolia, Russia, Turkestan, and other areas. They returned with intelligence on subjects such as the economic and agricultural development of the region, the financial conditions and tax grievances, names and personal characteristics of key figures in the area, especially those likely to be sympathetic to Japan, roads and communications, Russian, Chinese, Burmese and Indian defenses, etc.[15] The information was fed into the intelligence department of the General Staff.

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13. E. Herbert Norman, "The Genyōsha: A Study in the Origins of Japanese Imperialism," Pacific Affairs XVII, 3 (Sept. 1944), p. 279.

14. Ibid., p. 279.

15. Norman, "Genyōsha," pp. 279-280.

Arao was a captain in the army while operating the China intelligence network, but his agents were not necessarily military men themselves. He functioned as a "case officer," whose job was to identify, recruit, motivate and train agents, give them their assignments, and receive the intelligence they collected. He had a ready source of potential recruits available to him.

Five years earlier, in 1881, a group of dissatisfied ex-samurai in Fukuoka had formed the Genyōsha, an amalgamation of several small nationalistic societies. The defeat of the samurai in the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 had not reconciled the survivors to the new order of Meiji Japan, nor had it lessened their dislike of the Western ways that seemed to threaten the core values of Japanese culture itself. The Genyōsha was an expression of their discontent.[16] It was not just a reactionary, negative group, however. In the face of rising Western imperialism the Genyōsha both affirmed the old samurai virtues and stressed the continuing relevance of "Eastern" values. Asserting that the salvation of Japan and of Asia lay not in copying Western ways but in resurrecting and following Wang Tao, the Kingly Way, or the "rule of right," Genyōsha leaders like Hiraoka Kōtaro, Tōyama Mitsuru and Miyazaki Torazō, insisted that Japan's proper destiny was to lead Asia in its own resurrection. The Genyōsha was to be an instrument for aiding

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16. Storry, Double Patriots, pp. 9-10.

that rebirth.[17] The society's name itself hinted at this mission: it was named for the Genkai Nada, the straits separating Japan from Korea.

Genyōsha attracted a considerable number of young men. Some were adventurers seeking excitement and fortune; others were attracted by the idealism implicit in the vision of Asian regeneration. Barely a year after its founding, Genyōsha was able to send one hundred men into China to gather information, the necessary first step in "resurrecting" China.[18] Arao himself had originally intended to be one of these until he had been persuaded to join the army. Now, in 1886, he could draw on this pool of motivated young Japanese for his agents.

Arao established the link between Genyōsha and its host of successor organizations and the army's intelligence service. The aims of Genyōsha and the later Kokuryūkai (Amur Society) were not the same as those of army intelligence, but they were compatible. The China adventurers (Shina rōnin) of the civilian societies served as interpreters and guides for the army during the Sino-Japanese War.[19] They organized Manchurian bandits into guerrilla units during the Russo-Japanese War, and harassed Russian columns far behind the lines.[20] In return the

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17. Hilary Conroy, "Government vs. Patriots: Background of Japan's Asiatic Expansion," Pacific Historical Review XX (February 1951), p. 39.

18. Storry, Double Patriots, p. 12.

19. Norman, "The Genyōsha," p. 280

20. Storry, Double Patriots, pp. 14-15, and O. Tanin and E. Yohan, Militarism and Fascism in Japan (New York: International Publishers, 1934), p. 45.

army intelligence service gave them employment as agents, extended official protection to them when necessary, and actively supported their operations with funds, arms, and officer advisors when that seemed likely to accomplish a desired military objective. At his Hankow school, Arao regularly lectured his new agents on the importance of resurrecting Asia, a familiar Genyōsha theme, but he used it to motivate his men to gather intelligence for the army.[21]

Arao was the first of the so-called "China Experts" among army intelligence officers; his career set a pattern that was repeated in part by men like Matsui Nanao, Machino Takema, Doi Ichino, and Doihara Kenji. While he could and did work effectively within the General Staff, he personally preferred field work in China, and he obviously relished the excitement of intrigue and undercover operations. Although he worked to fulfill army intelligence aims, he was so closely associated with the civilian Shina rōnin that his biography was included in the official history of Kokuryūkai.[22]

By the time of the Sino-Japanese War the basic features of the army's intelligence service were established. Reflecting accepted

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21. Jansen, "Japanese Views," p. 185, and Japanese and Sun Yat-sen, p. 50.

22. Kuzū Toshihisa, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden (Tokyo, 1933-1936), vol. III, pp. 607-612. The biography is summarized in Norman, "Genyōsha," pp. 278-280. Arao resigned his commission in 1889, and established a "commercial school" in Shanghai with about 200 students, ostensibly to encourage greater commercial activity in China by Japanese businessmen. However, about half of his graduates became Shina rōnin, while the other half entered the army to become the next generation of "China experts." Only two of the 200 actually entered business. Ibid., p. 280.

European practice, officers were assigned to intelligence duty at every level of command from regiment on up, but they dealt primarily with simple tactical intelligence. In form, the Second Department of the General Staff was simply the military intelligence staff at the highest level. In reality it was much more. From its very beginning the General Staff needed strategic, rather than tactical, intelligence. It was to provide this longer-range, more general information that the early deep-penetration missions of Katsura and the others were mounted. Put on a continuing basis by Yamagata, with an institutional base and a working field network established by Arao, this clandestine intelligence gathering apparatus was effective and provided the General Staff with the necessary strategic intelligence. But in so doing it made the Second Department into an organizational anomaly.

Like virtually every other modern military force the Japanese army used the line-staff organizational pattern. In this structure command lines and operational responsibility run from central headquarters to divisions to regiments, and so forth. At each level both authority and responsibility are specifically vested in the unit commander. Only he can make definitive decisions or order his unit into action. He is bound to follow the orders of his superior commander, and his orders in turn are binding on subordinates. But no one man, at any organizational level, can possibly manage all aspects of complex military operations. Intelligence, supply, maintenance, medical support, communications--these are highly specialized and essential functions. They are handled not by the commanders but by the commanders' staffs. Staff officers at each organizational level have the right to communicate and coordinate with their counterparts at other levels, but they do not have the right to order actions--only commanders can do this, and the orders must come down the command line. Staff officers supervise specialized functions and advise their commanders. Commanders, and only commanders, can initiate operations.[23]

The Second Department was a staff agency with an operational capability; as such it was unique in the Japanese army. It performed the usual staff functions but in addition, through its agents and deep-penetration missions it had the capability of carrying out clandestine operations without going through the normal army command line. Further, with its pool of "China experts" and later its "Russia experts" it had a group of professional intelligence officers trained, motivated, and experienced in carrying out operations directed by and through the Second Department. Planning and policy formulation are staff functions; operational capabilities are not. Staff agencies that formulate a proposed policy regularly become its passionate advocates within the staff, and may use all the devices of bureaucratic politics to achieve its implementation.[24] Operational units take policies as settled directives and

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23. The traditional military line-staff organization is illustrated in Figure 2, p. 72. Fred R. Brown (ed.), National Security Management, Management: Concepts and Practice (Washington,D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1967), pp. 25-26. The Japanese Army General Staff organization is illustrated in Figure 3, p. 73. War Department Technical Manual TM-E 30-480, Handbook on Japanese Military Forces.(Washington: United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1944).

24. See Morton H. Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1974), pp. 26-62, for examples of this same problem within the American government.

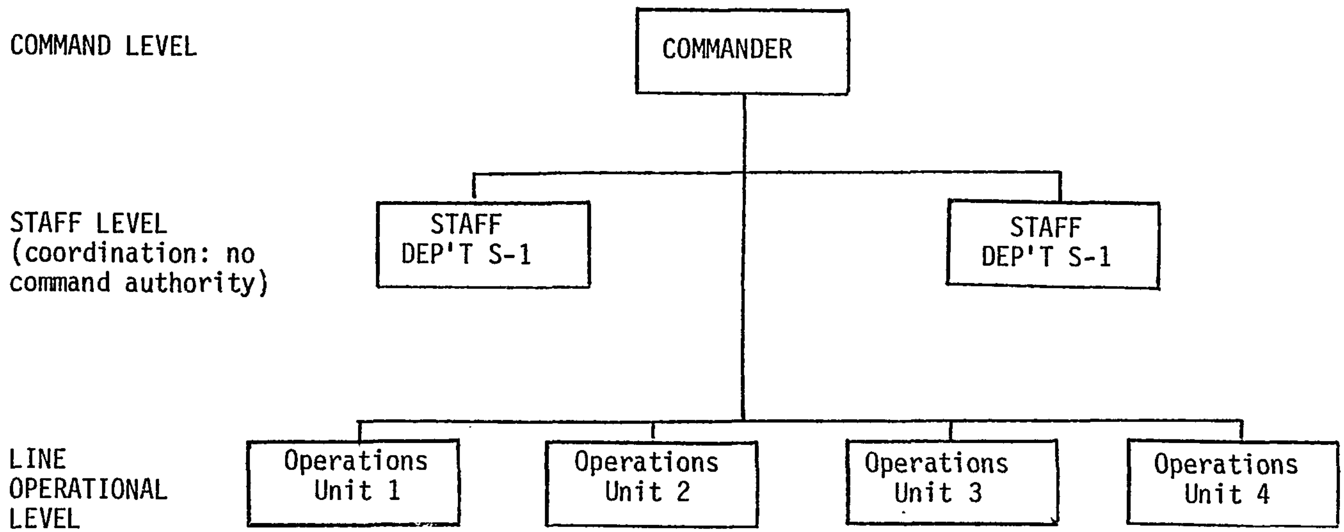


Figure 2. Traditional Military Line-Staff Organization

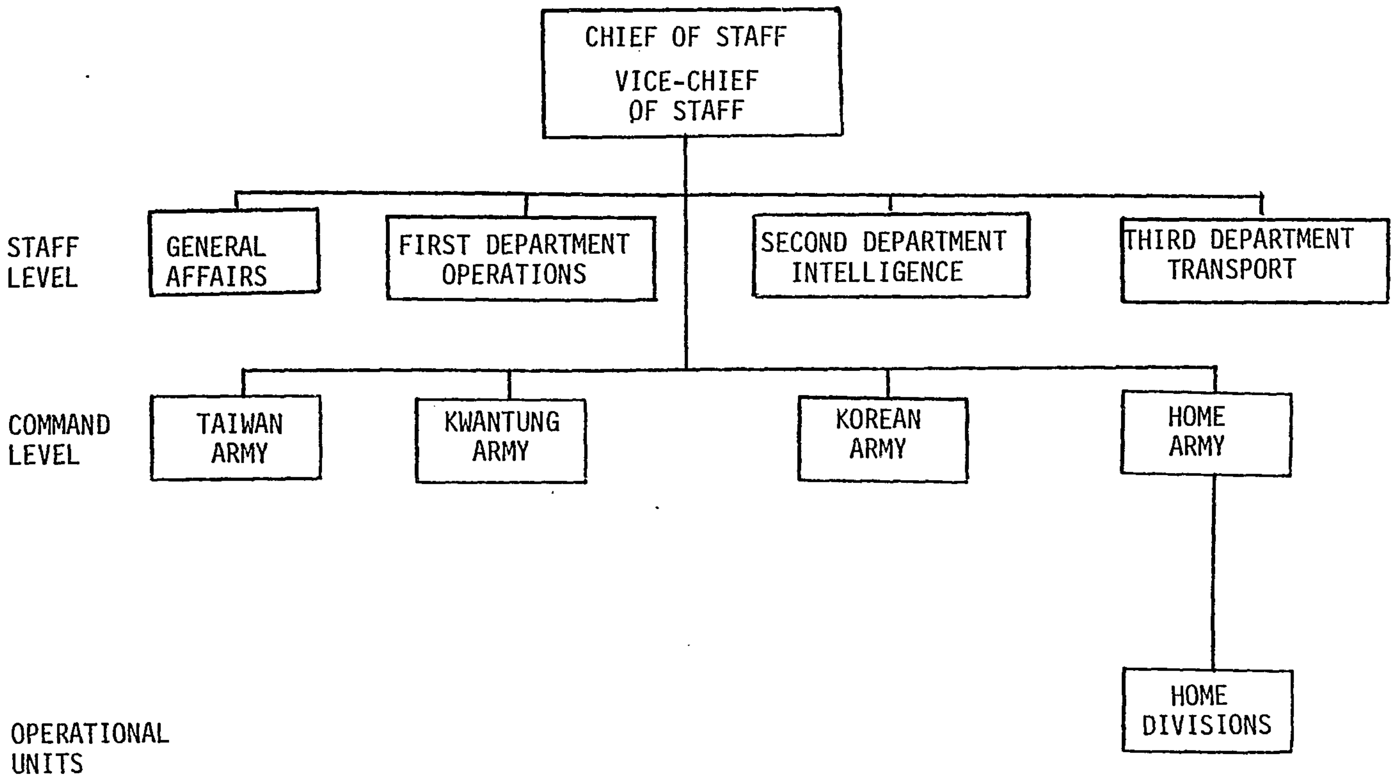


Figure 3. General Staff Organization

concentrate on carrying them out. When the two functions are combined the staff planners help execute, and the policy that is being advocated can easily become the one that is unilaterally implemented by simply by-passing the normal command lines.

## The Kwantung Army

Like the intelligence service, the Kwantung Army was created to fill a legitimate military need. The existence of the intelligence service gave the army the institutional basis for clandestine political operations, and so made such operations possible. The development of the Kwantung Army perhaps made those operations almost unavoidable.

The Kwantung Army was not formally created by that name until 1919, but its origins extend back to the Russo-Japanese War. In May, 1904, the Japanese First Army drove out of Korea into Manchuria. Conditions behind the lines were chaotic, and the problem of keeping the logistic and supply lines moving became increasingly serious. To insure that the fighting force received the necessary support, in June Chief of Staff Oyama recommended that a special independent command be set up in Manchuria consisting of a military Governor-Generalship with complete control over all activities in the area and headed by the senior army commander in the field.[25] Neither the War Ministry nor the Foreign Ministry was willing to concede that much power to a field army commander, however. As a result, a rear-area military command was established with authority only over the army supply lines moving toward the front.

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25. Shimada Toshihiko, Kantōgun (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1965), p. 4.

This arrangement broke down with the taking of the Liaotung Peninsula, the area that had been under direct Russian administration. Internal security within Liaotung was poor, governmental administration was hopelessly disrupted. For the first time the army was faced with the problem of controlling and policing a significant civilian population as well as its own fighting force. In the face of the very real problems this created, the General Staff resurrected Oyama's plan for bringing logistics, administration, and defense together in one set of hands. On 14 August 1904 an Imperial decree created the Liaotung Defense Army, an independent command with six battalions. Its commander was the military governor of Liaotung.[26]

In army eyes, a permanent military governorship in Liaotung was both sensible and desirable. The officers of the General Staff assumed that Russia would someday try to reverse the verdict of 1905, and they planned for war accordingly. They intended to meet the expected Russian attack on the plains of northern Manchuria, and Liaotung was to be the support and supply base for their operations.[27] To these officers, the value of Manchuria lay in its strategic importance for that anticipated struggle.

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26. Ibid., p. 4.

27. Their plans in the early days were rather sketchy, but became more specific and detailed over the following twenty-five years without changing in their essentials. See Japanese Special Studies on Manchuria, vol. I, Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR (Office of Military History, HQ. US Army Forces Far East, 1955), pp. 23-28, for the evolution of their plans.

Permanent military control of Liaotung was not acceptable to the Foreign Ministry, however. Even before the end of the war the Foreign Ministry was receiving pressure from the British Ambassador to reopen the Open Door in Manchuria, and already in 1905 E.H. Harriman had begun his efforts to buy the South Manchurian Railway.[28] The Foreign Ministry found a champion in Itō Hirobumi, the Governor-General of Korea and a strong advocate of civil administration. In May, 1906, the Japanese army made its triumphal return home. Itō took advantage of the celebration to return to Japan and urge a special conference on Manchuria. The meeting convened on 22 May; it included the _genro_ Itō, Yamagata, Matsukata and Inoe, Prime Minister Saionji, influential councillors and the army leadership. Itō argued that military control of Manchuria was not only alienating both the United States and Britain but that it was causing increased anti-Japanese agitation in China. Although the army disagreed, Itō won over the other _genro_, and the decision was made to end military control.[29]

In its place the complex Government-General of Kwantung was established, effective 1 August 1906. A Governor-General, holding civil rank but chosen from among army generals or lieutenant generals on active duty would both control the civil administration of the Kwantung Territory and command the Kwantung garrison. Field Marshall Oyama, the man who had first advocated military control of Liaotung, was named the

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28. Takamori Kazuo, _Mantetsu Kōbōshi_ (Tokyo: Akita Shoten, 1970), pp. 15-16.

29. Shimada, _Kantōgun_, p. 11.

first Governor-General. The South Manchurian Railway Company was created to handle commercial development in Manchuria, and the area's foreign relations were to be routed through a Consul-General, who was equal in rank to the highest military officer present in Manchuria.[30]

As commander of the Kwantung Garrison, the Governor-General was subject, as were all army commanders, to the operations plans worked out by the General Staff. But as civil administrator of the Kwantung Territories he was a senior civil servant, nominated by the prime minister for direct appointment by the Emperor. Further, since the Kwantung Territory was in China, he was responsible to the Foreign Ministry for relations with China and other powers. Thus, although the position could by decree be filled only by a military officer, it was a political position directly responsible to two separate and often competing government ministries.

The Kwantung Government became the focal point for conflict between the army and the Foreign Ministry. Its structure made the army a permanent and legitimate participant in political decision-making regarding Manchuria and the Kwantung Territory. Foreign policy decisions made in Tokyo could be critiqued on their military significance by the Kwantung Garrison staff, and the Governor-General in his role of Commander, Kwantung Garrison, could be legitimately briefed. Protests and reports could be properly forwarded to the General Staff. Military decisions, made by the General Staff for military reasons, became subject to Foreign Ministry protest and disapproval insofar as they affected

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30. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 9.

relations with China, and decisions involving Manchuria could not fail to affect China. Itō had created the Kwantung Government-General in order to get the army out of civil affairs in Manchuria, but its very structure made that hope impossible. It is perhaps no wonder that after only three months Governor-General Oyama complained that "the foreign policy of South Manchuria should be entrusted completely to the governor-general."[31]

## The General Staff

Had the intelligence service and the Kwantung Government been peripheral organizations, not directly involved with the performance of the army's mission, their capabilities for political involvement might have been inconsequential. Because they stood at the very heart of army plans and operations, however, they exerted enormous influence on the way army problems were identified and defined and on the solutions the army found for these problems.

In 1907, in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, the army and navy General Staffs for the first time worked out a unified Imperial Defense Policy.[32] Its purpose was to serve as a basis for establishing the strength and structure of Japanese forces by identifying prospective enemies. For the army, the enemy was emphatically identified as Russia, and a minimum strength of twenty-five divisions was established as

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31. Imai Seiichi, "Taishōgo ni Okeru Gunbu no Seijiteki Chii," Shisō, 399 (September, 1957), p. 1243.

32. U.S. Army, Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR, p. 15.

necessary to engage Russia. At the time the army consisted of only nineteen divisions.[33]

To support the 1907 Imperial Defense Policy, in that year the army began its practice of preparing annual operations plans. The planning cycle began in April of each year with the General Staff's "Estimate of the Situation." This was drafted by the Second Department of the General Staff--the intelligence staff. It presented the intelligence officers' best estimate of the current threats to Japanese interests, and requirements to meet those threats for the coming year. After it left the Second Department, the Estimate was examined by section heads in the other three General Staff Departments and was the subject of planning conferences by the Department heads.[34] From this round of conferences and planning sessions a draft Operations Plan emerged. This, in turn, was submitted to the "Big Three" of the army--the Chief of the General Staff, the Minister of War, and the Inspector General for Training. Once they accepted it, the Operations Plan became the official policy of the army for the coming year.[35]

Until the 1923 revision of the Imperial Defense Policy resulting from the Washington Conferences, the annual army Operations Plan

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33. Ibid., p. 15, and Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p.10.

34. The other Departments were Operations, Transport, and General Affairs.

35. General Tanaka Ryūkichi discusses the army planning process in IMTFE, pp. T 15,859-889. See also Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 49.

focused on fighting Russia.[36] In the event of war, the General Staff estimated that Japan could mobilize faster than Russia. The one division stationed in Kwantung was to be immediately augmented by at least five others from Japan; this total force was to secure the South Manchurian Railway to Changchow and hold it until the rest of the army had arrived. Russian forces were to be met as far north as possible.[37] For the operation plan to succeed, the Kwantung Territory and the South Manchurian Railway had to be maintained secure at all costs.

The annual operations plans were specifically prepared to implement the Imperial Defense Policy, and the operations plans themselves reflected the best professional judgment of the highest officers in the army. The practice of starting the planning process with an intelligence Estimate of the Situation is standard operating procedure in most military forces. But the Estimate defines the problems, and focuses the attention of operations-oriented officers on ways of seeking military solutions to those problems. Again, this is standard military planning procedure; in the case of the Japanese army, however, the men writing the Estimates and defining the problems were also its specialists in clandestine operations and covert political involvement. Of

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36. Beginning in 1923, the plans included preparations for quick expeditions and short localized campaigns in China, as well. Russia remained the main focus until the late 1930's, however. U. S. Army, Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR, p. 16-17.

37. U.S. Army, Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR, pp. 23-24.

all the officers in the army, they were the ones whose daily duty overseas blurred political and professional military matters the most.

Furthermore, the problems they were defining and the operations they were preparing both focused on Manchuria, the area in which the Kwantung Garrison had primary responsibility. Any event or situation that would obstruct the Kwantung Garrison's operations immediately affected the army's ability to deploy its forces against Russia. Any threat to Kwantung was a threat to the viability of the basic operation plan of the Japanese army, and so to the Imperial Defense Policy itself. The key military role in Manchuria was therefore played by the Kwantung Governor-Generalship, whose very structure drew it and the garrison into the political affairs of the area.

Thus more by happenstance than design, and more by institutional structure than by deviousness, the army created within itself the ability to get involved politically outside Japan. Bureaucracies, including military bureaucracies, can do well only what they are designed to do; standard operation procedures are their administrative lifeblood. The Japanese army inadvertently created two sub-groups, the intelligence service and the Kwantung Army, for whom political involvement and manipulation became military standard operating procedures.

## CHAPTER V

## THE GROWTH OF A TRADITION OF CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

For a few years after the Russo-Japanese War, no threat disturbed the normal flow of military routine in Manchuria. The Kwantung Garrison rotated every two years, sharing the burden of overseas duty and its training opportunities among the active duty home divisions. Such threats as did appear--the Harriman proposal to buy the South Manchurian Railway, the Knox Neutralization Proposal, the adjustment of the spheres of influence with Russia--were clear-cut diplomatic problems, to be handled by the Foreign Ministry.[1]

This routine was shattered by the Chinese Revolution in 1911. The mutiny of the Wuhan garrison on 10 October 1911 marked the end of Manchu authority over the Chinese New Army and signalled the beginning of the final dynastic collapse. The dangers to foreigners of civil disorder became a matter of immediate concern in Peking legations. In Japan the army at once began considering the implications of this new development. Only four days after the Wuhan uprising, the Japanese Vice-Minister of War, General Oka Shinosuke, sent a memo to the Vice Chief of the General Staff, General Fukushima Yasumasa, in which he raised the issue of sending troops to parts of China where Japan had

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1. Young, <u>Japan's Special Position in Manchuria</u>, discusses these in some detail in pp. 69-86; 125-168.

interests. He expressed concern that the turbulence would spread to north China and Manchuria, and commented that "the task of defending the Manchurian Railway would be much simpler if that area were independent." However, he suggested only that the army prepare to dispatch troops to north China in cooperation with the other powers, as provided in the Boxer Protocol.[2] In November a battalion of the Third Division took up position in north China, ready to move into Peking if necessary. After Chinese army units in Peking rioted and burned several buildings in the commercial section on 29 February, 1912, the Japanese troops joined an international force providing increased protection in the Legation Quarter.[3] The rest of the Third Division was also then dispatched to north China to secure the approaches to Peking and Shanhaikuan.[4]

For the officers on the General Staff, the spreading turmoil in China posed a dual threat. Civil disorders in Manchuria could seriously threaten the security of the south Manchurian Railway and also conceivably slow down the army's deployment in case of war with Russia. Rapidity of movement was an essential part of both Japanese strategy and tactics. At least as serious, the obvious inability of China to defend its borders was stimulating Russian appetites. Only a month after the Wuhan uprising the Russians secretly delivered 15,000 rifles and seven million rounds of ammunition to the Mongols, successfully encouraged

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2. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 15.

3. Li Chien-nung, Political History of China, pp. 270-271.

4. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 16.

Outer Mongolia to rebel from China, and moved to make it a Russian protectorate.[5] Russian troops also occupied part of Sinkiang, encouraged an uprising of the Barguts in northwestern Manchuria, and began the process that was to transform Tannu Tavu from Mongolian into Russian territory.[6] Faced with this increased Russian activity, the General Staff decided to deploy another division to re-enforce the Kwantung Garrison. The Twelfth Division was chosen.[7]

The Foreign Ministry objected. The Russians had not violated the secret agreements defining Japanese and Russian spheres of influence, nor had they yet made any moves that threatened the Japanese position in South Manchuria. The Chinese Viceroy of Manchuria, Chao Ehr-hsun, aided by Chang Tso-lin, was moving decisively to maintain order in Manchuria. Despite strenuous arguments, the General Staff was denied its request to send the troops to Kwantung.

At 5:00 A.M., on 3 February 1912, about ten miles north of Shanhaikuan, a bridge on the Peking-Mukden railway line was blown up just as an express passenger train crossed it. In the wreck over 150 people died, including a Japanese diplomat. The explosion occurred in a sector that had been under the control of the Japanese Third Division, and from which it had just withdrawn. One Japanese writer suggests that this may have been a clandestine act of the Japanese army,

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5. Harry Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins and Commissars (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1973), pp.88-89.

6. Ibid., pp. 91-103.

7. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 16.

done to show that Manchuria was indeed insecure, and that the Kwantung Garrison really did need reenforcing.[8] Whoever may have set off the charge, no reenforcements were sent to Manchuria.

The day before the explosion, the Chinese civil war seemed to come to Manchuria. Five hundred revolutionary troops were landed in Liaotung, not far from the Kwantung Territories themselves. Admiral Yoshimatsu, commanding the Japanese Second Fleet at Port Arthur, issued a stern warning that disturbances in Liaotung would not be tolerated. The revolutionary forces ignored him, and landed anyway. Viceroy Chao, still loyal to the Ch'ing, responded by deploying 1500 men against the revolutionaries. Their advance brought them within the neutral zone bounding the Kwantung Territories. On 13 February, the Kwantung Government formally warned both sides to withdraw from the neutral zone. To back up that warning, the Kwantung Garrison force took up positions threatening both sides, and prepared to evict them by force. Under this pressure both sides did withdraw, but on different sides of the railway. The effect was to block the Ch'ing forces and leave the revolutionary troops a clear path toward Peking.[9]

The immediate practical consequences were minimal. In Peking, even as the forces were maneuvering the Ch'ing court was giving in to the demands of Yuan Shih-k'ai; before the revolutionary troops could march, the Ch'ing dynasty collapsed. However, the incident marked

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8. Ibid., p. 17. He offers no proof, however.

9. Shimada relates the incident in Kantōgun, pp. 19-20.

the first time that the Kwantung Garrison's military capabilities had been used directly to interfere with internal Chinese politics. Unintended and inconsequential as it was, it demonstrated the Kwantung Government's unavoidable involvement in local politics, and helped set a precedent for more conscious use of that power in the future. It showed, too, that instability in China sooner or later would have an impact on the Japanese position in Manchuria, and forced the officers of the Kwantung Garrison and the General Staff to consider ways of meeting that eventuality.

## The First Manchurian Independence Movement

One possible solution had already been suggested in General Oka's memo: if Manchuria were independent, and so cut off from the revolutionary turmoil in China, the South Manchurian Railway would be much easier to defend. Chao Ehr-hsun, the Manchurian Viceroy, had remained loyal to the Ch'ing until this was no longer a tenable political position. An independent Manchuria, perhaps ruled by the Ch'ing dynasty itself, would necessarily be dependent on Japanese military power for protection against a Chinese republic, and that dependence could insure Japan's position in Manchuria.

A variation on that plan was in fact suggested by the army's intelligence chief, head of the Second Department General Utsunomiya Tarō. When the revolution had broken out, a member of the Dōbunkai (East Asian Common Culture Society), Oyama Toshisaku, had written that the revolution would probably not win a total victory, and that instead China would probably split at the Yangtze River into a republican south and an imperial north. Utsunomiya agreed with this prediction, and urged that Japan aid both north and south.[10] This plan, while allowing the revolutionaries to succeed, would divert revolutionary zeal, leaving a weak and therefore cooperative regime in north China and Manchuria. The plan was accepted by the army's leadership.

For reasons of their own, some of the civilian adventurers, the Shina rōnin and Kokuryūkai members, envisaged a similar China. During his years of searching for backers and funds, Sun Yat-sen had visited Japan frequently and had established close ties to the members of Kokuryūkai.[11] According to the official history of Kokuryūkai, Sun had promised that, in return for Japanese help in making a successful revolution, he was willing to let Japan dominate Manchuria.[12] The rise of Yuan Shih-k'ai negated that promise, however; Yuan, not Sun, held effective power in north China. Among the adventurers who set out to change this situation and to claim Japan's reward, the most active and influential was Kawashima Naniwa.

Kawashima was of samurai background. Growing up in Tokyo in the early days of Meiji Japan, he was at first attracted, then repelled by the Westernization he saw around him. His sense of mission--ridding

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10. Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, p. 324. The Dōbunkai, founded in 1898, was a cultural and research society that stressed the value of Asian culture. Its membership ranged from highly respected scholars to members of Kokuryūkai. See Jansen, Japanese and Sun Yat-Sen, pp. 51-53.

11. Jansen, Japanese and Sun Yat-sen, esp. pp. 82-130.

12. Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, p. 318.

East Asia of Western imperialism--was deepened by a trip to China in 1886. Returning to Japan he entered Tokyo Imperial University's Department of Foreign Languages, intending to study Chinese, Korean, Russian, French and German. He refused to take English, however; it was the language of the chief imperialists.[13] He left before earning his degree to go to China for an "ambitious undertaking," learned fluent Chinese, and worked as an interpreter for the Japanese army during the Sino-Japanese War. By the time of the revolution Kawashima was a recognized "China expert," with contacts in the army, Kokuryūkai, and among influential Chinese.

As Yuan Shih-k'ai maneuvered to assume power in China, Kawashima moved to block him. He convinced Wu Lu-chan, the commander of Chinese imperial forces in Hopei and an old friend, to attack Yuan. Yuan had Wu assassinated instead.[14] Kawashima tried to have Yuan's train bombed, and failed; he tried to bomb Yuan's house, only to discover Yuan had moved.[15]

Having failed in his attempts to assure Japan's position in Manchuria by removing Yuan, Kawashima determined to take more direct action. During his years in China he had made friends with Prince Su

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13. Ibid., pp. 212-225 contains a biography of Kawashima's early life in voluminous and admiring detail. Jansen presents a good thumbnail sketch in Japanese and Sun Yat-sen, p. 138.

14. Wu sent a circular telegram to other Chinese commanders, explaining his actions and asking their support. Yuan learned of Wu's intentions from the telegram, and acted first. Donald G. Gillin, Warlord (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967),p. 17.

15. Jansen, Japanese and Sun Yat-sen, p. 139.

of the Ch'ing royal house.[16] Prince Su was bitterly opposed to the republic, and deeply resented Yuan Shih-k'ai's moves to aid the dynasty toward its demise. Kawashima suggested that Prince Su set up the Ch'ing dynasty again, in a newly independent Manchuria. Late in 1911 Kawashima returned to Japan, and through his army contacts brought his plan to the attention of the Second Department's General Utsunomiya. Utsunomiya did not tell Kawashima of the army's similar plan, nor would he openly commit the army to back him. He did express his personal approval, however, Later he gave explicit instructions to his subordinates in the Second Department that "If Kawashima goes to China he should be helped."[17]

In January, 1912, Kawashima did go to China, and together with Toyama Mitsuru of the Kokūryukai began preparations. The army gave the support Utsunomiya had suggested. At the end of January the Kwantung Garrison's Chief of Staff, Hoshino Kingo, received a telegram from the army Vice Minister of War suggesting that disturbances might soon break out in Manchuria, and that the Kwantung Garrison need not be "overly fastidious in disposing of the situation."[18] The wording was vague, and may have been only a general warning, but at the very worst, as one Japanese author suggests, the telegram implied that the

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16. The relationship was close. Kawashima's famous daughter, Yoshiko, was actually Prince Su's daughter whom Kawashima had adopted. Ibid., p. 263, note 63.

17. Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, p. 325.

18. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 18.

disturbances could be used to justify the deployment of a second division to Manchuria.[19]

Certainly both the Kwantung Garrison and the General Staff did aid Kawashima. On 2 February 1912, Kawashima and Toyama spirited Prince Su out of Peking and took him to Port Arthur, where he stayed in the official residence of that city's head of civil government. A few days earlier, Colonel Takeyama Kōtsu was dispatched from the Second Department to Peking, as special envoy to Peking and Inner Mongolia.[20] He was assisted by Major Taga and Captains Matsui and Omura.[21] While Takeyama helped Kawashima get Prince Su out of Peking, the captains entered Mongolia, made contact with two Mongol princes Kawashima had designated, and helped them organize a force of cavalry. Major Taga arranged for the necessary weapons and ammunition, and accompanied them from Manchuria through Jehol into Inner Mongolia.[22]

Neither the Kwantung Garrison nor the General Staff had informed the Foreign Ministry of this operation, but Consul-General Ochiai at Mukden, catching wind of it, entered a strong protest. The Foreign Ministry, in Tokyo, emphatically agreed with Ochiai. Since 1910 an international banking consortium had been negotiating a major

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19. Ibid., p. 18.

20. Ibid., p. 18.

21. Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, p. 328.

22. Ibid., II, p. 329.

loan to the Chinese government; at the insistence of the Americans, Manchurian development was included. Largely to protect its economic position in Manchuria, Japan demanded the right to enter the consortium.[23] By 1912 this meant, in effect, underwriting the regime of Yuan Shih-k'ai; attempts to undermine Yuan threatened not only the negotiations but possibly Japanese financial interests as well. The cabinet agreed with the Foreign Ministry, and the army was instructed to immediately stop aiding Kawashima. It obeyed.

By then, however, the plot had taken on its own momentum. The supplies and arms Taga had procured were already in Mongolia, the cavalry force was formed, Prince Su was eager. In early July the force began its invasion of Manchuria. On 6 July 1912, they were met by a small Chinese force at Taishyapō, near the border of Inner Mongolia. In a hard fight they lost thirteen Japanese, nine Mongols and thirty Chinese; the engagement ended in a decisive defeat for the would-be rebels.[24]

This first attempt to establish an independent Manchuria was a prophetic failure. It was an exercise in covert political manipulation by Japanese "China experts." It depended on local dissatisfaction for its motive power, and attempted to channel those discontents to achieve Japanese ends. Neither the Kwantung Government nor the Second Department of the General Staff created the discontents, or

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23. Young, Japan's Special Position in Manchuria, pp. 169-183 discusses the complications and details of the negotiations.

24. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 19.

initiated the movement to exploit them, but both did actively cooperate with the attempt. They did so for military reasons, to insure the security of the Manchurian base of operations and possibly to justify a reenforcement of the Kwantung Garrison. Both were moves aimed at defense against Russia, but both involved interference in the domestic politics of China and Manchuria. Given the intense but rather narrow professionalism of the Japanese officer corps, it is not surprising that the officers of the General Staff and the Kwantung Garrison should have valued military over political considerations. It was not an exercise in military insubordination, and the army quickly obeyed orders to end its involvement. But the army had not bothered to get clearance before becoming involved in the first place, for in army eyes the ends were military, not political.

## The Twenty One Demands

The collapse of the first Manchurian independence movement and the Foreign Ministry's success in dealing with the international banking consortium brought a period of relative inactivity to Manchuria. China seethed with political activity as Yuan Shih-k'ai consolidated his hold, and the Japanese civilian adventurers continued their activities unabated, but Manchuria remained peaceful. The Kwantung Garrison did not get the second division, but the Governor of Mukden kept civil order, and Russia carefully observed the secret agreements defining the Japanese sphere of influence. Prince Su remained in Dairen.

The outbreak of the First World War brought fundamental changes to this order. Within weeks the European powers were locked in desperate combat on their own continent, with few resources and little patience to spare for Asia. The major restraints on Japanese policy were temporarily gone, but so too was the international order upon which that policy had been posited. The war was a time of opportunity and danger. Opportunity because the Europeans were diverted, danger because the war must someday inevitably end, and the victors could be expected to return to Asia with renewed strength.[25]

The most pressing problem was the Kwantung Territory. The lease to this land ran only for twenty-five years and would terminate in 1923. There was no prospect for its being voluntarily renewed or extended by China. The war provided an excellent opportunity for Japan to secure this vital position. As an ally of Britain, Japan occupied the German holdings in Shantung as soon as the war broke out. This put the Japanese army in a position to add extra weight to diplomatic demands. On 18 January 1915, only four months after the war had begun, the Japanese minister in Peking handed Yuan Shih-k'ai the Twenty One Demands. While these covered a number of economic and political matters, of major importance were Group II, the ones pertaining to Manchuria, which extended the lease on the Kwantung Territory for ninety-nine years.[26] Yuan at

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25. See Motosada Zumoto, "Japan and the Pan-Asiatic Movement," paper delivered at Geneva, 1 September 1926, cited by M.D. Kennedy, Some Aspects of Japan and Her Defense Forces (London: Kegan Paul, 1928), p. 151.

26. The text of the Twenty One Demands is available in Meribeth E. Cameron, Thomas H.D. Mahoney, and George E. McReynolds, China, Japan, and the Powers (New York: The Ronald Press, 1952), pp. 361-364. According to Royama, the initial demands formulated by Foreign Minister Katō Komei were moderate and focussed on Manchuria, but other groups within the government added more extreme demands. Masamichi Royama, Foreign Policy of Japan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1941), p. 19.

first resisted the demands, and accepted them only after the most offensive had been dropped and a point-blank ultimatum given to accept the rest within forty-eight hours.

The heavy-handed and clumsy way Foreign Minister Katō handled the Twenty One Demands left a residue of deep bitterness in Japanese-Chinese relations and brought sharp rebukes from the Western powers as well as from the genrō themselves. The Twenty One Demands left the army in an ambiguous position. On the one hand the rights gained in Manchuria were substantial, and the extension of the Kwantung Territory lease was a major accomplishment. But the manner in which it was done itself weakened the value of that accomplishment. Virtually all factions in China denounced the Japanese actions, and the government of Yuan Shih-k'ai made it clear that it had acted only under duress. In Manchuria the Kwantung Government discovered that its problems had been suddenly compounded. Before, Russia was the enemy to be concentrated on; the dangers of civil disorder existed only as an unfortunate by-product of the Chinese civil war. Now there was the knowledge that any Chinese regime strong enough to unite the country could almost surely demand the reversion of Kwantung. The Twenty One Demands tied Manchuria more tightly into the Chinese political web.

The Kwantung Government's recommended response was a strengthening of Japan's military position in Manchuria. On 25 May 1915, the day the treaty embodying the Twenty One Demands was signed, Kwantung Governor-General Nakamura sent two documents to General Oka, the army Chief of Staff. One was an "Opinion Concerning the Reorganization of the Kwantung Governor-Generalship," and the other, an "Opinion Concerning the Stationing of Troops in Manchuria." Nakamura argued that in a time of increasing potential danger, Japanese power in Manchuria was fragmented and poorly positioned. He recommended the centralization of power in the Governor-General's office, with authority to control the consular police, the Japanese courts, and the administration of all Japanese in South Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. To complement this increased civil authority he suggested that the Kwantung Garrison be shifted from Port Arthur to Mukden. This would place it farther north, nearer Russia where it might be needed, and would make Mukden the pivot of Japanese power.[27] He did not add that it would also place the main body of Japanese troops at the political center of Manchuria.

General Nakamura's recommendations were not acted on by the General Staff, for his analysis of the political threat from China was quickly shown to be mistaken. The danger lay not in the Chinese government's future strength but in its present weakness. Late in 1915 Yuan Shih-k'ai began his bid for the imperial throne. It was a move his own officers would not support. The generals of the Peiyang army, whose allegiance had given Yuan his strength, were willing to serve him as president, but not as emperor. By January, 1916, the military leader of Yunnan, Ts'ai Ao, had risen in revolt; others followed. The governor of Kwangsi declared his province independent.[28]

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27. Shimada, Kantōgun, pp. 29-30.

28. Li Chien-nung, Political History of China, pp. 227-330.

The Second Manchurian Independence Movement

It was in this context of spreading rebellion and disenchantment with Yuan Shih-k'ai that a second Manchurian independence movement began. In 1915 two Mongols appeared in Tokyo, sought out the Kokuryūkai, and tried to arrange to buy guns and military equipment. They had been sent by a Mongol leader, Papuchapu, who had led a pro-Japanese cavalry force in the Russo-Japanese War; he now wanted Japanese help in establishing an independent Inner Mongolia.[29] Kawashima Naniwa enthusiastically endorsed the idea, but expanded it to include Manchuria as well as Mongolia. Prince Su and the Japanese Okura zaibatsu contributed funds, and Kawashima left for Mongolia to help raise the necessary cavalry force.[30]

In early 1916 the General Staff threw its support behind Kawashima. In a cabinet meeting on 5 May 1916 the Japanese government formally decided that Japanese interests in China were being threatened by the disturbances there, and that they would be better served if someone other than Yuan Shih-k'ai headed the Chinese government.[31] This decision was greeted with approval by both the General Staff and the Kwantung Governor-General. In his attempts to strengthen his political position, Yuan had made a henchman, Tuan Chih-kuie, the new Governor

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29. Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, pp. 625-26.

30. Ibid., p. 631, and Saionji-Harada Memoirs, Supplement, "Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-lin" (Tokyo: General Headquarters Far East Command, Civil Intelligence Section, no date), p. 13.

31. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 31.

of Mukden. Tuan immediately entered into a power struggle with Chang Tso-lin, bringing the threat of civil war once again into Manchuria.[32] As in 1912, an independent Manchuria seemed a way to insure the security of the Kwantung Territories and the South Manchurian Railway. Unlike the earlier attempt, however, this time the General Staff got the backing of the government before entering the operation.[33]

Within the General Staff the plan received enthusiastic backing from Vice Chief of Staff Tanaka Giichi and from the then head of the Second Department, General Fukuda. Colonel Tsuchii Juzo, Major Koiso Kuniaki, and "China expert" Colonel Doi Ichino were dispatched by the Second Department to work with Kawashima in Mukden. Kwantung Governor-General Nakamura added his support.

Once in Manchuria the Second Department officers recruited a force of Japanese adventurers and unemployed Chinese coolies in Mukden, while Kawashima joined Papuchapu in Mongolia to raise the cavalry.[34] The plan called for Kawashima and Papuchapu to invade Manchuria; when

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32. Li Chien-nung, Political History of China, pp. 346-347.

33. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 31. Beginning in 1915 high-ranking army and navy officers met regularly with the Chief of the Political Affairs Bureau of the Foreign Ministry, in his office, to coordinate and plan Japan's China policy. They received political support from important cabinet members, and could call on the Okura and Kuhara *zaibatsu* for funds. According to Morley, it was probably this group that approved army support of Kawashima. James W. Morley, The Japanese Thrust into Siberia, 1918 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 13-14.

34. Saionji-Harada Memoirs, "Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-lin," p. 13.

the Chinese garrison moved out to meet them, the Mukden force raised by the three officers would try to seize the city, cause confusion, and hopefully demoralize the Chinese forces into disintegrating.[35] Kawashima succeeded in raising a fairly substantial force of almost three thousand men, and actually did invade parts of Manchuria.[36]

Strong opposition to the Manchurian independence movement appeared from an unexpected source, however. Even before Kawashima's cavalry began its operation Chang Tso-lin was strengthening and consolidating his position in Mukden. Using the slogan "Manchuria for the Manchurians," by the spring of 1916 he was in effective control of South Manchuria, with 20,000 well-armed men under his direct command. For a number of officers in the Kwantung Garrison, Chang Tso-lin was an ideal solution to their military problem. Fairly conservative, with impressive local strength and the support of the Mukden Chinese business community, Chang owed nothing to Yuan. He was a known quantity, had shown no resentment of the Japanese presence, and although very much his own man, was careful not to incite Japanese animosity toward him. Both Major General Hongō, commander of the Seventeenth Division then stationed in Manchuria, and Brigidier General Fujii, commander of the Independent Garrison (the railway guards), firmly supported Chang Tso-lin. These were the commanders of the operational units in Manchuria; their opinions carried weight in the Japanese army, and they won over Governor-General

35. Ibid., p. 15.

36. The whole operation is described in excruciating detail in Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, pp. 625-682.

Nakamura himself.[37] They also briefed the Consul-General at Antung, Yoshida Shigeru, and Mukden Consul-General Yada Shintarō, and through them won Foreign Ministry support for Chang.

Although he still was supported by the Second Department officers and the General Staff, this shift within the Kwantung Garrison boded ill for Kawashima's operation. The Kokuryūkai members working with him decided to assassinate Chang Tso-lin. Their opportunity came when Prince Kanin, younger brother of the Emperor, visited Russia by way of the South Manchurian and Trans-Siberian Railways. Mukden Consul-General Yada and Chang Tso-lin planned to greet the prince at the Mukden station as his train passed through. Kokuryūkai planted men with bombs along the most likely routes Chang would take as he returned to his headquarters, and waited. They struck when Chang was just a few blocks from his headquarters. Several of Chang's attendants and guards were killed by the blast, but Chang himself was unhurt; he escaped by leaping from his carriage, grabbing a horse and hat from one of his guards, and galloping to safety down a side road.[38] Three bombs in all were thrown; one was a dud. Consul-General Yada's carriage had been just behind Chang's, and he witnessed the whole affair. He picked up

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37. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 32.

38. Saionji-Harada Memoirs, "Prince Saionji and the Assassination of Chang Tso-lin," p. 14, and Kuzū, Tōa Senkaku Shishi Kiden, II, pp. 634-635.

the dud and showed it to General Hongō, who identified it as Japanese-made.[39]

In his account of the assassination attempt Saionji strongly implies that the Second Department officers were involved. This is not borne out by the *Kokuryūkai* history's version of it, however. The *Kokuryūkai* claimed credit for the attempt, described it in vivid detail, gave the names of the men who tried and the one who died in the effort, but made no mention of the Second Department officers. *Kokuryūkai* was proud of its affiliations with the army, and normally Kuzū misses no opportunity to show army involvement with *Kokuryūkai*, and vice-versa, even down to giving the rank and branch of enlisted reservists working with them. If the Second Department officers had played an active role, it is doubtful Kuzū would conceal it.

The failure of the assassination attempt doomed the entire plot. Chang, now on his guard, remained alert in Mukden, and although Papuchapu's army advanced into Manchuria, the motley crew of insurgents raised by Tsuchii, Doi and Koisō had no real chance against Chang's combat-ready forces. Knowing this, the officers did not call them into action, and no uprising occurred. They did, however, approach Consul-General Yada, tell him of their plan, and ask for help. He indignantly refused and alerted the Foreign Ministry that General Staff officers were involved.[40]

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39. *Saionji-Harada Memoirs*, "Assassination," p. 14.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The entire affair collapsed when Yuan Shih-k'ai died suddenly in Peking on 6 June 1916. No other single Chinese leader had the power and stature Yuan could command, even in defeat; his death left a vacuum at the top of the Chinese political structure, with several contenders vying for his mantle. For the Japanese joint foreign policy planners this new situation meant a major shift of policy. Rather than sponsoring local leaders or regional rebellions, the planners decided to try to influence the policy of China itself by helping a properly friendly leader gain control of that government.[41] The planners met in hurried sessions in Tokyo, and only two days after Yuan's death the decision was made to end support for local rebellions.[42] The Second Department officers were abruptly pulled out of Manchuria, and the flow of funds and arms to Kawashima ended. Without Japanese military support Papuchapu's army was no match for Chang's; after a few desultory engagements the remnants of the Mongol force retreated into the South Manchurian Railway zone, to be disbanded and quietly sent back home.[43]

The General Staff and the Kwantung Government had supported the first Manchurian independence movement unilaterally, for military reasons, and without coordinating with other agencies of the government. As a result they had engaged in political actions that ran counter to

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41. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

42. Shimada, *Kantōgun*, p. 31.

43. Jansen, *Japanese and Sun Yat-sen*, p. 197, and *Saionji-Harada Memoirs*, "Assassination," p. 14.

accepted government policy. This did not occur in 1916, however, with Kawashima's second attempt. The decision to support the second Manchurian independence movement came after the government's leadership had decided to support local rebellions in China. It was in line with accepted policy, had the sanction of the government, and ended as soon as that government's policy changed. The decision was not a simple example of army adventurism, nor was it an exercise in an independent foreign policy by the General Staff. Its significance lay, rather, within the army itself. In support of accepted policy, the officers of the Second Department had engaged in clandestine political operations, planned and organized an uprising, equipped a rebel army. They had gained expertise and experience in such activities, and did so with the full knowledge that they were performing properly sanctioned actions for accepted military and political ends. Their participation in the Second Manchurian Independence Movement helped legitimize covert political operations, making them an appropriate means to pursue proper ends.

## Warlords

The death of Yuan Shih-k'ai marked the beginning of the warlord period of republican China. For the next decade political power in China was fragmented as provincial military governors maneuvered to increase their power and income at the expense of their neighbors. China was indeed split along north-south lines, as the head of the Second Department had predicted in 1911, but neither north nor south was ruled by a stable unified regime. Cliques of warlords formed and disbanded as power and survival required. In the north the government in Peking became a prize in the struggle, since it conferred legitimacy and brought the prospect of gaining foreign loans for whoever dominated it.[44]

The Japanese attempt to support a friendly warlord, and so directly influence Chinese policy, merely contributed to the confusion without causing any significant changes. The warlord selected, Tuan Chi-jui, had already become Premier upon Yuan's death. Tuan was known to be friendly to Japan, and two of his closest associates were graduates of Tokyo's Waseda University, and well-disposed to Japan.[45]

The decision to back Tuan was a joint one, made by representatives of the army, navy, cabinet, Foreign Ministry, House of Peers, and endorsed by members of the banking community. The army's Chief of Staff, Field Marshall Uehara, and Vice-Chief of Staff Tanaka Giichi gave their support.[46] The policy lasted four years and accomplished little. Tuan was never able to consolidate his hold over all of north China. Large Japanese loans to Tuan helped keep him in power, but were made without the consent of the Chinese parliament, and were

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44. Chinese politics in the warlord era are described in Chi Hsi-hseng, The Chinese Warlord System, 1916 to 1928 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Research in Social System, American University, 1969), Pye, Warlord Politics, and Li Chien-nung, The Political History of China, especially pp. 345-435.

45. Chi, Warlord System, p. 27.

46. Morley, Japan's Thrust into Siberia, p. 14.

denounced as Japanese interference.[47] A military agreement to equip Tuan with arms and advisors for up to three divisions and four brigades enhanced his power for awhile, but he diverted part of those arms to Chang Tso-lin, and so equipped the man who helped drive him from Peking.

In the end the policy was futile; civil wars cannot be decided by outsiders pursuing their own interests. Japan's attempts to do so gave her a reputation for deviousness but little else.[48] If these initiatives accomplished anything it was to help establish political manipulation as a legitimate, approved method for accomplishing policy goals on mainland Asia. The officers of the Second Department monitored the China program, and dutifully supervised the advisors sent to China, but China was not then their major effort. In 1917 the Russian Revolution exploded, and the General Staff focused its attention on Manchuria and Siberia.

## Clandestine Operations During The Siberian Expedition

In army eyes the Russian Revolution revived an old threat and created a new one. Since 1907 the Russian and Japanese had both

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47. These were the Nishihara Loans. See Paul S. Reinsch, An American Diplomat in China (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, Page Co., 1922), pp. 299-303, and Li Chien-nung, Political History of China, p. 383.

48. Paul Reinsch, the American Minister to Peking during this period, was openly suspicious of Japanese intentions and quick to point out examples of Japanese untrustworthiness. See Reinsch, An American Diplomat, pp. 124-125, 190-191, 266-267.

scrupulously adhered to the terms of the secret agreements delineating their respective spheres in Manchuria and Mongolia. Now the victorious Bolsheviks in Petrograd were revealing those and all secret agreements of the old regime to the world, and were contemptuously repudiating them. The diplomatic barriers that had held the line in Manchuria for a decade were gone overnight; only the Kwantung Garrison remained as a guarantee against a resumption of Russia's southward flow toward Liaotung. In 1917 and 1918 such a danger was obviously not an immediate prospect, but given five or ten years to consolidate itself, the vigorous new Bolshevik regime could present a very real and unrestrained military threat.[49] It was the old Russian danger, never fully dead but now wholly alive.

The new threat was ideological. As protectors of Japan's unique kokutai, the officers of the army were as a rule already hostile to Western liberalism in general and to all varieties of socialism in particular. Communism appeared as the most extreme ideological challenge to the existing order; to call the Emperor system a "feudal remnant" to be abolished was a shocking example of lese majestie, not to be tolerated. At a more mundane but practical level, the ability of the army to fight effectively depended on the state of "spiritual training" of its soldiers; Communism ran precisely counter to the main motivating force that gave the army its strength and cohesion.

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49. Morley, Japan's Thrust into Siberia. pp. 36-37. Much of the material presented here on the Siberian Expedition is based on Morley's excellent and exhaustive account.

Still another threat appeared. The Chinese Eastern Railway remained in the hands of anti-Bolshevik Russians; to whom did it belong after the Revolution? The Chinese government moved to preclude a fight over it; in December 1917, 3500 Chinese troops entered Harbin and began policing the line. They left operational control of the railway in the hands of the Russians actually running it.[50]

The Chinese action was aimed at the Russians, of course, and was intended to minimize the possibilities of the fighting spreading to Manchuria. But Chinese control of the Chinese Eastern Railway had ominous implications for the South Manchurian Railway as well. The Chinese had objected to both the Russian and Japanese railway guards ever since 1905. The 1905 treaties had specified that when either nation withdrew its railway guards, the other was obliged to do likewise. The Chinese takeover of the policing of the Chinese Eastern Railway thus posed a real threat to the legal status of the six battalions of railway guards maintained in Manchuria by Japan, and threatened to take control of the physical security of the South Manchurian Railway away from the Japanese army. In light of the operations plans of the army, and especially with the new unsettled situation caused by the Bolshevik Revolution, this was not acceptable to the General Staff.

Shortly after the Bolshevik success, in November 1917, a protege of Prime Minister Terauchi, Nishihara Kamezō, organized a movement to

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50. Harry L. Kingman, Effects of Chinese Nationalism upon Manchurian Railway Developments, 1925-1931 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), pp. 44-45.

influence Japanese opinion leaders concerning the dangers Communism held for Japan. Less than a month later a Russian emigre named Andreev contacted Nishihara and asked for Japanese help in establishing an anti-Soviet regime in Siberia. Nishihara brought the idea to the attention of Prime Minister Terauchi and Vice Chief of Staff Tanaka Giichi, both of whom were won over.[51] The Second Department sent a young linguist, Yoshimi Enzō, to work with Andreev immediately, and shortly thereafter sent a second agent, Sawano Hideo, to join him.

The reports these first two agents sent back to Tokyo were encouraging enough to warrant the dispatch of two more senior officers. The head of the Second Department at the time, Major General Nakajima Masatake, was a "Russia expert" who had just returned from a tour of duty in Petrograd. Nakajima himself went to the mainland, and accompanied by an aid, Lt. Colonel Sakabe Tosuho, made a reconnaissance tour of north Manchuria and the Russian Maritime Provinces. He concluded that an anti-Communist Russian buffer state could indeed be established. This was the beginning of a full-scale Second Department effort. Intelligence officers were sent out to establish networks in north China, in northern Manchuria, and in the Amur valley in Siberia.[52]

These officers had two specific tasks. Before the end of November, 1917, the General Staff had drawn up a contingency plan, the

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51. Morely, Japan's Thrust into Siberia, pp. 48-49.

52. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

"Plan to Send Troops to the Russian Far East to Protect Foreign Residents." Protection of the lines of communications (i.e., railway and telegraph lines) and rear support areas was part of the plan, as were actions to put the proposed expeditionary force in militarily advantageous positions in case fighting was required.[53] This plan laid out the basic outlines of the actual operations plan that was used when the Siberian Expedition was mounted.[54] The intelligence officers' job was thus partially tactical, to support the operations plan and provide the intelligence necessary for an army to operate in a new area at the end of a long, exposed supply line. It was largely to provide this information that the widespread intelligence networks were set up. Funds were channeled through the Kwantung Garrison, the Korean Army, the China Garrison (in occupation of the German holdings in Shantung), and through the General Staff itself. The networks formed the classic intelligence configuration, with the agents in a particular city or area reporting regularly to their case officers, who then forwarded their intelligence to the Second Department.[55] The reporting and communications centers established to channel this flow of intelligence were the beginnings of the Special Service Organs.

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53. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

54. Ibid., pp. 102-103 for details of the operations plan.

55. Ibid., p. 68.

The second task was acknowledged to be the more important, however. It was to identify non-Communist Russians who might be able to build an anti-Bolshevik Russian state in Siberia, and so provide a buffer for Japan. This job was specifically given to Nakajima by Chief of Staff Baron Uehara, and repeated by Prime Minister Terauchi.[56]

Several possible candidates presented themselves. Two of the most promising were General Horvath, the anti-Bolshevik Russian Governor of the Chinese Eastern Railway zone, and Captain Semenov, a cossack _ataman_. Horvath controlled the railway and had some degree of legitimacy as the officially appointed Governor. Semenov was a military man, with contacts among the cossacks, an acceptable military record, and a small force-in-being under his command. Semenov asked for arms, ammunition and money, and proposed to use his force to advance westward to the Lake Baikal region. Nakajima approved, as did the Kwantung Garrison's Chief of Intelligence, Lt. Colonel Kurozawa Jun. So did the General Staff. In late February Lt. Colonel Araki Sadao, in Tokyo, helped supply Semenov with eight rapid-fire field guns, two howitzers, fifty machine guns, 5,000 rifles and carbines, and almost ten million rounds of ammunition. The equipment was sent to Semenov's base at Manchouli; six officers and forty-three men from the Seventh Division, wearing Russian uniforms, accompanied the shipment.[57]

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56. _Ibid._, pp. 68-69.

57. _Ibid._, pp. 97-99.

Despite the arms and advisors, Semenov was unable to carry out his plan. His attack into Russia was repulsed by Soviet forces, and by May, 1918, he was pushed back to Manchuria. To strengthen him, the Kwantung Government and the General Staff agreed that a Japanese volunteer force should be raised and attached to his brigade. Japanese reservists between the ages of 24 and 40 were eligible to join; pay ran from 60 to 130 yen a month. One battalion was raised, but it was not particular effective, and most of the volunteers quit.[58]

By August 1918 events had moved beyond clandestine and intelligence activities. Japanese troops, along with Americans and British, landed in force in Vladivostok and spread out over the Maritime Provinces and beyond. The Japanese remained there, in strength, until after the Washington Conference. When they left Siberia, Semenov left with them.[59]

## Creation of the Kwantung Army

Much of the support for the Siberian Expedition was routed through the Kwantung Territories and the South Manchurian Railway. It was found that the existing Governor-Generalship did not work well under these quasi-wartime conditions. The Foreign Ministry objected

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58. Ibid., pp. 208-210.

59. He settled in Manchuria and in the later 1930's helped organize White Russians in Manchuria into espionage and clandestine operations teams to penetrate into the Soviet Union. In 1945, when the Russians invaded Manchuria, Semenov was courts-martialed as a traitor and shot.

to the scope of the army's operation, coordination between the army and the South Manchurian Railway was at times difficult, and the sheer bulk of military matters took an excessive amount of the Governor-General's attention. In the middle of 1919, therefore, the Kwantung Government-General was completely reorganized. The Governor-General suggested again that the Consul-Generals in Manchuria be brought directly under his command to give him effective control over foreign affairs in Manchuria. Despite the strong opposition of Vice Foreign Minister Shidehara, Prime Minister Terauchi's cabinet agreed.[60] Likewise, the South Manchurian Railway was brought directly under the Governor-General's control by making him ex officio head of the railway company.[61] The Governor-Generalship itself was then abolished; in its place was the Governor of Kwantung, a civilian. Military functions were consolidated in the newly created post of Commander, Kwantung Army.[62]

The creation of the Kwantung Army brought the military forces in Manchuria again under the direct control of the General Staff and helped clear up the murky military-political relationships that had existed since 1907. This reorganization should have been a move toward removing the Kwantung Army from local political affairs and

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60. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 35.

61. South Manchurian Railway Company, Second Report on Progress in Manchuria to 1930 (Dairen, 1931), p. 86.

62. Military HIstory Section, Headquarters, Army Forces Far East, Japanese Preparations for Operations in Manchuria (Prior to 1943), (Headquarters, U.S. Army Forces, Far East, no date), p. 2.

forcing it to concentrate on professional military matters. However, the change occurred in the middle of the Siberian Expedition, when the army was deeply involved in the clandestine political manipulation of White Russians and when political and military means and ends were being freely intermingled. It came, too, after a decade of sanctioned active involvement in local politics by the Kwantung Garrison. The creation of the Kwantung Army did not change the military realities the Kwantung Army staff had to face, nor did it change the usefulness of clandestine operations in dealing with them. It did help the staff concentrate on purely professional military goals, but left them with a variety of means for achieving those goals.

## The Legacy

From the first Manchurian independence movement in 1912 through the Siberian Expedition in 1919, both the Second Department of the General Staff and the Kwantung Army engaged in clandestine operations that included political involvement in China, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Russia. In every case they were acting in pursuit of valid military goals--to protect the Kwantung Territories and the South Manchurian Railway. With the sole exception of the first Manchurian independence movement they operated with the knowledge and consent of the Tokyo government, and supported policies that had been accepted at the highest decision-making level of not only the army but of the government itself.

But if the ends were legitimate military ones, the means, even if sanctioned, were conspiratorial and clandestine. Professional military officers learned to create private, temporary, covert armies, to channel funds and arms to them, and to identify local leaders who might make likely tools. They learned the arts of covert political operations, and they learned them as accepted standard operating procedures. They learned that so long as the goals were legitimate, in pursuit of national policy, the means used made little difference. This capability for and experience in clandestine operations was perhaps no danger to military discipline so long as it remained leashed to a coherent national policy. In the late 1920's, however, when such a policy ceased to exist, clandestine operations did become a danger, both to military discipline and to the national policy-making process itself.

## CHAPTER VI

## MANCHURIA AND THE POLICY MUDDLE OF THE TWENTIES

In a modern military force, strategy is based on and limited by the policy decisions of the nation's political leadership. This was true at the beginning of the nineteen twenties for the Japanese military; the Washington Conference agreements signed by the Japanese government set the basic premises for Japanese security policy. Before the decade ended, however, military operational plans had become a major influence over policy decisions, and the demands of strategy significantly shaped one of two competing foreign policies pursued by the government. This intrusion of military concerns into foreign policy-making was not yet the militarization of Japanese foreign policy, but it was the beginning of the politicization of those parts of the army most concerned with strategy. When combined with the institutional capabilities for covert operations developed earlier by the Kwantung Army and Second Department of the General Staff, it helped lay the immediate ground work for the Manchurian Incident.

### The Washington Conference Agreements

Cooperation with, or at the least non-aggravation of, the Western sea powers had been a central tenet of Japanese foreign policy since the Meiji Restoration. By entering the 1902 alliance with Britain, the world's foremost naval power, Japan at a stroke removed the most serious potential threat to her coastline. At the same time, the Japanese naval building program produced a fleet capable of defeating any force other than the British that might be deployed to Japanese waters. From the Russo-Japanese War until the beginning of World War I the Japanese navy maintained battleship parity with the United States, but this was still only one-fourth the size of the British battleship force. While the Japanese fleet was not large enough to threaten any British possession in Asia, no other single power could match it without sending virtually its whole fleet to the western Pacific, leaving its own homeland without naval protection.[1]

This comfortable balance was destroyed by the massive American naval expansion during World War I. By 1920, just to maintain battleship equality in its home waters, the Japanese navy would have had to double the size of its battleship force. This, in turn, would have made it a potential threat to Australia and New Zealand, and so endanger the alliance with Britain. Worse still, a Japanese naval build-up could conceivably have ended in an Anglo-American alliance directed at Japan.[2]

The dilemma was resolved at the Washington Conference of 1921. The American proposal to declare a moratorium on major naval construction and to establish a fixed ratio of 10:10:6 for capital ships for the United States, Britain, and Japan, provided a way for Japan to avoid

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1. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 7.

2. These concerns are discussed in detail in Crowley, Japan's Quest, pp. 25-27.

a disastrous arms race. However, the 10:6 ratio alone would have left the Japanese fleet still theoretically inferior to the Americans, even in its home waters.[3] The Japanese naval delegation was willing to accept this theoretical inferiority if the United States would agree not to fortify its Pacific possessions, and so deprive itself of secure forward bases. The Americans agreed to this proposal under the condition that Japan bind itself to the "open door" in China and agree to respect the territorial integrity of China.

The Four-and Five-Power Treaties signed at the Washington Conference incorporated these military agreements. The Nine-Power Treaty bound Japan and the other signatories to the American concept of the "new diplomacy" that was to replace the old imperialist approach to East Asian relations.[4] Together, these treaties provided naval security for Japan, but at a price. This strategic security depended on continuing cooperation with the major powers to ensure no abrogation of the treaties, and this in turn meant observing the terms of the Nine-Power treaty in China. In short, Japan's foreign policy was to be conducted within the framework set by the United States and major European powers.[5]

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3. The inconclusive Battle of Jutland during World War I made it the conventional wisdom of naval planners that victory at sea required at least a forty percent superiority of forces. The 10:6 ratio gave that advantage to the Americans.

4. Akira Iriye, After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931 (New York: Atheneum Press, 1969), p. 18.

5. Kokusai Seiji Gakkai (ed.), Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun-sha, 1962), I, p. 182.

This situation, at first, did not unduly upset Japan's military leadership. The military restrictions agreed to at the Washington Conference directly involved only the navy, and although the naval General Staff was not enthusiastic, it agreed that it could carry out its mission despite them. The army, more concerned with Manchuria than with the Pacific, went along. However, Minister of War Ugaki warned that this was a potentially dangerous policy. He wrote that the Americans were cynically buying gratitude with their policies, but that beneath surface appearances power, not altruism, still prevailed. Regarding the Nine-Power Treaty agreements, he warned that the United States and Britain would seek their own interests in China, not those of Japan; Japan could depend on them only at her own risk. Only Japan could protect Japanese interests in China, and to do this the country needed the strength and will to depend on itself, alone.[6]

Ironically, the immediate impact of the naval agreements reached at Washington fell more heavily on the army than on the navy. Arguing that cooperation with the Anglo-American powers made large military forces unnecessary, the government repeatedly and drastically slashed military funding, cutting it from forty-nine percent of the national budget in 1919 to thirty percent in 1923.[7] While the navy could pay for modern vessels by scrapping older ones, the army had no such flexibility. In 1924 budgetary pressure forced Minister of War Ugaki to

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6. Ibid., p. 184.

7. Tatsuji Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire (New York: Russel and Russel, 1967), p. 29.

deactivate the 14th, 15th, 17th and 18th Divisions; only seventeen active duty divisions remained. This was far below the minimum strength of twenty-five divisions set by the 1907 National Defense Policy. It was a force too small to allow Japan to "depend on itself, alone," as Ugaki himself had urged.

## Army Strategic Perspectives

The new strategic realities of East Asia following World War I and the Washington Conference treaties made the existing Imperial Defense Policy hopelessly obsolete; in 1921 it was still essentially the same as the 1907 plan. Consequently, early in 1923 the top planners of the army and navy assembled to work out a new policy. In February the new Imperial Defense Policy was approved. Like the earlier one, this policy saw Russia as the most likely future antagonist for the army, and northern Manchuria as the anticipated battleground. For the first time, however, it also explicitly named the United States as a likely future antagonist.[8] A possible conflict with the United States had been a matter of concern for the Imperial Navy since the end of the Russo-Japanese War; the increased American diplomatic presence in East Asia after World War I and the American naval build-up during the war made friction even

8. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 188, and U.S. Army, Japanese Operations Plans Against the USSR, pp. 15-16.

more probable.[9] The 1923 Imperial Defense Policy reflected this naval concern. In addition, the continuing unstable conditions in China caused the planners to prepare for short expeditions or campaigns in China if necessary to protect Japanese subjects or property. A document appended to the Imperial Defense Policy, titled "Essentials for the Employment of Forces," set forth the basic responsibilities for each service:

> In principle, operations against the USSR will be undertaken mainly by the army, assisted by elements of the navy, while operations against the United States will be carried out by the navy, with assistance from elements of the army. While total war is not anticipated in China, operations should be planned to meet the eventuality of dispatching some army and navy elements to north, central, or south China.[10]

The revision of the Imperial Defense Policy called also for a review of the operations plans for carrying it out. In case of war with the USSR, the Second Department's Intelligence Estimate predicted that the main threat would come from the Trans-Baikal region; Soviet forces in the Maritime Provinces were insufficient for an offensive. The main Soviet thrust was expected to be eastward along the Chinese Eastern Railway to Harbin, then south to Changchun. Japanese interests and properties could be best protected by engaging the Russians as far north as possible, and before they were fully prepared for battle.

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9. The Philippine Islands were the root of the military problem. Any American fleet large enough to defend the Philippines could also defeat the Japanese fleet in its home waters. Any Japanese fleet capable of defending Japan could also take the Philippines. The naval officers on both sides of the Pacific understood this, named each other the most likely future enemy, and war-planned accordingly.

10. U.S. Army, Japanese Operations Plans Against the USSR, p. 16.

The operations plan that emerged envisaged two Japanese thrusts. One force of five divisions, as in the earlier plans, would quickly move to Changchun and prepare for a drive north to Harbin, cutting the Chinese Eastern Railway. This was to be, at first, the "bait"--the plan called originally for the wartime mobilization of forty divisions.[11] These would compose the main Japanese force, which was to capture the newly constructed railroad that ran from Ssupingchieh, south of Changchun, to Taonan, south of Tsitsihar, and assemble in the Taonan area. The decisive battle was to be fought on the right bank of the Nonni River, on the plains between Harbin and Tsitsihar. Once the Russian army was in that area, the Japanese main force was to drive rapidly north, take Tsitsihar, turn east and engage the Russians. Trapped between two Japanese forces, with all supply lines cut, the Soviet force was to be annihilated. This done, the Japanese army was to invade the Trans-Baikal region of Russia itself.[12]

A bold plan, the strategy was retained with little change until the Manchurian Incident made it obsolete. Based squarely on standard Japanese tactical doctrines, the plan depended on quick mobilization, rapid movement, surprise, and the ability to concentrate locally superior forces at the time and place the Japanese chose. It also anticipated a short, sharp war and while it did refer to the possibility of a protracted fight, it dealt with that prospect only in short, rough

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11. This was scaled down to thirty divisions after the 1924 reduction in strength.

12. U.S. Army, Japanese Operations Plans Against the USSR, pp. 24-28.

outline. There was no reference to political-military relations or to ways of concluding the war.[13]

This lack of reference to the political aspects of war was perhaps one sign of the rift that was growing between military planning and civilian political thought. The officials of the Foreign Ministry were carefully working to keep Japanese policy in line with the principles enunciated in the Nine-Power Treaty--respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, non-interference in Chinese domestic affairs, and economic cooperation with the Powers and China. Simultaneously the new army operations plan, focusing strictly on military requirements and operations, reaffirmed the necessity for firm Japanese control of Liaotung and the South Manchurian Railroad. Without that control the entire plan was impossible. Further, by envisaging the taking of the Ssupingchieh-Taonan railway the plan called for direct if incidental action against a Chinese railroad, and the occupation of Chinese territory along the route to keep Japanese supply lines open.[14] Chinese sovereignty was not germane to military operations, was irrelevant and therefore was simply ignored.

As reflected in the operations plan, war with Russia remained the main concern for the army, but with the publication of the new Imperial Defense Policy it had to consider also the United States.

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13. Ibid., pp. 16-18.

14. The Changchun-Harbin line was an extension of the Chinese Eastern Railroad, under direct Russian control and so a legitimate military target.

Earlier, various military officers and government officials had at times discussed the possibility of war with America, but these had been personal speculations, not official policy. The new Imperial Defense Policy forced army planners to explicitly consider the operational problems involved in fighting the United States. In 1923 the Japanese army was totally unprepared to seriously engage the army of any modern industrial power, much less that of the richest and most heavily industrialized nation. A well trained and highly motivated infantry force might reasonably hope for victory in a short war with Russia; it could not expect to survive an encounter with a modern mechanized force backed by masses of artillery, aircraft, tanks, and machine guns.

Those officers who had observed World War I in Europe understood this problem. In the years following the war men like artillery Colonel Kobayashi Junichiro, arguing forcefully for the mechanization of the Japanese army, tried to introduce modern equipment. Their efforts were complemented by those of officers like Lt. Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan, who insisted that modern war was the clash of nations, not armies, and could not be successfully waged without the full mobilization of the nation's resources. By naming the United States as a potential enemy the 1923 Imperial Defense Policy made the arguments of these men directly relevant to army operational planning.[15]

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15. Even before the Defense Policy was implemented a number of reform-minded officers had organized to discuss the problems involved in waging modern war. The first, the Isseki-kai (One Evening Society) was formed in 1921 by Nagata while studying in Baden-Baden, Germany. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 364.

Their ideas began to have a material impact the following year. Money saved by the deactivation of the four divisions in 1924 was used to create a tank regiment, two air force regiments and an anti-aircraft regiment.[16] This was a beginning, but was clearly inadequate by itself. Japan's industrial plant and resource base were simply too small to sustain the full modernization of the army. Nagata Tetsuzan argued, however, that if properly mobilized and organized for defense production, Japan's industry and manpower were indeed adequate. In 1927 he was appointed chief of the newly-created Mobilization Section of the Ministry of War's Bureau of Equipment and Supplies, and the following year wrote the first draft of a national mobilization plan.[17] The second part of the problem, that of a resource base, found a solution in Manchuria.

Manchuria was a largely untapped treasure house of raw materials. Large reserves of coal, iron, gold, magnesite and oil shale lay under its soil. A rich agricultural region, as late as 1925 only about half of its arable land was planted.[18] The South Manchurian Railroad and its ancillary enterprises had already begun the development of some of Manchuria's possibilities. Traditionally, the officers of the army had been more concerned with Manchuria's security value than

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16. James B. Crowley, "Japanese Army Factionalism in the 1930's," Journal of Asian Studies XXI (May, 1962), p. 313.

17. Ibid., p. 313.

18. Lytton Report, as cited in IMTFE, pp. T 18,710-T 18,711.

with its economic value. As they struggled with the problems of modern mechanized war, however, a number of them began to look to Manchuria as the necessary resource base essential to modern war.

Lt. Colonel Ishiwara Kanji, especially, saw Manchurian resources as absolutely essential for Japan's survival. Recognized as one of Japan's outstanding military theorists, Ishiwara believed that war between the United States and Japan was not only conceivable but inevitable. It would come in the fairly distant future, he taught, when air technology had made it feasible for the two countries to strike at each other. It would be the "final war"--not merely an imperialist clash but the collision of Eastern and Western civilizations, with Japan and the United States as their respective champions. To win that war Japan would need the resources of Manchuria to tie to its own industry, and would need the support and backing of the other Asian states.[19]

Ishiwara's insistence on Japan's military need for Manchurian resources evoked a sympathetic response among other reform-minded officers such as Brigidier General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu and Colonel Itagaki Seishirō. Both agreed that Manchuria was the "lifeline" of Japan. In 1929 Tatekawa returned from his position as military attache in Peking to become Chief of the Second Department of the General Staff. One of

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19. Seki Haruhiru, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi I, pp. 358-370.

his first projects was to send a subordinate officer, Colonel Tanaka Ryūkichi, on an economic reconnaissance of Manchuria.[20]

Itagaki was less concerned with economic than with strategic considerations. In an article written just before he was assigned to the Kwantung Army staff, Itagaki discussed the strategic significance of Manchuria. Manchuria was, he said, essentially a self-contained area whose natural defenses in the south had allowed Chang Tso-lin to survive his numerous military blunders. The threat to Manchuria came from the north, from the traditional and continuing Russian attempts to expand into Manchuria. Itagaki saw no respite from Russian pressure, and with China still weakened by foreign pressure and civil war, believed that only the Japanese presence prevented an immediate renewal of Russian attempts to achieve hegemony in Manchuria. Because of this Russian pressure, a Japanese withdrawal from Manchuria would threaten the security of the Japanese empire by putting Russia once again in a strong position along the Korean border. This was the traditional army argument for maintaining the Manchurian position. Itagaki added to this the new concern for a supply base for modern war. He noted that Japan could conceivably fight Russia or the United States, or even China if tensions continued to rise. In any case, the Manchurian resource base was essential to Japan.[21]

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20. Testimony of Tanaka Ryūkichi, IMTFE, pp. T 2002-T 2003.

21. Itagaki Seishirō, "Gunji jo yori Mitaru Man-Mo ni Tsuite," Gendaishi Shiryō, 7, Manshū Jihen, pp. 139-144.

The Washington Conference and the treaties signed there were intended to bring a "new order" to East Asia, to downplay the use of force in favor of economic and diplomatic relations in the area, and to allow China an opportunity to unify and enter the modern family of nations. It is ironic that the 1923 Imperial Defense Policy, meant to adjust Japan's military posture to this new system, should instead have made the army even more concerned with retaining and strengthening Japan's position in Manchuria, regardless of what happened in the rest of China. However the army defined its enemy, whether Russia or the United States, Manchuria was regarded as vital to Japan's security. The tactical operations against Russia could not be carried out without firm Japanese control of at least Liaotung and the South Manchurian Railroad. The strategic build-up and modernization needed to face the United States was seen as impossible without Manchurian resources. The loss of Japan's position in Manchuria would mean, for the army, nothing less than the actual destruction of its operational capability.

## The Problems of Manchuria

The army was not alone in its insistence on the importance of Manchuria, of course. Both military and civilian officials considered the maintenance of Japan's position in Manchuria as a vital part of Japan's foreign policy. In 1920, during the negotiations for the banking consortium to provide loans to China, a Foreign Ministry memo stated the Japanese case as firmly as any army officer could:

> From the nature of the case, the regions of South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia which are contiguous to Korea stand in very close and special relation to Japan's national

> defense and her economic existence. Enterprises launched forth in these regions, therefore, often involve questions vital to the safety of the country. This is why Japan has special interests in these regions and has established there special rights of various kinds. . . . Furthermore, the recent development of the Russian situation, exercising as it does an unwholesome influence upon the Far East, is a matter of grave concern to Japan. . . . Now South Manchuria and Mongolia are the gate by which these direful influences may effect their penetration into Japan and the Far East to the instant menace of their security.[22]

If there was virtual unanimity within the Japanese government on the importance of Manchuria, there was less agreement on how Japan's position there should be maintained. By the nineteen twenties the main threats to that position came not from Russia or the United States but from China. There were two sources of danger. One was the continuing Chinese civil war. As Chang Tso-lin became more deeply involved there was an increased danger that the fighting would spread to Manchuria, with resulting disruption and destruction. The second threat, newer and more serious, was from rising Chinese nationalism. The Twenty One Demands of 1915 had embittered Chinese attitudes toward Japan as had the Japanese acquisition of Germany's Shantung holdings. When, in 1919, the Paris Peace Conference confirmed Japan's rights in Shantung Chinese indignation exploded in the May Fourth Movement, the beginning of modern mass nationalism in China.[23] Beginning in Peking, the Movement spread to the other major cities of China; students, intellectuals,

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22. The Consortium (Official Text of the Four Power Agreement for a Loan to China and Relevant Documents), (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1921), p. 34.

23. Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966).

workers and businessmen participated. In 1923 this nationalist surge found institutional expression when Sun Yat-sen accepted Comintern help in reorganizing his Kuomintang party. At its first congress, in January 1924, the revitalized Kuomintang announced that:

> All unequal treaties are to be abolished: foreigners' leased territories, consular jurisdiction, foreigners' management of customs' duties, all political power exercised by foreigners in China at the cost of Chinese sovereignty. New treaties are to be concluded based on recognition of China as an equal and sovereign nation.[24]

The Northern Expedition, begun in July, 1926 under the military leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, showed conclusively that the Kuomintang had the strength and fervor to reunify China. The taking of the British concessions at Hankow and Kiukang in January, 1927, by mobs of civilians, was proof of the depth of popular support for an anti-imperialist program. There was thus a genuine basis for increased concern within the Japanese army and government over the security of Japan's Manchurian position.

## Attempts to Find a Solution

At the beginning of the decade the civil war, rather than Chinese nationalism, was perceived as the main problem. Both the General Staff and the Kwantung Army staff were inclined to contain the threat by using their tested methods of clandestine political manipulation. A Kwantung Army memo of October, 1923, took sharp disagreement with the policy of cooperation with the West and nonintervention in China. The

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24. Li Chien-nung, Political History of Modern China, pp. 450-458.

only results, it said, would be to increase Chinese dependence on other powers while lessening the influence of Japan, and Japan's aims should be just the opposite. The memo suggested instead a policy of increasing Japanese influence:

> Therefore, to free China from international control and to develop a closer cooperation between Japan and China, Japan must open negotiations with influential politicians and warlords in China so that they can restrain the high-handed measures of the Chihli clique which is the great cause of the present confusion in China, solve the conflict between Chihli and Fengtien, and cultivate a situation in which a relatively just and fair generalissimo can unify China. Such a task is not necessarily difficult. In short our Empire, because of its neighboring relation with China, must solve the conflicts of China today, even if such methods of resolving the problem may look somewhat like Japanese interference in Chinese domestic affairs, though not to the extent that such methods look obvious.[25]

This suggestion to use the now familiar techniques of influencing and trying to manipulate warlords found a receptive response within the General Staff. But while the officers of the General Staff agreed with the methods, they were more cautious and more specific in their aims. Less concerned with "solving the conflicts of China today" than with protecting Japan's position in Manchuria, they focused their attention on Chang Tso-lin. One legacy of the abortive 1916 "Second Manchurian Independence Movement" had been firm support of Chang Tso-lin by the General Staff; the qualities that had attracted the attention of the Kwantung Army operational commanders still

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25. Ikei Masaru, "Dai-niji Hō-Choku Sensō to Nihon," Hōgaku Kenkyū XXXVII (March, 1964), pp. 52-54, English translation by Bamba Nobuya, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1972), p. 233.

commended him to the General Staff in the earlier nineteen twenties. Further, the influential chief of the Second Department of the General Staff in the nineteen twenties, General Matsui Iwane, had served earlier as an advisor to Chang Tso-lin, and throughout the decade the Second Department continued to supply Chang with high-ranking and competent advisors.[26] This General Staff support of Chang was reflected in a plan for a policy toward China drawn up in early 1924 and approved by both the army's leadership and the Foreign Ministry. It supported the earlier Kwantung Army suggestion that local Chinese politicians and warlords be influenced, but added specifically:

> to Chang Tso-lin who is the real power in the Three Eastern Provinces, according to the established plan, Japan will continue to give friendly support so as to let him secure his position in the area. However, Japan must be cautious not to bring ill effects upon her interest-relations with the rest of China by doing so.[27]

There was thus general agreement among army planners both in the Kwantung Army and the General Staff that real power in China was fragmented and was likely to remain so, and that whatever international agreements may have been reached, it was in Japan's interests to exert influence upon the actual powerholders, the warlords. There was, however, an incipient disagreement between the General Staff and the Kwantung Army over the question of Chang Tso-lin. Where the General

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26. Such as Generals Machino Takema and Matsui Nanao. Colonel Doihara Kenji, one of the army's foremost "China experts," only made it to assistant advisor in this company. IMTFE, p. T 15,722.

27. Nihon Gaikō Nempyō narabini Shuyō Monjo (ed. Gaimushō: Tokyo, 1966) II, p. 61, as cited in Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, pp. 232-233.

Staff tied its policy to Chang Tso-lin personally, the Kwantung Army approached him as one among many warlords, to be supported whenever practical, but whose personal fate was of little concern for Japanese policy. This difference in opinion over Chang was at first merely a minor disagreement within a general policy consensus, however. It reflected the differing institutional viewpoints of two army organizations. The Kwantung Army, stationed in Manchuria, had to deal mainly with the results of Chang's involvement in the civil war and its impact on the security of Liaotung. The General Staff, through its Second Department and its advisors, dealt directly with Chang himself, and might hope to influence him personally.

While there existed disagreement within the army about how to carry out the China policy, within the Foreign Ministry there was confusion over the policy itself. The officials of the Foreign Ministry were generally effective proponents of the principles of the Nine Power Treaty, and were committed to a diplomacy of cooperation with the Anglo-American powers. Yet the Foreign Ministry fully concurred in the plan to support Chang Tso-lin and to seek to advance Japanese interests by cultivating warlords, even though the plan implied a downgrading of the importance of the Peking government. A policy based on the Nine Power Treaty necessarily meant the encouragement of a unified China, with a government that could impose effective control on all parts of the country. For both the changing warlord cliques in control of the Peking government and the Nationalists in Canton, Manchuria was certainly to be a part of the reunified China. But a policy of quietly supporting various warlords increased the difficulty of reunification, and specific support of Chang Tso-lin implied at the least an autonomous Manchuria.

A Japanese foreign policy in support of the principles of the Nine Power Treaty assumed that Japanese interests could best be protected by friendly relations with the anticipated new Chinese government. A policy that supported the warlords made no such assumption; it posited a continuation of the civil war and held that Japanese interests in China were best protected by real influence with real local powerholders. Insofar as Manchuria was concerned, a policy of adherence to the Nine Power Treaty centered on China as a whole and assumed that the "Manchurian Question" would be settled amicably once the larger "China Problem" was solved. Support of the warlords, especially of Chang Tso-lin, gave protection of Japanese rights in Manchuria priority over the "China Problem." Both policies aimed at the preservation and enhancement of Japan's position in China, and both recognized the unique problems involved in Manchuria. But they proceeded from different assumptions, and implied the use of different means. Either policy alone might be defended as realistic and rational. To pursue both simultaneously, however, suggests serious confusion over the desired ends of policy.[28]

Further increasing the confusion was the traditional rivalry between the Foreign Ministry and the army over Manchurian policy. Each tended to see Manchuria in terms of its own professional and

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28. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 183, claims that this basic confusion over policy was the root of Japan's troubles in the following decade.

institutional functions, and since both had legitimate if conflicting functions to perform there, a basis existed for a real jurisdictional dispute. In a policy planning meeting in July, 1922, for example, the Chief of the Foreign Ministry's Political Affairs Bureau made a strong attack on what he called the army's interference in foreign policy in Manchuria. He accused the army of secretly pursuing its own policy there, and noted that it had the mechanism for doing so in its network of advisors. The advisors, of course, were indeed responsive to the General Staff, not the Foreign Ministry. The army's representative, however, coolly replied that the army carried out only approved policies in Manchuria as elsewhere. But the army did carry out those policies effectively, he continued, and that contrasted sharply with the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the Foreign Ministry when it tried to implement policy.[29]

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29. Ibid., p. 185.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE BEGINNING OF INDEPENDENT ACTION: THE JAPANESE AND CHANG TSO-LIN

The Chinese civil war was the first serious threat to Manchuria. Chang Tso-lin dreamed of ruling all China, and his attempts to do that repeatedly threatened the tranquility of Manchuria. This happened first in 1922 when his army was soundly defeated by the forces of Wu P'ei-fu. Forced back into Manchuria and fearing an attack, Chang appealed to the Japanse government for help. The Foreign Ministry took the opportunity to urge Chang to get out of Chinese wars and to concentrate on increasing Manchurian prosperity. It promised economic aid but no military support. The General Staff, with its closer connections to Chang, was more responsive. Chang had asked for technical advisors in several fields. The officers of the General Staff refused to send additional advisors, but did provide aid to strengthen and help re-equip his army.[1]

By 1924 Chang's army was substantially rebuilt and prepared, while Wu had consolidated his hold on northern and eastern China. The next confrontation came in September, 1924, when a dispute between subordinate warlords of the two escalated into full civil war. Wu's forces were larger, and he carried the fight quickly to Shanhaikuan, the

1. Ikei Masaru, "Dai-Niji Ho-Choku Senso to Nihon," pp. 51-52.

gateway to Manchuria. A victory over Chang there would throw all Manchuria open to Wu's army, an army that had already beaten Chang's once before.

Alarmed, the Japanese government issued a warning to both sides not to endanger Japanese lives or properties.[2] As Wu's army contined to deploy, Chang again appealed to Japan for support. The Kwantung Army, on the scene in Manchuria, recommended that Chang be helped. The General Staff concurred, as did important officials in the Foreign Ministry.[3] The Consul-General at Mukden, Funazu Tatsuichirō, suggested that Chang be allowed to fight his own wars, but if he should be defeated and Wu's army crossed the Liao River, Japan should move to seal off Manchuria, by military means if necessary.[4] Since Wu P'ei-fu was known to be personally hostile to Japan, the Japanese position in Manchuria would be significantly less secure if he ruled there.[5] On October 23rd, when the Japanese cabinet met to consider aid to Chang, a majority agreed that there was enough real danger to Japan's interests to justify aid. Foreign Minister Shidehara was not one of that majority, however. He argued that aid to Chang constituted interference in

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2. South Manchurian Railway Company, Third Report on Progress in Manchuria 1907-1932 (Dairen: South Manchurian Railway Company, 1932), p. 21.

3. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 42.

4. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 234.

5. Gillin, Warlord, p. 141.

Chinese domestic affairs, and would therefore be inconsistent with the Nine Power Treaty and not in keeping with a policy of cooperation with the Anglo-American powers. He adamantly refused to authorize help for Chang, and threatened to bring down the government by resigning if aid were sent without his approval.[6] The matter was settled when Feng Yu-hsiang, the "Christian General," turned on his overlord Wu P'ei-fu and took Peking in a quick coup, leaving the rest of Wu's army isolated at Shanhaikuan, weak and easy prey for Chang.

Feng's betrayal of Wu came as news to Shidehara, but not to the officers of the General Staff's Second Department. Feng's uneasiness at Wu's growing power was well known; if Chang were defeated, Wu would be free to settle with other potential rivals, including Feng himself.[7] Feng and Chang had a common interest in keeping Wu P'ei-fu from becoming undisputed master of north China, but they were themselves bitter rivals, and neither would willingly help the other achieve hegemony. The officers of the General Staff helped resolve the dilemma by convincing Feng to betray Wu and share power with Chang. To balance the two out Tuan Chi-jui would become the nominal leader of a triumvirate to rule north China. Tuan was acceptable to both Feng and Chang; he had no independent military power and so was a threat to neither. He

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6. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, pp. 237-238.

7. Gillin, Warlord, p. 139.

was also pro-Japanese, and together with Chang he could be depended on not to challenge Japanese interests in the area.[8]

A Japanese-educated acquaintance of Feng's, Huang Fu, made the initial contacts. To aid in the persuasion Chief Advisor to Chang Tso-lin, Colonel Matsui Nanao, with the help of Doihara Kenji and reserve colonel Teranishi Hidetake, transferred one million yen from Chang Tso-lin to Feng.[9] Major Matsumuro Takeyoshi, a "China expert," was dispatched as a "special observer" to Feng, one of the few times Feng ever had a Japanese army advisor.

Matsumuro war-planned the military operations that made Feng's _coup_ a success.[10] The whole operation was done secretly. Outside the General Staff only Minister of War Ugaki and the venerable Marshall Uihara Yūsaku knew the details, and they gave their approval.[11] The operation was in accord with the accepted government plan of supporting Chang Tso-lin, and of seeking to influence local warlords. There is no evidence that Shidehara ever knew that the _coup_ that ended the question of Japanese intervention was itself a product of clandestine army operations.

The alliance between Feng and Chang was transparently a marriage of convenience, and lasted only slightly over a year. When the

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8. _Ibid_, pp. 137-144.

9. Shimada, _Kantōgun_, p. 42. Feng's biographer puts the amount at ¥ 1,500,000. Gillin, _Warlord_, pp. 144-145.

10. Shimada, _Kantōgun_, p. 43, and Gillin, _Warlord_, pp. 144-145.

11. Shimada, _Kantōgun_, p. 43.

conflict between the two broke out in November, 1925, Chang discovered that Feng had subverted one of his generals just as he had early subverted Feng. Kuo Sung-lin rebelled and turned on Chang. As Kuo drove back into Manchuria, Colonel Matsui, Commander of the Kwantung Army General Shirakawa Yoshinari, and Mukden Consul-General Yoshida Shigeru all recommended immediate help for Chang. Again Shidehara refused, saying that Japan's long term interests would be best served by cooperating with the central Chinese government, not by engaging in "local disputes."[12]

However, Kuo's advance was the most serious threat yet to the Kwantung Territories and the South Manchurian Railway, since the final fighting could be expected to take place near the line, and certainly in Mukden. This was an alarming prospect both for the Kwantung Army and the General Staff. Their alarm increased when, on December fifth, Kuo's army destroyed the last blocking force Chang could throw against him. Two days later General Shirakawa issued a warning, ostensibly to both parties, that Japanese lives and properties must not be endangered. Kuo continued to advance. When Shirakawa reported that Kuo's army was preparing to cross the Liao River, the gateway to Liaotung, the General Staff ordered the Kwantung Army to prevent any interference with Japanese rights. This constituted official orders, and authorized Shirakawa to deploy his forces as necessary.[13]

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12. Ibid., p. 44.

13. Instructions from headquarters traditionally set the objectives of the operation, but left specific operational planning to

Shirakawa immediately sent part of the Tenth Division to Mukden to maintain order there. When, on December 13th, two thousand of Kuo's men crossed the Liao River and tried to enter the town of Yinkow, the commander of the local Japanese garrison forbade them to enter. Shirakawa approved. On the same day Shirakawa issued another warning: to maintain the security of the South Manchurian Railway, he informed both sides that no battle lines or fighting forces would be permitted within thirty kilometers of the boundaries of the line.[14] To back up this warning, he sent a company of the 10th Infantry Battalion to Yinkow and reenforced it with several howitzers.

While all this activity was directed at Kuo Sung-lin's force, Chang was in Mukden desperately trying to recall enough troops from northern Manchuria to allow him to fight. In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Shidehara recognized that the Kwantung Army's action in fact favored Chang by buying time for him. On the same day that Shirakawa blocked Kuo at Yinkow, Shidehara instructed Consul-General Yoshida that the policy would be to tacitly approve innocent passage through the forbidden zone, for if the military order was strictly enforced, Kuo

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the field commanders concerned. This principle of command authority, dokudan senkō, granted field commanders considerable discretion in how they used their forces, so long as they achieved the desired objectives. It is a standard principle of military operations, not peculiar to the Japanese army. For its use in the Japanese army see Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, II, pp. 13-16, and Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 115.

14. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 45. This was changed to twelve kilometers upon further orders from the General Staff.

would be cut off from the supplies at the Mukden arsenal, and this constituted interference.[15] The Foreign Minister's instructions were not military orders, however. Shirakawa "tacitly approved" nothing. Instead, on the seventeenth, he deployed two regiments from the Korean Army and two more batteries of artillery to Yinkow. By December 19th he had the equivalent of one extra division in Manchuria, all directed at Kuo.[16] Kuo was blocked; within a week Chang was able to meet and defeat him.

Technically, everything Shirakawa did was directed equally at Chang and Kuo. In reality, the entire force available to him was deployed against Kuo. Once his force was large enough to assure victory, Chang had no difficulty putting it into battle position. Despite Shidehara's policy of non-intervention in Chinese political affairs the Kwantung Army's action was in fact a massive intervention. By decisively ending Kuo's challenge it saved Chang Tso-lin from certain defeat in his own territory.[17]

Although Shirakawa's actions ran precisely counter to Japan's stated policy, they were not acts of insubordination. He made no moves until ordered, and then carried out those orders effectively. He protected the South Manchurian Railway from threatened disruption without

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16. Ibid., p. 46.

17. Nakamura Kikuo, Manshū Jihen (Tokyo: Nihon Kyobunsha, 1965), pp. 52-53, and Harry L. Kingman, Effects of Chinese Nationalism Upon Manchurian Railway Developments, 1925-1931 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), p. 6.

firing a shot, and that line was central to army operations plans. Furthur, his actions in temporarily shielding Chang Tso-lin were in accord with the still-accepted army and government plan of helping Chang. In terms of army policies, plans and procedures, Shirakawa acted with professionalism and propriety, but his actions were subversive of the foreign policy made by the nation's civilian leadership. There was a gap between the high general principles Shidehara proclaimed and the specific actions taken to solve concrete pressing problems, a gap Shidehara did little to close. The army, responsible for the security of the Manchurian position, was learning to solve its problems by itself, less by defying civilian authority than by ignoring it.

The army was also creating larger problems with its solutions. With Kuo out of the way Chang, now the strongest single warlord in North China, was able to once again sweep into Peking. Feng withdrew to the northwest to begin rebuilding his army with Soviet help and to organize an anti-Chang coalition. The civil war continued, and not only was Chang still involved in it, he was now a primary participant. Instead of having to defend only Manchuria he now had to maintain sizable forces in Peking and North China as well. By the time of his death, Chang's army was 250,000 strong; its maintenance took an estimated eighty percent of the Manchurian budget.[18] This left insufficient funds even to pay government officials adequately, with the resulting increase in graft and corruption. After 1925 taxes were increased, the currency

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18. Lytton Report, in IMTFE, p. T 18,723.

was depreciated, and Chang's government moved to monopolize the marketing of Manchuria's most profitable export, soy beans.[19] Chang's participation in the civil war both undermined Manchuria's prosperity and brought the prospect of an invasion of hostile forces if he should be defeated. From the Japanese point of view, Manchuria was less secure after Kuo's defeat than it had been before.

In August, 1926, head of the Second Department General Matsui Iwane proposed in a memo that Chang Tso-lin must be persuaded to disengage from the costly civil war. This could be done, he suggested, if Japan and the other powers warned both Feng and Chang to desist from fighting, and if Chang's current position in North China and Manchuria was then guaranteed by those powers. If Chang would concentrate on reconstruction and stability in Manchuria and in his part of North China, Matsui suggested, he should be given generous loans by Japan for railroad construction.[20]

Matsui's ideas were acceptable to both the army and the Foreign Ministry, since both agreed that a stable Manchuria was essential for Japanese interests, and that continued civil war was destroying that stability. In late August new instructions were forwarded to the Second Department's advisors attached to Chang's army to try to persuade his officers that Chang should end the fighting. The instructions included a warning that continued fighting could destroy Chang. At the

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19. Ibid., pp. T 18,724-18,725.

20. Iriye, After Imperialism, pp. 112-113.

same time the Foreign Ministry contacted Japanese bankers and financiers and began laying the groundwork for the proffered loans and investments.[21]

Chang was not interested. In November he gave unmistakable evidence of continuing the civil war by reorganizing and renaming his own coalition, and prepared for further fighting. Faced with this failure of policy, Japanese Foreign Minister officials prepared lists of Manchurian leaders who could serve as possible replacements for Chang, and whom Japan might support if the situation got worse.[22]

The Japanese attempts to protect Manchuria from the continuing civil war only revealed a conflicting and muddled policy. While the Foreign Minister proclaimed non-interference the army was deeply involved clandestinely, but in direct support of policies approved both by the army and the Foreign Ministry itself. A major foreign policy initiative came from the desk of the army's chief intelligence officer; it was accepted by the Foreign Ministry even though it involved clear and deep involvement in Chinese political affairs. When it failed, the Foreign Ministry, supposedly pursuing a policy of non-intervention, prepared a list of acceptable replacements for the independent leader of Manchuria, a step implying a level of intervention that even the army still hesitated to suggest. Confusion thus existed not only in the goals of foreign policy but in the institutional policy-making structure as well. By 1927 both desperately needed review and revision.

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21. Ibid., p. 113.

22. Ibid., p. 114.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE SEARCH FOR A NEW POLICY

In April, 1927, Tanaka Gi'ichi was appointed Prime Minister of Japan. As president of the Seiyukai he had been an outspoken critic of Shidehara's foreign policy, and he came to power politically committed to change it. Furthermore, the situation in China had become more complex by then with the advance of the Kuomintang's Northern Expedition. The problems Tanaka faced were considerably different than those Shidehara had dealt with.

Tanaka Gi'ichi's approach was diametrically opposed to that of Shidehara. Concurrently Prime Minister and Foreign Minister from April, 1927 to July, 1929, he was both president of the Seiyukai and a retired army general. While in the army he had known of or taken part in a good many of the clandestine operations designed to secure Japan's military position in Manchuria. He helped start Chang Tso-lin's career, and considered Chang to be his protege to some extent. He had helped back Kawashima's 1916 Second Manchurian Independence Movement, and had been deeply involved in the clandestine activities leading up to the Siberian Expedition. Ever since General Oka's memorandum of 1911 the idea of an independent or autonomous Manchuria had periodically reappeared in Second Department plans. Tanaka was not only familiar with the idea, he enthusiastically supported it.[1] He saw Manchuria as the army saw it, primarily in strategic terms, for its value in providing security against Russia. Consequently he was unwilling to risk that position for possible economic gains in China proper. His answer to the Chinese Nationalist challenge was to encourage an autonomous Manchuria under Chang Tso-lin while using demonstrated military power to encourage the Nationalists to accept that autonomy. It was essentially a more complex and sophisticated version of the General Staff's position. It worked no better than had Shidehara's approach. Tanaka was devious, trying to balance too many intrigues at once, and unable to keep his subordinates either informed or under control. The assassination of Chang Tso-lin by Kwantung Army officers ended Tanaka's premiership.

But Tanaka left a dangerous legacy. While he was Prime Minister the government's policy toward China was essentially the same as that worked out by the army for its own professional reasons. During that time army plans and programs became national programs, approved at the highest governmental level and adapted to political rather than military purposes. It was a muddling of military and political concerns, such as had occurred in 1906 with the establishment of the Kwantung Government, but now happening within the home government itself, and at the highest level.

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1. He was known to favor a buffer zone between Japan and Russia consisting of Manchuria, Mongolia, Korea, and the Soviet Maritime Provinces. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 11, Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 112.

By early April China from the Yangtze River south was in Kuomintang hands, and it was only a matter of time until the advance would continue into North China. Since Chang Tso-lin would not leave Peking unless forced out, a major conflict was building, one that Chang had little realistic hope of winning. The contradictions inherent in the old Japanese policy of both encouraging the formation of a strong central Chinese government and of quietly supporting Chang Tso-lin could no longer be ignored. But a further complication was that a revolutionary Kuomintang government, motivated by a nationalist ideology, accompanied by Soviet advisors, and composed in part of members of the Chinese Communist Party was itself a threat to Japan's Manchurian position.

A partial solution to this problem was provided by the split between the Left Kuomintang and Communists at Wuhan and Chiang K'ai-shek's military headquarters at Nanchang. The seriousness of that split was dramatically demonstrated by Chiang's _coup_ in Shanghai on April twelfth. Coming a bare two weeks before Tanaka assumed power, Chiang's _coup_ suggested a possible new policy approach to both Shidehara and Tanaka. If the Kuomintang was to unify China, as seemed likely, it was in Japan's interest that Chiang K'ai-shek's more moderate wing be the one to do it.[2] But if Chiang was anti-Communist he was also anti-imperialist and a firm Nationalist. Tanaka faced the dual problem of encouraging Chiang in his

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2. _Ibid._, pp. 143-144.

conflict with the left Kuomintang while still restraining him in his actions toward foreign interests.

A further problem confronting Tanaka in China was of his own making. In mid-April the Kuomintang army defeated elements of Chang's forces in Honan province, and began an advance toward Tientsin and Peking. By late May the Kuomintang force was in Shantung, approaching its capital of Tsinan. On May 28th the Tanaka cabinet announced that 2000 Japanese troops would be sent to Shantung to protect the Japanese residents of the area.

The Tokyo Asahi Shimbun expressed serious doubts that the protection of Japanese residents was the real reason for the Shantung Expedition, since there were only about 2000 residents to be protected by the 2000 troops. Rather, it suggested, the aim was to protect Chang Tso-lin again, this time by blocking the Kuomintang's Northern Expedition. It blamed the army for the decision.[3] But the army's leadership was almost unanimously against the decision. Vice Chief of Staff Minami, Chief of the First Department (Operations) of the General Staff Araki Sadao, Chief of the Second Department Matsui Iwane, Chang Tso-lin's Chief Advisor Matsui Nanao, as well as Minister of War Shirakawa, all had opposed the decision.[4] These were the very officers most committed to maintaining Japan's position by supporting Chang Tso-lin. Tanaka decided on the expedition primarily for domestic political reasons, to

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3. Asahi Shimbun, May 29, 1927.

4. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 288.

satisfy those members of the Seiyukai who advocated a "positive" policy in China.[5] The effect of that decision was to create a massive anti-Japanese sentiment in Chinese public opinion, with boycotts and demonstrations from Canton to Mukden itself.

## Formulation of the Policy: The Eastern Conference

To resolve these problems and settle on a new, more coherent China policy, Tanaka called the Eastern Conference, to meet in Tokyo from June 27th to July 7th, 1927. Its twenty-two major participants included Mori Kakup, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Political Affairs; Kimura Katsuichi, Chief of the Asian Bureau of the Foreign Ministry and Hotta Masaaki of the European-American Bureau; Vice Chief of Staff Minami Jirō, and Commander of the Kwantung Army Mutō Nobuyoshi; Consul Generals Yoshida Shigeru from Mukden and Yada Shichitarō from Shanghai.[6] The conference included virtually every high government official whose duties focused on Asia. Although other matters were also discussed, the most important subject was Manchuria and the Chinese civil war.

It was a subject to which the Kwantung Army staff had given considerable thought. Physically present in Manchuria and formally charged with direct responsibility for protecting the Japanese position there, it was acutely aware of the problems and dangers the civil war

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 289.

was causing. Throughout the previous winter and spring Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Brigidier General Saitō Tsune and his staff had been working on a memorandum on the "National Policy Toward China." Completed by 1 June 1927, three weeks before the Eastern Conference convened, the memo pointed out the importance of Manchuria to Japan, and suggested that for both strategic and economic reasons, the Japanese position there should be strengthened. Saitō specifically recommended more railroad construction (it would facilitate deployment of the army, if properly planned) and increased agricultural production.

The threat of disorders, heavy taxes, and the civil war made such activity unlikely, however. Therefore, Saitō suggested, Manchuria should become an autonomous, self-governing region, cut off from the strife of China proper. This solution would end the "sufferings and misery" of the Manchurian population, and would serve as an example for the Chinese people of how a government following the "Kingly Way" could bring peace and harmony. He suggested four specific steps to bring this about. The Japanese government should notify Peking that Japan would help guide an autonomous Manchuria. Japan should then take steps to help get the new government of an autonomous Manchuria established. If any other government questioned the propriety of this action, Japan should announce that it was being done to meet the aspirations of the Chinese people (i.e., those living in Manchuria). Finally, the area to become autonomous should be, at least, all territory north of the Great Wall, and Japan should sincerely try to advise and guide it.[7] Saitō made no mention of Chang Tso-lin; the fact of Japanese-guided autonomy, not the name of the local leader, was his concern.

At the Eastern Conference three weeks later Saitō's commander, Mutō Nobuyoshi, backed up the memo with a strong presentation of the army's position on Manchuria. Whether as a buffer against Communism, a tactical deployment field for war with the Soviet Union, or resource base for modernization and mechanization, Manchuria was vital to Japanese security. Matsui Iwane, Chief of the Second Department, gave an intelligence estimate of the forces involved in the Chinese civil war: Chiang's army was the best organized and the strongest, but might be diverted from its northward drive by having to fight Wuhan or possibly Feng Yu-hsiang. At any rate, the split within the Kuomintang had weakened it. Consequently if Chiang mounted a major drive north of Shantung, it might be possible and practical to aid Chang Tso-lin.[8]

The civilian participants had mixed reactions to these arguments. Mori Kaku of the Seiyūkai re-emphasized the importance of Manchuria to Japan and the necessity to strengthen and secure the Japanese position there. Yoshida Shigeru, Consul General at Mukden, argued that Japanese rights and interests in Manchuria and China were primarily economic, and any regime bringing stability would benefit them. Kimura

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7. Usui Katsumi, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō" in Himerareta Shōwa-Shi (Special issue of Chisei: Tokyo, 1956), p. 31, and Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 163.

8. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 296.

Eiichi, Chief of the Foreign Ministry's Asian Bureau and Yada Shichitarō, Consul-General at Shanghai agreed with Yoshida. But Yoshizawa Kenkichi, Minister to Peking and the ranking Foreign Ministry official in China, argued that Japan's position could best be protected by supporting Chang Tso-lin in Manchuria.[9]

On the final day of the conference Tanaka summed up the arguments and read an eight-point statement outlining the policy that had emerged. In his statement Tanaka made a firm distinction both between China proper and Manchuria, and between the methods to be used in dealing with each. For China proper, Tanaka agreed that there would be no intervention in the civil war and that the "popular will" of the Chinese people would be respected. However, in case lawless elements or chaotic conditions endangered the lives or rights of Japanese residents, Japan would be prepared to resort to "determined" defensive measures. Articles six, seven, and eight dealt with Manchuria.

> (6) Manchuria and Mongolia, especially the Three Eastern Provinces, have vital relations with Japan from the viewpoint of our national defense and national existence. Our country not only must be especially concerned with the area but also has the duty and responsibility, as a neighboring country, to make the area a happy tranquil land for natives and foreigners alike by maintaining peace and developing the economy.
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> (7) If an influential leader of the Three Eastern Provinces respects our special position in Manchuria and Mongolia and sincerely makes efforts to stabilize the same area, our government should support him with appropriate means. (This section not to be made public.)
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> (8) If it is anticipated that the upheaval will spread to Manchuria and Mongolia, and public peace and order will be

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9. Iriye, After Imperialism, summarizes the minutes of the Conference as recorded in Japanese Foreign Ministry archives, PVM 41.

> disturbed, and our special position as well as our rights and interests will be violated, we must be prepared to take immediate and appropriate means to protect the area and to maintain it as a peaceful land for development by both natives and foreigners.[10]

Tanaka's statement toward China proper implied acceptance of Chiang K'ai-shek's victory, while still leaving room for Japanese action if more radical leadership should emerge from the Kuomintang power struggle. Ever since the 1923 Imperial Defense Policy had been published the army had stood ready to mount short campaigns into China to protect Japanese residents. Tanaka had already used this capability for primarily political reasons when he ordered the First Shantung Expedition. He was now prepared to use it as a regular tool of foreign policy, not military protection as it had been originally intended.

The articles on Manchuria paralleled the ideas of the Kwantung Army and the General Staff, ideas shared by Mori Kaku and the more militant wing of the Seiyūkai. Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Saitō's memo of June First had advocated positive Japanese action to bring peace to Manchuria, and had suggested that the interests of both Japan and the inhabitants of Manchuria would be served thereby. Article Six stated, as accepted policy, the "duty and responsibility" of Japan to maintain peace and develop Manchuria. Article Seven was consistent with the long-held conviction of the General Staff, and especially of the Second Department, that support of Chang Tso-lin provided the most effective protection for Japan's Manchurian interests, if he could be withdrawn

10. The original articles are reproduced in Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, pp. 59-60. English translation from Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, pp. 299-300.

from the civil war. Article Eight provided for the contingency that he could not, and set the stage for unilateral Japanese action, again as provided in Saitō's memo.

Despite the similarities, the Eastern Conference policies were not simply those of the army. The articles on Manchuria were broadly stated; they allowed action but did not mandate it. The policy suggested in Saitō's memo was specific, with step-by-step procedures carefully laid out. By contrast, the Eastern Conference report expressed concern but recommended no steps more specific than using "appropriate means" and "maintaining peace and developing the economy." Saitō's plan was fully compatible with these statements, but so were a wide variety of other and much different policies. Nor can it be said that the Eastern Conference policies originated solely with the army. Old soldier Tanaka Gi'ichi had been deeply involved with Manchuria during his military career, and like Saitō had advocated an autonomous Manchuria under Japanese guidance.[11] But Tanaka was no mere puppet of the army; his ideas and policies were his own. Next to Tanaka himself Mori Kaku was perhaps the most vocal advocate of a "positive policy" in Manchuria. Mori was Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, a professional politician who had never served in the army. He was the driving force behind the Eastern Conference.[12]

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11. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, pp. 309-311.

12. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, pl 61, and Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, pp. 22-26.

And yet, despite their vagueness and multitude of sources, the policies enunciated at the Eastern Conference were fully compatible with the specific recommendations made by the army. As a result of the Eastern Conference the old army idea of a separate Manchuria became a possible course of action for national policy.[13] It had periodically reappeared in army thinking ever since General Oka's memo of 1911 and had gradually entered army plans and programs. For the first time, however, in 1927 it became an open accepted part of national policy, debated by the leading government officials and announced by the Prime Minister himself. The policy faintly echoed the plan that Second Department Chief Utsunomiya had devised in 1912, to support both the revolutionaries in the south and the Ch'ing in the north, and so divert revolutionary zeal while still having safe, pliant rulers over Manchuria. Tanaka's plan would allow both support of Chiang K'ai-shek in China proper while still retaining that pliant ruler in an autonomous Manchuria. And yet the need for such a Manchurian ruler was based primarily on Japanese military considerations. If Japanese interests were mainly economic, as Yoshida and Kimura had insisted, there was no need for pliant rulers or an autonomous Manchuria. These were necessary only to allow rapid and certain deployment of troops into combat and to insure no outside interference that would obstruct tactical operations. This consideration underlay the army's unanimity over Manchuria, and in the Eastern Conference that unanimity contrasted sharply

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13. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 55.

with the disagreement and uncertainty over policy of the Foreign Ministry and other officials. As a result, a requirement growing out of tactical operations became a key part of Japanese foreign policy.

The army's unanimity over the need for a secure Manchuria masked an increasingly important disagreement over how that was to be achieved, however. By 1927 the Kwantung Army had become disenchanted with Chang Tso-lin and warlords in general, while the General Staff still concentrated on Chang. The Eastern Conference did not settle this difference but compounded it by accepting both these approaches simultaneously. What had begun in 1922 and 1923 as a difference in interpretation became after 1927 potentially incompatible parts of the same sanctioned policy.

## The Policy in Action

At first there seemed to be no contradiction between strengthening Chang Tso-lin and increasing the Japanese influence in Manchuria. The Second Department's Colonel Doihara Kenji was sent to Manchuria to set up a more extensive network of military advisors to Chang's army, as one step in improving its performance.[14] At the same time Yamamoto Jotarō, the newly appointed president of the South Manchurian Railway, was instructed to quietly begin private negotiations with Chang Tso-lin for five new railroads. The loans for these five lines would significantly strengthen the arguments for Japan's special position there. At least as important, the five proposed lines "pointed north," and

14. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 323.

would allow a large rapid deployment of troops against virtually the entire length of the Russian-controlled Chinese Eastern Railroad.[15] In return for the right to build those lines, Chang was offered a defense treaty against Russia, an agreement on economic cooperation in the development of northern Manchuria, and ten million yen "rent" for the lines, paid in advance.[16] When Lt. Colonel Machino Takema, Chang's new Chief Advisor, told Tanaka that Chang would probably not agree because of the danger of public protest and disorders, Tanaka responded that, if it could not be avoided, Japan would have to use its military power.[17] Chang, desperately in need of the money to equip his army for the upcoming confrontation with the Kuomintang, was in no position to risk Japanese military pressure at the same time. Reluctantly, he agreed to Yamamoto's railroad demands.[18]

Even while Yamamoto was negotiating, Tanaka began his campaign to separate Manchuria from the Chinese civil war. In the early summer of 1927 he sent General Yamanashi Hanzō, ex-Minister of War and a personal friend, to Peking. Yamanashi's mission was to convince Chang Tso-lin to leave Peking, get out of the civil war, and content himself with ruling Manchuria. Chang refused. He told Yamanashi that he was

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15. This is graphically shown on the map in Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 295.

16. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, p. 31.

17. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 294.

18. The story of the railroad negotiations is told in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, pp. 291-197; Takemori, Mantetsu Kōbōshi, pp. 69-72; Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, pp. 63-73; Iriye, After Imperialism, pp. 174-183.

fighting Communism in China, that it was not only his fight but that of Japan, and that he was protecting the peace of all East Asia. Yamanashi replied that Chiang K'ai-shek was not a Communist and told Chang "If you return to Manchuria and concentrate on developing the country, you can be King of Manchuria."[19] Chang still refused.

Chang Tso-lin was one part of Tanaka's problem; Chiang K'ai-shek was the other half. It was necessary to convince Chiang that Japan bore him no enmity, for a hostile government of a unified China would make a dangerous neighbor. At the same time he had to be made willing to accept an autonomous Manchuria. The main tool Tanaka had for accomplishing this was the army. The first Shantung Expedition had shown that Tanaka was willing and able to put Japanese troops into a position to create a real military threat to Chiang's flank. But by announcing his willingness to see China unified, and by stating that the troops were for the protection of Japanese residents rather than the suppression of the revolution, Tanaka was able to use them as part of the bargaining process. They could be quickly withdrawn when a satisfactory agreement was reached, without loss of face by anyone.

Internal Kuomintang politics gave Tanaka an opportunity to make his point directly to Chiang. The split between Chiang K'ai-shek and the Wuhan government stopped the Northern Expedition and threatened to permanently divide and weaken the Kuomintang itself. By July, 1927, the Left Kuomintang at Wuhan expelled the Communists, the condition

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19. Suzuki Teiichi, "Hokubatsu to Chiang-Tanaka Mitsuyaku," in Himerareta Showa-shi (Special issue of Chisei: Tokyo, 1956), p. 24.

Chiang had laid for reunifying the party. To help that re-unification, in August the top leaders of both factions, Wang Ching-wei and Chiang K'ai-shek, both resigned and left the country. Chiang went to Japan, to the hot springs of Unzen and the resort town of Beppu. General Matsui Iwane, promoted from Second Department head to Chief of the General Staff, knew of Chiang's presence and helped arrange a meeting between Chiang and Tanaka.[20]

They met in Hakone, in early November, 1927. Tanaka pointed out that they had an important point in common in that they were both strongly anti-Communist, and that Japan had no objections to a unified anti-Communist China. However, the current anti-Japanese movement among the Chinese was causing concern in Japan. Chiang replied that Japanese support for Chang Tso-lin and the northern warlords was the cause of the boycotts and anti-Japanese demonstrations. The way to end the opposition, he said, was for Japan to aid the revolution and thereby show that it was not, in fact, protecting Chang. Tanaka agreed that Chiang K'ai-shek was the only man who could unify China and offered Japanese support, but warned that Japanese rights must be observed and protected. Chiang agreed that they would be.[21]

Shortly after his meeting with Tanaka, Chiang was recalled to his command by the re-unified Kuomintang; he was indeed the only

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20. Ibid., p. 24.

21. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 297. No formal minutes were kept of the two-hour meeting, but Brigidier General Satō Yasunosuke was present and took running notes of the conversations. These are reprinted in Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, pp. 75-76.

person who could hold the party together. At the news conference he held on the morning after his return, Chiang declared that the Northern Expedition would be resumed, but he noted that the Japanese had special interests in Manchuria that must be respected.[22] In January, 1928, Chiang's personal envoy, Chang Ch'un, visited Tanaka. The discussion was blunt and businesslike. Tanaka warned that the Kuomintang could have all of China proper if it liked, but would possibly face armed intervention if it tried to enter Manchuria. Chang Ch'un replied that there would be no attempt to invade Manchuria if Chang Tso-lin would evacuate Peking without a fight. Tanaka agreed, if the Kuomintang in turn would dampen the anti-Japanese movement within China.[23]

## The Policy Unravels

In the Spring of 1928, Tanaka's China policy was an apparent success. Although Chang Tso-lin was still in Peking and becoming increasingly obstreperous, he had already shown in the railroad negotiations that he could be pressured. Chiang K'ai-shek was again driving toward Peking with the re-vitalized Northern Expedition, but he had quietly agreed to stay out of Manchuria, at least for the moment. By

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22. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 297.

23. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 78, claims the agreement was made in November, directly between Chiang and Tanaka. If so, it missed the attention of General Sato or was purposely not recorded. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 298, says the specific tacit agreement was reached in January, with Chang Ch'un. Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 207, agrees. The explosive nature of the agreement makes it improbable that Chiang would or could have made it face-to-face. A personal envoy can be repudiated if politics requires it.

April Chiang's army was again in Shantung, approaching the cities of Tsinan and Tsingtao, and prepared for the final confrontation with Chang. Chiang had promised protection for the Japanese residents of those cities, and both Tanaka and the General Staff were inclined to believe him.

However, Tanaka's Seiyukai had just won the February 1927 general elections on a platform that included "protecting nationals on the spot."[24] In the cabinet meeting of April 18th Minister of War Shirakawa recommended a second Shantung Expedition, to protect the Japanese residents of those cities. The next day Tanaka agreed, largely for domestic political reasons, but also to insure that the tacit agreement would be observed. Unfortunately the commander of the division sent to Tsinan, General Fukuda Hikosuke, was an operations-oriented officer who lacked the political sophistication of either the Kwantung Army staff or the Second Department officers. Seeing an opportunity for personal glory when a brief fire-fight erupted he precipitated a major conflict that produced over two thousand casualties.[25] This Tsinan Incident enflamed Chinese public opinion once again, and intensified the anti-Japanese boycotts and demonstrations that had so bothered Tanaka. It also convinced some members of Chiang's government that the Japanese army had adopted an independent policy of protecting Chang Tso-lin from the Northern Expedition.[26]

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24. Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 197.

25. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, pp. 299-303.

26. Ibid., I, p. 305.

This judgment was both incorrect and ironic; even as the Tsinan Incident was occurring, officers of the Kwantung Army were searching for a way to get rid of the Manchurian warlord. In 1927, Machino Takema had warned Tanaka that his railroad plans for Manchuria would stir public protest. Although Tanaka brushed aside the objection, Machino had been correct. By August, 1927, when the news of the agreement was made public, anti-Japanese demonstrations and organizations were organized throughout Manchuria. The Mukden Merchants' Association instructed its membership to boycott Japanese goods.[27] Anti-Japanese signs were distributed door-to-door by Chinese policemen. On September 4th over 20,000 people demonstrated in Mukden.[28] Sponsored by the "Society for Support of Diplomacy," which included many prominent Chinese businessmen and community leaders, it was the largest anti-Japanese demonstration yet in Manchuria.[29] Windows of Japanese stores were smashed, and Japanese police had to escort Japanese children to school. By mid-September anti-Japanese activities in Taonan had become so threatening that Japanese residents were told to be ready to evacuate. Although the anti-Japanese activities became less violent after September, they continued on a smaller scale throughout the winter.

The officers of the Kwantung Army blamed Chang Tso-lin for this anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria. They suspected Chang of using the

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27. Kingman, Nationalism in Manchuria, p. 27.

28. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 293.

29. Kingman, Nationalism in Manchuria, p. 28.

movement to negate the railroad agreement he had reluctantly signed. He had in the past used the merchants' associations shrewdly; they were his allies. By the Spring of 1928 the Kwantung Army staff was convinced that, for the sake of Japan's position in Manchuria, Chang had to go.[30] Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Brigidier General Saitō Tsune and Chief Staff Officer Kōmoto Daisuke were the firmest advocates of removing Chang from the scene, and Kwantung Army commander General Muraoka agreed with them. In Tokyo, Minister of War Shirakawa and Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau Abe concurred, as did Mori Kaku of the Seiyukai.[31] Such action could be legitimately considered, for it was directly supportive of the national policy laid out in articles six and eight of Tanaka's statement at the Eastern Conference.

The Northern Expedition provided the occasion. As the apparently unavoidable final battle between Chang and Chiang neared the Kwantung Army staff prepared a plan of action and on April 20th, 1928, Saitō wired it to the General Staff in Tokyo. He suggested that, after the clash, the Kwantung Army be ordered to advance to Shanhaikuan and to disarm Chang's defeated army or the victorious Kuomintang army if either tried to advance past Shanhaikuan; neither was to be allowed to enter Manchuria with its weapons. The Kwantung Army would be allowed to use force to accomplish this task.[32] Saitō had been the author of the 1 June 1927 memo suggesting an autonomous Manchuria under direct

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30. Usui,"Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 35.

31. Ibid., p. 35.

32. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, pp. 303-304.

Japanese guidance; the specific operations plan to block both Chang and Chiang was a necessary first step. It would create a military and political vacuum in Manchuria.

Saitō's plan to depose Chang Tso-lin met approval from the Second Department's officers in Manchuria, although his hopes for Japanese guidance of the area did not. Doihara Kanji, in charge of the advisor net, and Chief of the Mukden Special Services Organ Colonel Hata Shinji, favored replacing Chang with his son, Chang Hsueh-liang. Other advisors such as Major Giga Nobuya and Matsui Nanao argued the case for Chang's deputy Yang Yu-ting.[33] While they differed over who should replace him, the officers physically present in Manchuria were in virtual unanimity about the need to dispose of Chang Tso-lin.

This Kwantung Army perspective obviously diverged significantly from that held by Tanaka, yet it fell well within the apparent bounds of the policy enunciated at the Eastern Conference. Further, it was the type of situation the Kwantung Army and Second Department advisors had faced frequently in the past, when local political action was necessary to meet the requirements of military or state policy. Both had successfully if secretly done so on several occasions, with at least the tacit approval of headquarters. Saitō's message of April 20th suggests that the Kwantung Army staff believed it was operating in full support of accepted policy, and expected to find agreement in Tokyo to its proposed action.

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33. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

Moreover, the Kwantung Army's proposals were indeed apparently accepted. By mid-May, 1928, Peking's fall was imminent, and Chang's disintegrating army was beginning to filter back to Manchuria. The cabinet met in Tokyo on May 16th, and formally decided that Japan must take the necessary steps to maintain stability in Manchuria.[34] Under no circumstances would Chiang K'ai-shek's army be allowed to enter Manchuria with its weapons, and if Chang Tso-lin's force was reduced by defeat to an undisciplined mob it too would be disarmed. However, if Chang's army withdrew quickly and in good order into Manchuria, it would not be interfered with.[35] To back this up, on May 18th the Kwantung Army was alerted for action. In his diary for that day Kwantung Army Chief of Staff Saitō recorded the gist of the orders he had received:

> If it appears that the maintenance of peace and stability in Manchuria-Mongolia would be disrupted, the armies will be directly disarmed. . . . These armies will be resolutely prevented from entering, especially with the Southern army be kept out.[36]

These were precisely the actions Saitō had recommended on April 20th.

Tanaka's aims in ordering these actions were not the ones Saitō had had when he recommended them. For Tanaka the military threat posed by the Kwantung Army was a diplomatic tool, the pressure needed to get Chang Tso-lin back into Manchuria without a final desperate fight in Peking. This was reflected in the messages he sent to Minister

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34. Ibid., p. 304, Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 57.

35. Shimada, Kantōgun, pp. 57-58.

36. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 31.

Yoshizawa in Peking and Consul-General Yada in Shanghai. Yoshizawa was instructed to notify Chang Tso-lin of the cabinet's decision and to tell him to return north of the Great Wall. This message was, in fact, an ultimatum; unless he retreated immediately and in good order, Chang would lose his sanctuary, his army, and all his power.[37] Yada, in Shanghai, was ordered to notify the Kuomintang government that once Chang Tso-lin was safely back in Manchuria he would never again be allowed to interfere in the affairs of China proper.[38] At the same time the wording of the cabinet decision made it clear the Kuomintang would not be allowed to interfere in the affairs of Manchuria. The Kwantung Army was the necessary instrument for persuading both Chang Tso-lin and Chiang K'ai-shek to accept an autonomous Manchuria, ruled by Chang.

From the Kwantung Army perspective, however, the problem was military, not diplomatic. Saitō's plan for an autonomous Manchuria with close Japanese guidance had been apparently accepted as a possible course of action for national policy in 1927. His operations plan for sealing off Manchuria at Shanhaikuan in support of this policy was returned to him in the shape of firm official military orders. The actions of the Kwantung Army upon receipt of those orders indicate that the staff believed the option was being put into effect.

Immediately upon receipt of the alert order on May 18th, General Muraoka shifted Kwantung Army headquarters to Mukden, the political

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37. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 337.

38. Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 210.

center of Manchuria and the terminus of the Peking-Mukden Railroad that ran through Shanhaikuan. The Fourteenth Division, then on duty in Kwantung, shifted with him. To provide security for Liaotung and the South Manchurian Railway while the Fourteenth Division was at Shanhaikuan, Muraoka requested and was granted reenforcements from the Korean Army, which deployed the 40th Mixed Brigade to Liaotung.[39] Once these movements were completed, the Kwantung Army was positioned to act, but it could not yet legally do so. In peacetime the army was restricted to the Kwantung Leased Territories and the South Manchurian Railway zone. It could leave that area only with Imperial sanction. The alert orders of May 18th had ordered it to prepare for such movement, but gave neither date to move nor explicit instructions to actually do so. The following morning, with his force fully prepared, Muraoka requested permission to move.

The Chief of the General Staff notified Tanaka, but the Prime Minister was not yet ready to resort to direct military force. He instructed the Chief of Staff to tell Muraoka that the decision to advance would be made in two days, on the 21st. Muraoka immediately wired back that the 21st would be too late; the Kwantung Army was ready now. This response clearly showed the officers in Tokyo that the Kwantung Army's perception of the policy was not in line with Tanaka's. Colonel Tashiro Kenichirō, Chief of the China Section of the Second

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39. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 61.

Department, was immediately dispatched to Mukden to explain the policy to Muraoka in person.[40]

In the meantime, in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army remained in a state of maximum alert, waiting for orders to move. The staff, not unreasonably, expected the orders on the 21st as Tokyo had stated, and at noon on May 21st Saitō assembled the staff to receive them. The orders did not come; in his diary Saitō began to reflect impatience with the "government's indicision."[41] On May 23rd Colonel Tashiro arrived in Mukden and briefed the staff on Tanaka's intentions: while the ostensible policy was to treat both armies alike, the intent was to allow Chang Tso-lin back into Manchuria. The Kwantung Army was to be authorized to use discretion and to let Chang's forces through.[42] To the officers of the Kwantung Army staff this was a reversal of the apparently firm national policy, and just when it was on the verge of being accomplished.

Two days later this decision was itself nullified by the Tokyo government. Tanaka's announcement of his policy, on May 18th, had drawn sharp unfavorable criticism from Britain, France, and the United States.[43] American Secretary of State Kellogg bluntly stated that Manchuria was in fact a part of China.[44] Opposition came also from the

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40. _Ibid_., p. 62.

41. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 32.

42. _Ibid_., p. 32.

43. _Ibid_., p. 32.

44. _Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi_, p. 306.

Foreign Ministry; Arita Hachirō, Chief of the Asia Bureau, favored forcing Chang Tso-lin to resign, but not separating Manchuria from China. He feared the reaction of the powers and of China.[45] The Chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Navy Ministry, Sakonji Seizō, also voiced his opposition to the use of force in Manchuria.[46] At the same time Chiang K'ai-shek gave every indication he would abide by the earlier agreement not to enter Manchuria. As his army approached Peking word was sent through Consul-General Yada in Shanghai that it was nearing its "final destination." Another Nationalist Chinese official hinted strongly that the Kuomintang preferred to end military operations without a Manchurian campaign.[47] Under these conditions, the deployment of the Kwantung Army to Shanhaikuan began to appear both politically dangerous and militarily unnecessary; the Kuomintang pressure alone would force Chang back or destroy him in North China. Despite the indignant disapproval of Mori Kaku and other Seiyukai firebrands, on May 25th Tanaka decided against deploying the alerted Kwantung Army. The Kwantung Army was notified the following morning.

This series of decisions left the Kwantung Army staff angered and resentful. The policy apparently accepted at the 1927 Eastern Conference made military sense by protecting the strategically vital

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45. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 30.

46. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, pp. 337-338.

47. Iriye, After Imperialism, pp. 211-212.

South Manchurian Railway. Specific operations plans to implement that policy had been drawn up by the Kwantung Army staff only a month earlier, and had been apparently accepted by the General Staff and the Tanaka government. Yet, when the time for action came, Tanaka first seemed to waver, then backed down. On May 18th the Kwantung Army was ready to create an independent Manchuria free of Chang Tso-lin and under Japanese guidance. By the 23rd it was told it would have to accept Chang Tso-lin's presence, but at least Manchuria would be kept out of Kuomintang hands. On the morning of the 26th it was ordered off alert, and told it must allow events to proceed without its help. Not knowing of Tanaka's secret understanding with Chiang K'ai-shek, the officers of the Kwantung Army not surprisingly felt betrayed by their own government.

## The Assassination of Chang Tso-lin

The frustration felt by the Kwantung Army staff was shared by others in Manchuria. On May 30th Matsuoka Yōsuke, Vice-President of the South Manchurian Railway, visited Kwantung Army commander Muraoka in his headquarters. According to Saitō Tsune's diary entry for that day, Matsuoka complained bitterly about the government's indecisiveness, and gloomily expressed his concern that Chang Tso-lin would continue his anti-Japanese policies in Manchuria, if he did not resign and if he stayed alive. He then bluntly asked Muraoka how he thought Japanese opinion would react to news of Chang Tso-lin's death. Pressing the point, he wondered aloud whether it would even be appropriate for Chang to stay alive. And if Chang should live and allow the powers to extend their influence into Manchuria, he continued, where could Japan find compensatory benefits?[48]

Muraoka had no need for Matsuoka's provocations, however. Like his Chief of Staff Saitō and his First Staff Officer Kōmoto, he had accepted the idea of an autonomous Manchuria under Japanese guidance as a proper and desirable policy, and he shared the dissatisfaction of his staff with the government's apparent inability to pursue its own stated policy. Further, he was commander of an organization with a long tradition of independent decisions and clandestine participation in local politics. Chang Tso-lin was in power in 1928 because Kwantung Army operational commanders had championed his cause in 1916, when the General Staff and government were supporting Kawashima's attempt to unseat him. Only three years previous, in 1925, General Shirakawa had saved Chang from Kuo Sung-lin despite the official policy of neutrality; in doing so he had served the national interest in Manchuria, a fact recognized by his promotion from Commander, Kwantung Army, to Minister of War.

Muraoka now followed the precedent set by the earlier commanders. Shortly after he learned from Colonel Tashiro that Tanaka had no intentions of deposing Chang, Muraoka called Lt. Colonel Takeshita Yoshihara, the Second Department's advisor in Harbin, to his office. He asked Takeshita to contact the military attache in Peking, Brigidier General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, and arrange for Chang Tso-lin to be

48. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 32.

assassinated by the North China garrison.[49] With Chang dead, the possibility of turmoil in Manchuria might be great enough that the Kwantung Army could still be ordered to carry out the original plan. Muraoka told neither Saitō nor Kōmoto of this request, but Kōmoto learned of it from Takeshita, and convinced him that he, Kōmoto, should handle the operation.[50]

One of the reasons Kōmoto volunteered so readily for this assignment was that he was already deeply involved in his own plot to kill Chang Tso-lin. Ever since reporting for duty with the Kwantung Army in March, 1926, he had been aware of the strong and growing anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria. Like the then-commander Shirakawa and Chief of Staff Saitō, he believed Chang Tso-lin was its main instigator. In 1927 he accompanied the new commander, Mutō, to the Eastern Conference, and saw there what seemed to be the incorporation into national policy of the plan Saitō had suggested in his memo. In his article written years later, Kōmoto told how he witnessed a direct encounter between Mutō and Tanaka. Mutō, aware of the military implications of the plan, warned that it could conceivably lead to a confrontation between Japan and the powers; if they should interfere would the

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49. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 308. The North China garrison was the Boxer Protocol force stationed between Peking and Tientsin. It was small, but in the right place for such an operation.

50. Ibid., p. 308, and Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, p. 45.

government still stand firm? Tanaka assured him it certainly would.[51] Kōmoto left the Eastern Conference convinced the government was prepared to satisfactorily settle the Manchurian Question and was prepared to use military force of necessary.[52]

Back in Manchuria Kōmoto pondered ways to implement this program. By December, 1927, he began considering the possibility of assassinating Chang Tso-lin.[53] He wrote in his diary "The Great Chief must die. Without that the Manchurian Question cannot be settled. One person would suffice for the assassination of Chang Tso-lin."[54] Early in 1928 he recruited Captain Kawagoe Morinichi of the Independent Railway Guards Garrison, and a bandit chieftain from northern Manchuria to his plot. These two began reconnaissance of the railroads to find a suitable bridge under which to place a bomb.[55]

Toward the middle of May 1928, before the Kwantung Army was placed on alert, a Japanese coal merchant living in Manchuria, Itō Kenzaburō, appeared at Saitō's office. Itō excitedly told Saitō that

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51. Komoto Daisuke, "Watakushi ga Chō Sakurin o Koroshita," Bungei Shunjū (Tokyo: December, 1954), p. 195.

52. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 81.

53. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 63.

54. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 35.

55. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 63. A bomb, or sacks of explosives, placed on the sides under a strong bridge would have the whole force of its explosion deflected toward the railroad car passing through it. That would insure maximum damage to the car without unnecessary damage to the trackage. However, the bridge had to be solid, to prevent its collapse. A blocked rail line is of little military value.

the policy toward Manchuria had to change, and that the necessary changes could be made by the Japanese present in Manchuria. While Saitō agreed, he had already submitted his plan for solving the problem through normal military channels; he neither needed nor wanted local civilian participation. In the time-honored manner of both military and civilian bureaucrats, he shuffled Itō off to his next ranking subordinate, Chief Staff Officer Kōmoto Daisuke. Itō argued that Chang Tso-lin had to be disposed of in some manner, and replaced by a leader more sympathetic to Japanese interests. Komōto approved, agreed, and promptly added Itō to those searching for an appropriate bridge.[56]

Kōmoto told neither Saitō nor Muraoka of his activities, and had actually taken no irreversible steps before the May 18th alert. However, after learning from Takeshita that his commander, General Muraoka, was also actively trying to have Chang killed, Kōmoto moved with more vigor and decisiveness. He recruited First Lieutenant Kanda Yasunosuke of the Engineers Regiment and set him on yet another bridge reconnaissance. A few days later he was joined by Major Tomiya Tetsuo of the Railway Guards, who had himself been considering an independent action against Chang's life.[57] Captain Tōgū Tetsuo of the Railway Guards and Captain Ishino Yoshio joined the conspiracy, as did Captain Tanaka Ryūkichi and Captain Ozaki Yoshiharu.[58] On the assumption that

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56. Ibid., p. 64.

57. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, p. 46.

58. Ibid., pp. 47-48, Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, pp. 308-309, and Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinso," p. 35.

Chang Tso-lin could not survive in Peking past mid-June, Kōmoto set June 14th as the target date for completion of all preparations.[59]

Events outran the plot. On May 27th Chang launched a major counter-offensive against the advancing Kuomintang troops, only to find his army hopelessly outclassed. He disengaged within three days to avoid the destruction of his force. This lesson in the field dramatically reenforced the repeated urgings of Minister Yoshizawa and Brigadier General Tatekawa that he leave Peking at once and so at least keep Manchuria. On June 2nd Chang announced that he was withdrawing into Manchuria.

Kōmoto and his men rapidly completed the necessary preparations. The site for the bombing, suggested by both Kanda and Itō, was the earthen bridge where the Mukden-Peking railway passed under the South Makchurian railway, just outside Mukden. Kōmoto had wanted the bombing to take place well away from the South Manchurian railway, to deflect suspicion from Japan. But with little time left and close Chinese security on most other likely bridges, he agreed. He asked Itō to supply four or five Chinese, to be seen running from the scene by witnesses.[60] An explosives specialist from the Korean Army's 40th Mixed Brigade set the explosives.[61]

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59. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 64.

60. Ibid., p. 64.

61. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 85.

Kōmoto organized the operation with the careful professionalism of a career officer. Takeshita, now in Peking, kept him informed of Chang's movements, including his departure time. Captain Tanaka Ryūkichi, also in Peking, kept meticulous notes on the composition of Chang's train, and pinpointed the exact position in the train of Chang's personal car.[62] Ishino was dispatched to Shanhaikuan, to report the precise time Chang's train passed through; other officers were positioned at other strategic locations along the route with similar instructions.[63] On June 4th, a little after midnight, Chang's train pulled out of Peking. Alerted and informed by his men in Peking and along the route, Kōmoto was ready. At 5:20 A.M. the train reached the bridge; the bomb was detonated just as Chang's private car passed under it. Chang was mortally wounded. Kōmoto immediately ordered Captain Ozaki to issue an Emergency Assembly Order to the Kwantung Army, that is, to put the army on a maximum combat-ready alert, ready to move and take advantage of the confusion. But Chief of Staff Saitō, not in on the plot nor aware of the involvement of the Kwantung Army officers in the assassination, countermanded Kōmoto's order. To his straightforward military judgment, there was no clear-cut military necessity for such an extreme move.[64]

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62. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 35.

63. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, pp. 308-309.

64. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 85.

Shortly after the bombing, on June 7th, Minister of War Shirakawa suggested to the cabinet that the Kwantung Army be given two new missions. In the atmosphere of insecurity and uncertainty in Manchuria since Chang's injury, he said, it was highly possible that disorders or chaotic fighting could break out, or that the Kuomintang might seize the opportunity to advance into Manchuria. If any of these occurred, he suggested that the Kwantung Army be authorized to advance to Shanhaikuan and disarm any soldiers entering Manchuria. If conditions within Manchuria itself became chaotic, he argued that the Kwantung Army should be authorized to collect the Japanese residents in places like Mukden and Yinkow, for their protection. Further, he urged the cabinet to send advance authorization to the Kwantung Army to perform these missions, i.e., that the Imperial sanction be granted in advance, to be implemented upon instructions from Tokyo.[65]

This was in fact a suggestion that the original plan of an autonomous Manchuria under Japanese guidance be revived (Shirakawa had been strongly in favor of it from the beginning). The advance granting of the Imperial sanction, combined with the principle of a field commander's right to make operational decisions, would enable the Kwantung Army to act legally if unilaterally. Given the command and control structure of the army, it would be difficult if not impossible to repudiate such action once it had been accomplished. This was understood by Tanaka and his cabinet; Shirakawa's suggestion was rejected

65. Usui, "Chō Sakurin Bakushi no Shinsō," p. 36

on the explicit grounds that it would put too much power in the hands of the Kwantung Army.[66]

Tanaka's rejection of Shirakawa's suggestion ended the possibilities of the original plan being put into effect; the assassination of Chang, in turn, ended Tanaka's tenure as Prime Minister. Kōmoto's plot had been too widespread, involving too many people, to be concealed long from army investigators. But even after the whole story was known, and Tanaka informed, the army both refused to allow the civilian government to have jurisdiction over the case and refused to bring Kōmoto to court-martial. The official reason given was that it would be injurious to the army's prestige, although the cool relationship by then existing between Tanaka and powerful officers such as Marshall Uehara Yusaku also had an influence.[67] Caught between the Emperor's stated desire that the guilty officers be punished and the army's refusal to relinquish jurisdiction or court-martial, Tanaka resigned.

Although he was not court-martialled, Kōmoto's military career was ended. He was reprimanded, reassigned to a dismal post in an obvious backwater, and informed that his resignation would be accepted if he chose to tender it. He did resign. "Allowing" an officer to resign is universally recognized within the military as a fairly severe punishment, for it is the casting out of a fellow officer. But it is also

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66. Ibid., p. 36.

67. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 85.

recognized as punishment for unfitness, not for criminality. A man is "allowed" to resign when he has shown such poor judgment that he is an embarrassment to the corps, or when he breaches discipline in a serious way, or shows imcompetence bordering on dereliction of duty. The punishment imposed by the army on Kōmoto may help explain the army's reasons for not pursuing stronger measures against him; his crime was perhaps less that of assassination than of poor judgment, in the army's eyes. The policy he was pursuing was one that was accepted throughout the army as national policy and that it expected would be implemented. Shirakawa wanted Chang Tso-lin out of the way even if not dead. So did some of the General Staff's Second Department advisors, members of the Foreign Ministry such as Yoshida Shigeru and Arita Hachirō, and political figures such as Mori Kaku. When Tanaka, for his own reasons, insisted on bringing Chang back to Manchuria, thoughts of using assassination to get rid of the Manchurian warlord became strikingly frequent. A public official such as Matsuoka Yōsuke of the South Manchurian Railroad, a private businessman like Itō Kenzaburō, an officer such as Major Tamiya Tetsuo and even Kwantung Army Commander Muraoka himself, all either advocated assassinating Chang or took steps toward actually doing it. Kōmoto acted beyond the bounds of discipline, but did so in pursuit of this widely accepted policy. The ease with which he recruited professional, disciplined officers to his plot suggests that they felt that they were executing a proper and desirable policy that Tanaka had somehow inexplicably abandoned. The nature of Kōmoto's punishment implied that, to the army, his aims were desirable but his methods were not, and this judgment in itself implied a rebuke to Tanaka.

Tanaka badly confused political, military, and diplomatic matters. He mounted military overseas expeditions primarily for domestic political reasons, used army officers such as Tatekawa and Machino as emissaries for diplomatic purposes, and carried out private negotiations for railroads that were ostensibly economic but really military developments. Perhaps most serious, he adopted as his china policy a set of plans and ideas that had been developed largely within the Kwantung Army and the General Staff. These plans had grown out of military problems as defined by professional military officers, who saw them as necessary because they supported the military mission. The political actions which the plans called for were, for the officers, secondary to the military goals. By accepting those plans as national policy Tanaka implicitly accepted also the right of military officers to make political plans and decisions. When the political and military aspects of the policy demanded different solutions, both Tanaka and the officers felt betrayed by the other. Rather than settling the Manchurian Question, Tanaka inadvertently politicized the officers of the General Staff and Kwantung Army, thereby partially legitimizing their own attempts to solve it, at least in their own eyes.

## CHAPTER IX

## THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF INSUBORDINATION

By the summer of 1928 the major institutional roots of army independence in Manchuria were well developed. They had grown slowly, inadvertently, over a long period of time, in response to actual military problems that demanded effective solutions. But once developed, they gave the army the institutional capability not only to formulate an independent policy in Manchuria but to pursue it with righteous vigor despite its own government's frantic efforts to stop it. These major institutional roots were:

1. An activist Kwantung Army physically in Manchuria, whose military role was central to the army's operational capabilities, and which had become deeply involved in Manchurian politics to protect that military mission.

2. An intelligence department in the General Staff that had the capability to mount clandestine operations overseas and at the same time played an integral part in the army's planning process. It was a staff agency with an independent operational capability.

3. An established tradition of actually mounting clandestine operations by both the Kwantung Army and the Second Department; the two had developed standard operating procedures for conducting such operations, and used them as accepted means for achieving sanctioned goals. The goals were set during the army's planning process, in which

the Second Department played a vital role, and focused largely on the Kwantung Army's military mission.

4. A militarily sound operations plan for war with Russia, the most probable enemy, that required for its success unhampered movement in Manchuria. This, in turn, required a stable Manchurian regime that would not impede tactical operations, a requirement not likely to be met by the nationalistic Kuomintang.

5. Acceptance of the army's concept of its Manchurian requirements as national policy under the Tanaka administration. This acceptance elevated the political portion of the army's war plan from a subsidiary military requirement to a primary national goal. But for the army the political aspects of the plan were still subsidiary to the military mission. In effect, this made China policy the legitimate handmaiden of army operational planning, at least as seen by army eyes.

These factors gave the army the latent capability for independent action by legitimizing its institutional goals while developing its capability for action. But they did not cause the officers to act independently. While Kōmoto and his men were willing to act beyond the bounds of discipline most officers, like Saitō, still considered such actions as unacceptable conduct for a professional officer. It took only a routine decision by Saitō to scotch Kōmoto's plan. These factors were the deep roots of independent action; they made it possible. But before this potential could be transformed into action, several other factors were needed:

1. The alienation of the officer corps from the civilian political leadership. This had not yet happened in 1928, but did develop in the following three years. The Depression and the London Naval Conference of 1930 convinced many officers that the party politicians running the government were not only corrupt but incompetent and dangerous to Japan. This alienation helped legitimize insubordination.

2. An increased sense of crisis in Manchuria. During the three years following Chang Tso-lin's assassination the Japanese position in Manchuria became increasingly tenuous, but the Japanese civilian leadership seemed unable or unwilling to act effectively. This sense of crisis provided the motivation for independent action.

3. The development of a set of specific plans and programs that included explicit provisions for independent action to settle the Manchurian Question. As a bureaucratic institution the army operated by set plans and standard operating procedures. These provided the coordination, the agreed-on goals, and the automatic movements that made action possible.

## Alienation of the Officer Corps

### Domestic Difficulties

The party politicians who dominated Japan's government during the nineteen twenties never succeeded in winning the respect of the officer corps, nor did they seriously try. Rather, the policies they pursued reflected the interests of the large urban corporations that had sprung into prominence during the economic expansion of World War I. In 1914 Japan had about one million industrial workers; by 1930 the number had increased to five million.[1] At the same time large-scale industry and commerce were increasingly concentrated in a small group of companies and families. By 1931, forty-eight per cent of all bank and trust company deposits and insurance company reserve funds (totalling ¥ 11,743,570,000) was held by six concerns: Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Yasuda, Kawasaki, and the First Bank.[2] In 1930, nineteen families registered incomes of over one million yen; eighty-four per cent of all families earned less than eight hundred yen, and half of these received under four hundred yen.[3]

After World War I these large companies, the zaibatsu, sought access to political power through the Diet and the political parties, their primary method being the generous use of money.

> In the period 1915-1932, two conservative party lineages were recognized and utilized by the zaibatsu as means to power, that is, to influence the formulation of public policies. The parties became dependent on them financially, and this influence was used to obtain national policies favorable to big business and specific company

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1. O. Tanin and E. Yohan, Militarism and Fascism in Japan (New York: International Publishers, 1934), p. 49. The latter figure changed almost none at all between 1920 and 1930, presumably because of the effects of the depression in 1930. Allan B. Cole, Japanese Society and Politics: The Impact of Social Stratification and Mobility on Politics (Boston: Boston University Press, 1956), pp. 58-59.

2. Yasuke Tsurumi, "Japan in the Modern World," Foreign Affairs, 9 (January , 1931), pp. 263-264.

3. Cole, Japanese Society and Politics, p. 73.

> interests, to resist agrarian and military elements when they threatened zaibatsu positions, and to oppose any broad social reforms which might change the socio-economic structure.[4]

Throughout the nineteen twenties, the policies pursued by the government reflected the interests of large business, with taxes falling more heavily on landowners than on manufacturers.[5]

This close alliance between the party politicians and big business spawned a series of scandals and instances of personal corruption. From the Meiji Restoration until 1926 there were about a dozen important scandals in Japanese politics, but in the five years from 1926 to 1930, nine major scandals were exposed.[6] They involved both of the political parties, Diet members, prime ministers, and millions of yen. The personal corruption these scandals revealed did not transform professional military officers into rebellious conspirators of course, but it did show them as well as the public that much of the political leadership was unworthy of respect. General Araki Sadao expressed the officers' assessment of the effects of such leadership:

> Capitalists are concerned only with their own interests and pay no attention to public life; politicians often forget the general situation in the country while absorbed in their party interests; clerks and students forget their duty, giving themselves over to merriment and pleasure.[7]

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4. Ibid., pp. 74-75.

5. Tanin and Yohan, Militarism and Fascism, p. 131, and T.A. Bisson, "The Rise of Fascism in Japan," Foreign Policy Reports, V 111 (26 October 1932), 100.

6. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 17.

7. Araki Sadao, quoted in Ivan Morris (ed.) Japan 1931-1945: Militarism, Fascism, Japanism (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1963), p. 70.

The depression that began in 1929 added a more serious cause of officer discontent. The agricultural sector was especially hard-hit by the economic collapse. In 1928 rice sold for four dollars per bushel, raw silk for $690.00 per bale. By the end of 1931 the prices had dropped to a dollar forty cents per bushel and $150.00 per bale. Rural debt rose to over five billion yen, with interest rates running to thirty per cent and more.[8] The average selling price of one _tan_ (approximately 2.5 acres) of rice field of average quality dropped from 546 yen in 1927 to 489 yen in 1930 and 411 yen in 1931.[9]

Conditions among the urban lower-middle class were scarcely better. Small business debt amounted to 2.5 billion yen by the end of 1931. Worse, the main sources of credit for these businesses, the small and medium banks, were badly hurt, and many closed.[10] Yet during these early depression years the party-controlled governments doggedly followed a deflationary policy. They advocated further arms reduction as an economy measure, and their China policy was largely based on the necessity to maintain foreign trade.[11] These policies met the interests of large business, which dominated foreign trade, but they failed to meet those of the debt-ridden peasantry or the urban _petit bourgeoisie_.

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8. Bisson, "Rise of Fascism," p. 200.

9. Tanin and Yohan, _Militarism and Fascism_, p. 152.

10. T.A. Bisson, "The Trend Toward Dictatorship in Japan," _Foreign Policy Reports_, Vol. X, No. 25 (13 February 1935), p. 318

11. Bisson, "Rise of Fascism," pp. 197-198.

These harsh economic conditions directly affected the army's officers, especially the younger ones. The majority of the conscripts entering uniform each year came from a rural background. The army had spent years forging close ties between itself and the villages, and misery in the villages was quickly felt in the barracks. The core concept of company-level leadership was the establishment of "elder brother-younger brother" ties between the officers and their men, and morale-shattering news from home was an immediate cause for concern to those officers. It was not merely sympathy for another man's misfortune. Morale and motivation were central to the army's tactical ability. "Spiritual training" built morale and motivation. So did the close ties with the villages and the personal interest of the officers and these, with training, gave the army its superb mobility, its surprise capability and its shock power at the point of attack. Anything that threatened that motivation or seriously demoralized the troops presented a real danger to the army. The depression was just such a danger, but it was one the civilian government seemed to care little about. While it appropriated 140 million yen to be used for agricultural relief, by February, 1931, it had actually spent only about four million.[12] By 1932 the plight of the countryside had sparked the formation of a series of radical reform groups among young officers.

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12. Ueda Katsuo (ed.), Taiheiyō Sensō Genin Ron (Tokyo:1953),

The London Naval Treaty

The officers' impressions that the civilian leadership was self-seeking and irresponsible was strongly reenforced by the results of the London Naval Conference in 1930. The Washington Conference nine years earlier had set the limits on battleship construction; the London Conference was intended to do the same for lesser craft. At Washington, the Japanese naval officers had been willing to accept the theoretical inferiority inherent in the 10:6 ratio; the non-fortification clause plus their strength in cruisers, submarines and other craft gave them actual superiority in home waters. That local superiority was essential if the navy was to have the capability of defending Japanese shores, the very reason for its existence.

The officers of the Naval General Staff, in preparation for the London Conference, determined that this requirement would be met so long as the ratio of Japanese heavy cruisers did not fall below seventy per cent of those in the American or British fleet. The American navy, however, was preparing to build a force of twenty-three heavy cruisers. (It eventually settled for eighteen.) Britain, which emphasized the smaller light cruisers, had only fifteen heavy cruisers.[13] Seventy per cent of the proposed American strength would give Japan sixteen, enough to threaten Australia and New Zealand. This was intolerable to the British. Even before the conference began, the British and Americans agreed that Japanese heavy cruiser strength should be limited to the 10:6 ratio.

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13. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 39.

The final agreement signed in London gave Japan an overall naval ratio of 10:6.975, very close to the 10:7 goal of the Japanese government. But in the key heavy cruiser category the agreement specified a ratio of 10:6. The agreement grew out of talks between Ambassador to England Matsudaira Tsuneo and American Senator David Reed, and was accepted only after American Secretary of State Stimson bluntly warned that the alternative was an Anglo-American accord excluding Japan.[14] Navy Minister Takarabe, the Japanese naval representative at the conference, reluctantly initialed the agreement.[15]

Prime Minister Hamaguchi Yukō and Foreign Minister Shidehara were both satisfied that the London Naval Treaty served Japan's interests well as one more token of cooperation with the Anglo-American powers. The Naval General Staff, however, was aghast. Chief of the Naval General Staff Admiral Katō Kanji and his Vice-Chief, Vice Admiral Suetsugu Nobumasa, vehemently opposed the acceptance of the treaty. As the men actually charged with naval operations they were directly responsible for the defense of Japan, and once the American fleet had built up to its legal limit of heavy cruisers, it would be able to defeat the Japanese fleet in Japanese waters. This was recognized by naval officers on both sides of the Pacific.[16] Further, America had already been identified as the most likely future antagonist for the

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14. Ibid., p. 54.

15. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy in Mukden, p. 64, n.6.

16. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 46.

navy in the 1923 Imperial Defense Policy. Katō and Suetsugu had sound professional reasons for their opposition to an agreement that insured their defeat by an identified potential foe.

Despite the opposition of the Naval General Staff, Hamaguchi successfully guided the London Naval Treaty through the ratification process. It left a bitter legacy for the military, however. Admiral Takarabe and virtually every other senior officer who had cooperated with Hamaguchi on the treaty was forced into retirement by the naval officer corps. Nor was the navy alone in its resentment. The civilian government had ignored the professional advice of its military specialists on a vital defense matter, had in fact forced through a treaty despite vociferous opposition by them. The implications of this were not lost on the army's officers. An eighteen-point study issued by the Military Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of War bluntly stated that the civilian government had not only improperly infringed into areas where professional military judgments should prevail but had interfered with the internal command structure as well. It specifically pointed out that, if the cabinet could over-ride the Naval General Staff on such a key issue as the minimum fleet size, it could also over-ride the army's operational planning requirements and impose equally unrealistic and militarily incorrect limits on it.[17]

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17. "London Kaigi ni Kansuru Shitsumon no Kekka Rikugun ni no Kanken o Oyobosu beki Jikō ni Tsuite," Military Affairs Bureau, Ministry of War, Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 11, pp. 5-6.

The London Naval Treaty virtually completed the alienation of the officer corps from the civilian political leadership. In October, 1930, a group of field grade officers in Tokyo formed the Sakurakai, originally a discussion group intended to explore ways of bringing about reform.[18] The Sakurakai Prospectus listed the causes of army discontent:

> Though the causes behind the present state of our nation are many, we must first point out the grave responsibility of the rulers . . . who have been vainly absorbed in political and material self-interest . . . . Moreover, when we observe the London Treaty issue, it is evident that the poisonous sword of the demoralized and covetous party politicians is about to be turned towards the military. The military authorities . . . who have been numbed by terrible social conditions lack the courage and the decision to rise even against corrupt politics. . . . As we observe recent social trends, top rulers engage in immoral conduct, political parties are corrupt, capitalists and aristocrats have no understanding of the masses, . . . farming villages are devastated, unemployment and depression are serious. These present causes for grave concern for the nation.[19]

## The Mounting Crisis in Manchuria

During the three years following Chang Tso-lin's assassination the Japanese position in Manchuria came under increasingly heavy attack both from the local Manchurian authorities and from the Kuomintang government of China proper. This anti-Japanese movement represented a serious attempt to dislodge the Japanese, and was seen by the officers

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18. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, pp. 96-97.

19. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, pp. 30-31.

of the Kwantung Army and the General Staff as a direct and major threat to the army's operational capabilities in a war with Russia.

Chang's death left power fragmented in Manchuria. Yang Yu-t'ing, Chang's Chief of Staff and commander of the Mukden Arsenal, was one of the chief contenders for Chang's mantle. The other was Chang Hsueh-liang, Chang Tso-lin's son and one of his key subordinate generals. At the time of his father's death young Chang had been with the garrison at Chinchow. He stayed there for two months before returning to Mukden to claim his father's old position of Military Governor of Mukden Province. This put him in a strong competitive position, but it was no more than that. As in the rest of warlord China, each provincial military governor had actual control over his own army, and used the resources of the province to support it. Chang Tso-hsiang, Military Governor of Kirin, and Wan Fu-lin, of Heilungkiang, had been Chang Tso-lin's men, not his son's. With the old chief gone, they were free to pursue their own particular interests. As military governor of the richest province in Manchuria, Chang Hsueh-liang could deploy a larger force than the others, and so was no man to ignore or attack. But Yang Yu-t'ing had friends and allies among subordinate commanders throughout Manchuria, and as commander of the Mukden Arsenal he could control the vital flow of weapons and ammunition it produced.

Further complicating the picture, civilian Chinese leaders in Mukden could exercise political influence if not military power. Men such as Yuan Chin-kai, civil governor of Liaoning (Mukden) Province at the time of Chang's death, and his associate T'ing Chien-hsiu, had the ability to administer local government, to collect taxes, and to marshall the support of the Chinese business community, a support that had been vital to Chang Tso-lin on several occasions in the past. Nor were outside influences lacking. Both Yang Yu-T'ing and Chang Tso-hsiang were thought to have private connections with the Kuomintang, while Wan Fu-lin's primary commander, Ma Chan-shen, was known to be receiving arms and funds from the Soviet Union. The Japanese officers of the Second Department's advisory corps and the Kwantung Army staff were divided between backing Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Yu-t'ing.[20] Kwantung Army Commander Muraoka, Chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ Hata, the civil Governor of Kwantung, and South Manchurian Railway Vice-President Matsuoka Yōsuke favored Chang Hsueh-liang; General Matsui Nanao, Okura zaibatsu chief Ōkura Kihachirō, South Manchurian Railway President Yamamoto Jōtarō and Colonel Machino Takema supported Yang Yu-t'ing.[21] In the end the group favoring the recognition of Chang Hsueh-liang carried the argument.[22]

The most critical problem young Chang had to face was working out a relationship between Manchuria and China. Yang Yu-t'ing and Kirin's Chang Tso-hsiang advocated union with the south. Yuan Chin-k'ai

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20. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 85; Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, pp. 51-52.

21. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 47; Akira Iriye, "Chang Hsueh-liang and the Japanese," Journal of Asian Studies, XX (November, 1960), p. 35; Nashimoto Yūhei, Chugoku no naka no Nihonjin (Tokyo: Dohsei Publishing Co., 1969), p. 19.

22. Iriye, "Chang Hsueh-liang," p. 35.

and other civilian leaders, more concerned with local stability and favorable economic conditions, argued for an autonomous Manchuria and the encouragement of favorable relations with Japan.[23] Whatever his personal feelings, for Chang to have opted too early for union with China would have meant following the policy advocated by his arch-rival and allowing Yang to seize the political initiative. In early July, Chang became the "Commander in Chief of the Peace Preservation in the Three Eastern Provinces," and so became one of the seventeen members of the Mukden business-dominated Peace Preservation Committee.[24] This strengthened his position and associated him with those favoring autonomy and stability, but did not force him into taking a definite stand.

If the Manchurian leadership was divided over the question of Manchuria's union with China, the same was true in Japan. In general, the officials of the Foreign Ministry accepted union as, if not desirable, at least unavoidable. Both Minister Yoshizawa in Peking and Consul-General Hayashi in Mukden urged Tokyo to acquiesce gracefully, and to concentrate diplomatic efforts on ways to protect Japan's treaty rights in Manchuria.[25] The army, on the other hand, strongly argued that the policies set forth in the final statement of the Eastern Conference should be pursued. Military attache to Peking Brigidier General Tatekawa, Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army Saitō, and Colonel

23. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

24. Ibid., p. 35.

25. Ibid., p. 39, and Iriye, After Imperialism, pp. 233-234.

Doihara Kenji of the advisory corps all sent messages back to army headquarters in Tokyo urging that an autonomous or independent Manchuria should be created, one that was not connected with the Kuomintang.[26]

Tanaka, still Prime Minister, at first hesitated between the two policy approaches and took a "wait and see" position. However, on July 7th Chiang K'ai-shek's Kuomintang regime announced that all unequal treaties would be abrogated, and on the 20th abrogated the Sino-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1896.[27] This served as a clear warning that Japan's Manchurian position would be in serious danger if the Kuomintang should control the region, and resulted in a series of warnings to Chang Hsueh-liang not to join with the South. Consul-General Hayashi delivered one strong message on July 20th, and Baron Hayashi Gonsuke reiterated it while attending Chang Tso-lin's funeral in early August.[28]

However, within Manchuria popular pressures were rising for joining Manchuria with China proper. On August 4th the All-Student League of Kirin held a rally where speakers demanded an end to Tanaka's policy toward Manchuria, and denounced Chang Hsueh-liang as a Japanese puppet for not openly opposing it. This agitation, linking Chang Hsueh-liang with Japanese policy and thoroughly condemning both, continued and increased during the summer of 1928.[29] At the same time, the continuing

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26. Iriye, "Chang Hsueh-liang," p. 39, and After Imperialism, pp. 232-233.

27. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 310.

28. Bamba, Japanese Diplomacy in a Dilemma, p. 342, n. 111.

29. Ibid., pp. 346-347.

instability and political uncertainty caused more people to favor ending by joining with China. Chang, balancing all factions, negotiated with the Kuomintang.

Chiang K'ai-shek offered favorable terms. In return for accepting the Kuomintang flag and announcing his allegiance to the Nanking government, Chang Hsueh-liang was made Commander-in-Chief of the Northeastern Frontier Army (i.e., confirmed in the military power he already possessed), and confirmed as the administrative head of Manchuria, with Kuomintang branches to be introduced only after joint consultation between Mukden and Nanking. To further sweeten the deal, the Inner Mongolian province of Jehol was to be added to Chang's domain.[30] On December 29, 1928, Chang Hsueh-liang raised the Kuomintang flag and formally united Manchuria with China proper. In doing so, Chang was pursuing a policy advocated by his chief rival, Yang Yu-t'ing. He settled the politically embarrassing situation by simply shooting Yang.[31]

The domestic consequences of the union for Manchuria were minimal. Manchuria retained its *de facto* autonomy. Chang Hsueh-liang permitted no interference in the Manchurian government from local Kuomintang branches, and the power to appoint or dismiss Manchurian officials remained firmly in Chang's hands. Cooperation with Nanking was voluntary,

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30. Lytton Report, in *IMTFE*, p. T 18,719, and Iriye, *After Imperialism*, p. 245.

31. Shimada, *Kantōgun*, p. 85.

and "binding instructions" were obeyed only when it was convenient for him to do so.[32]

The raising of the Kuomintang flag had considerably greater consequences for Manchurian-Japanese relationships. Well before December, 1928, Chang Hsueh-liang knew that Japanese officers had killed his father. Whether moved by filial piety or a thirst for revenge, or by the nationalist zeal that later apparently caused him to precipitate the Sian Incident of 1936, Chang actively cooperated with the Kuomintang in its efforts to end the privileged Japanese position in Manchuria. Although the Kuomintang could not interfere in government, it was allowed to propagandize, and for the first time Kuomintang anti-imperialist and rights-recovery slogans were freely and openly disseminated. Strongly nationalistic text-books were introduced into Chinese schools. Nationalist organizations, such as the Liaoning Peoples' Foreign Policy Association, were formed. These associations brought direct pressure to bear on the Japanese residents of Manchuria by getting Chinese landlords to raise the rents of Japanese tenants, or to refuse to rent to them or to renew their leases.[33]

The Japanese in Manchuria complained bitterly that the Chang regime was illegally denying them rights guaranteed by treaty. In its final report the Commission of Inquiry of the League of Nations (the

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32. Lytton Report, in IMTFE, pp. T 18,719-720.

33. Ibid., pp. T 18,721-722.

Lytton Commission) partially agreed:

> The fact that restrictions were placed upon the residences, travel and business activities of Japanese subjects in the interior of South Manchuria, and that orders and regulations were issued by various Chinese officials prohibiting Japanese or other foreigners from residing outside the Treaty Ports or from renewing leases of buildings is not contested to in the documents officially presented to the Commission by the Chinese Assessor. Official pressure, sometimes supported by severe police measures, was exerted upon the Japanese to force them to withdraw from many cities and towns in South Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia, and upon Chinese property owners to prevent them from renting houses to Japanese. It was stated by the Japanese that the Chinese authorities also refused to issue passports to Japanese, harassed them by illegal taxes and, for some years before September 1931, failed to carry out the stipulation in the agreement by which they had undertaken to submit to the Japanese Consul the regulations which were to be binding upon the Japanese.[34]

Such an atmosphere inevitably led to incidents between the local Manchurian Chinese and the Japanese residents of Manchuria. The Kwantung Army kept meticulous count; its tabulation, by day and incident, for the four years preceding the Manchurian Incident shows two hundred forty incidents occurring between the two groups.[35] By early 1931, over 125 Chinese and twenty seven Japanese had reportedly died or been injured in these clashes.[36] Perhaps more important for the army,

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34. Lytton Report, in IMTFE, pp. T 18,742-743.

35. Kwantung Army Staff, "Saikin Yonen ni Okeru Man-Mo Kankei Jiken Ichiranhyō," in Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 11, pp. 239-258.

36. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 63.

during the same period it also tabulated a list of seventy one important confrontations or incidents that involved the Kwantung Army itself.[37]

Nor was the pressure on the Japanese position purely political and social. Between 1928 and 1931 four new Chinese railroads were built in Manchuria without the use of Japanese capital, the harbor at Hulutao was constructed, and work was begun to improve the navigability of the Liao River. The significance of these projects became clear in the June 1931 statement of the South Manchurian Railway Company; its earnings had been cut in half. The company claimed that the Chinese lines had cut their general passenger rate by twenty three per cent. Freight routed through Yinkow (and so onto Chinese lines) rather than through Dairen was offered a thirty per cent rate reduction and a seventy per cent cut in the transport tax. Further, Chinese immigrants into Manchuria were charged only about one-third the standard rate.[38]

Between 1928 and 1931 the Japanese position in Manchuria was subjected to continuing and increasing erosion. Whatever the raising of the Kuomintang flag may have done for Chang Hsueh-liang's position, it opened the Japanese in Manchuria to the full force of the Kuomintang's Rights Recovery Program. Of all the unequal treaties the Nanking government was sworn to end, perhaps none was as noxious as the Sino-Japanese Treaty of 1915, which had grown out of the Twenty One Demands.

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37. Kwantung Army Staff, "Saikin Yonenkan Guntai Kankei Jūyō Shōgai Jiken Ichiranhyō," in Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 11, pp. 259-275.

38. Kingman, Effects of Chinese Nationalism, p. 23.

And it was upon this treaty that the Japanese position in Manchuria was most firmly based.

The army's leadership, both in Tokyo and in Manchuria, viewed these events with undisguised alarm, for they presented a direct threat to both the army's mission and its operational capability, and provided much of the motivation for the Kwantung Army's insubordination. After the Pacific War some senior ex-officers of the Imperial Army listed what they saw as the causes of the Manchurian Incident. They were:

> 1. Almost complete failure to execute pledges concerning Japanese investments in railways.
> 2. Disregard and infringement of rights concerning the construction of railways.
> 3. Construction of railways running parallel to the South Manchurian Railway in order to constrain the latter. This action rendered nominal the greater part of the Japanese railroad rights and interests.
> 4. Intense repression of Japanese rights of private land lease by Chang Hsueh-liang's officials, to such an extent as to make it impossible for Japanese to live, trade, or farm in the inner parts of Manchuria and Mongolia.
> 5. Oppression of Koreans living in Chiengtao, causing them to live under miserable conditions.
> 6. Execution of a thoroughgoing national educational policy to encourage boycott of and insult to Japanese.
> 7. Numerous cases of insult and outrage of Japanese residents.
> 8. Frequent acts of insult to Japanese by Wang I-cheh's troops. [Wang I-cheh commanded Mukden North Barracks.]
> 9. Wanpaoshan Incident and the murder of Captain Nakamura.
> 10. Between 1928 and the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident there occurred more than 120 cases of infringement of rights and interests, interference with business, boycott of Japanese goods, unreasonable taxation, detention of individuals, confiscation of properties, eviction, demand for cessation of business, assault and battery, and the oppression of Korean residents. Few of these cases were ever settled.

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39. Hq. US Army Forces Far East, Military History Section, Political Strategy Prior to the Outbreak of War, Part 1 (Washington: Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1952), pp. 3-4.

The civilian political leadership seemed not to share the army's concern for events in Manchuria. In July, 1929, Tanaka was replaced as Prime Minister by Hamaguchi Yukō of the Minseitō. Hamaguchi promptly appointed Shidehara Foreign Minister again. It was Hamaguchi who pushed through the London Naval Treaty over the strenuous objections of the Naval General Staff. When a fanatical youth assassinated him, he was replaced as Prime Minister by Wakatsuki Seijirō, the man who had led the Japanese delegation to the London Conference. Both Hamaguchi and Wakatsuki accepted Shidehara's approach to diplomacy. Shidehara's response to the growing problems in Manchuria was to adopt conciliatory measures toward Nanking and to seek a settlement within the context of cooperation with the Anglo-American powers. Basically the same policy he had pursued between 1924 and 1927, it ignored the very important differences in circumstances that then existed. Even such a moderate and balanced historian as Royama Masamichi states that Shidehara should have been able to devise a more constructive and effective policy in the face of an impending crisis.[40]

The impressive Russian military response to the Chinese seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railroad in July, 1929, further increased the army's anxieties about Manchuria. Control of the Chinese Eastern Railroad was a long-standing issue between Russia and China. In July, 1929, Chinese forces seized the entire railroad system and expelled the Russian managers. This sparked a six-month armed confrontation between

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40. Royama, Foreign Policy of Japan, p. 57.

the forces of the two countries. In a series of sharp attacks the Russians destroyed the Sungari river fleet and took Tungkiang, Manchouli, and Chalainor. Completely outclassed by Russian arms, the Chinese agreed in December, 1929, to return operational control of the railroad to Russia.[41]

The significance of this for the Japanese army was two-fold. It was tangible evidence that the Chinese Nationalist government seriously intended to end foreign control of Chinese territory and posed an implied threat to the Japanese control of the South Manchurian Railway. More immediately, the Russian military response showed that the Soviet Union had a modern, effective force in the Soviet Far East. Lieutenant Commander Kanda Masatane, a "Russia Expert" and Chief of the Harbin Special Service Organ, analyzed the Russian operation in detail. It was, he observed, an exercise in the effective use of combined arms, with armor, artillery and aircraft used in combination. The Russians mobilized quickly, were well-trained, and showed a capability for night attack--an operation requiring both discipline and specific training. In short, the Russian army in eastern Siberia was a potent, professional military force, and as a result of the affair the Chinese Eastern Railroad remained in Russian hands, available for Russian military use.[42] Russia remained a serious military presence in northern Manchuria, with a demonstrated ability to defeat Chinese

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41. Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins, and Commissars, pp. 115-117.

42. Kanda Masatane, "TōShi (Tetsudō) Jihen ni kanshi Sorenpō no okonaeru," Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 11, Manshū Jihen, Zoku, pp. 200-204.

arms. Militarily, as Itagaki later observed, only the Kwantung Army stood between Russian forces and the Korean border.[43]

## Plans and Programs

### In Army Headquarters

In the spring of 1930 the army, as an institution, began officially to respond to the increasingly critical situation in Manchuria. As usual, in April the General Staff began its annual planning process with the Second Department's "Estimate of the Situation." But by 1930 the key positions in the Second Department were manned by officers who were both deeply concerned about Manchuria and who were political activists, well-trained in the clandestine operational tradition of the intelligence service. Chief of the China Section Shigeto Chiaki and his immediate subordinate, Chief of the China Sub-section Lt. Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi, were by the nature of their official positions primarily concerned with developments in China and Manchuria. The Chief of the Russia Section, Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō, a professional "Russia Expert," had served as Chief of the Manchouli Special Service

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43. Itagaki, "Gunji jo yori Mitaru Man-Mo ni Tsuite," p. 140. This was a point that Itagaki repeatedly made. After the Manchurian Incident and the creation of Manchukuo, Itagaki justified the actions of the Kwantung Army by pointing to the growing strength of Russia, and for the need to use Manchurian resources to mechanize the Japanese army for a possible confrontation with Russia. He believed the dangerous period would begin with the completion of Russia's third Five Year Plan, i.e., in about ten years from the time he wrote. "Itagaki Kokyū Sambō no Josei Handan," Gandaishi Shiryō, Vol. 7, Manshū Jihen, pp. 172-179.

Organ during the Siberian Expedition and as military attache to Turkey between 1927 and 1930. At Manchouli he had directed the agent network operating out of that Special Service Organ. In 1929, in Turkey, he drew on that experience to recommend a plan for infiltrating agents into the Caucasus to foment disruptions and disorders in that part of Russia. The aim of his plan was to decrease Russian pressure on East Asia and Manchuria by focussing Soviet attention on other areas.[44] Unlike Shigeto and Nemoto, Hashimoto was more concerned with Russia than Manchuria, but he saw Manchuria as an essential base for offensive clandestine operations against Russia as well as the necessary tactical field of battle in case of open war. Supervising the activities of these men was Brigidier General Tatekawa Yoshitsugu, who had been appointed Chief of the Second Department during the August, 1929 assignment cycle.[45] While serving as military attache to Peking, Tatekawa had been deeply involved in the attempt to get Chang Tso-lin to return to Manchuria, and after Chang's death he had argued strongly for the creation of an autonomous Manchuria.

As Chief of the Second Department, Tatekawa directed the drawing up of the 1930 Estimate. The drafting of the portion on Manchuria fell routinely to the staff sections most directly concerned with that area, the China and Russia Sections. The result was an Estimate that focused heavily on Manchuria and the current threats to Japan's position

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44. IMTFE, Exhibit 734-A, p. T 7,647.

45. Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 7, p. 1x.

there. From the discussion of the Estimate within the General Staff there arose a consensus that army action, of some sort, would be essential if Japan's position in Manchuria was to be protected. A three-fold plan emerged to become official army policy. It stipulated that Chang Hsueh-liang and Chinese officials were to be pressured into respecting Japanese rights. If this step should fail, Chang Hsueh-liang's regime was to be replaced by one more sympathetic to Japan. As a last resort, Manchuria would be physically seized and occupied by the Japanese army.[46]

This 1930 army plan echoed the policies enunciated in Saitō's 1927 plan and incorporated as an option at the Eastern Conference. But where that earlier policy aimed at the creation of an autonomous Manchuria, the 1930 army plan assumed the _de facto_ existence of Manchurian autonomy, and focused on ways of forcing the Manchurian (not Nanking) authorities to recognize Japanese rights there. Also, unlike the earlier policy, it did not mask conflicting approaches to the problem but laid out the different possible actions in a program of increasingly severe options to be pursued. It was, at this level, a coherent, well-staffed plan, designed to solve one of the army's most pressing military problems.

Despite its operational coherence, however, the 1930 plan reflected a serious confusion of political and military concerns. The

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46. Seki Hirohara, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in _Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi_, pp. 378-379.

Eastern Conference decisions had raised operational military requirements to the level of national policy commitments, i.e., to protect Japan's Manchurian position by seeking increased control or influence over Manchuria. The 1930 plan, in turn, made these policy commitments part of the operational planning process, considering them legitimate goals to be actively pursued by the army as part of its purely professional military operations. What had begun as a live question of policy to be decided by civilian political leadership became, for the army, simply a military order, to be obeyed. Just as Tanaka had confused military requirements with policy initiatives in 1927, so in 1930 the army's leadership confused policy formulation with operational planning.

Given the institutional structure, history, and mission of the army, this confusion of policy and planning was perhaps an easy trap for the officers to fall into. Despite Foreign Minister Shidehara's unwillingness to take concrete steps to protect the Japanese position in Manchuria, the army was still strictly charged with its defense. But the army, in turn, watched Japanese rights being steadily eroded through political, not military, pressure from Chang and the Kuomintang. At the same time the 1927 Eastern Conference decision, which bore on this same problem, had elevated the army's proposed solution to the level of national policy. That policy had been ignored since 1928 but was not formally repudiated by the national civilian leadership. It was, rather, enthusiastically advocated by the major opposition political party, the Seiyukai, and a significant number of influential members of the bureaucracy, nobility, and government councils.

Perhaps at least as important, the men who wrote the draft for the Estimate by that very fact defined the nature of the threat to be considered, determined which basic facts, assumptions and information were relevant to decision-making, and drew up the tentative list of alternatives to be considered. In 1930 those men were Second Department officers who were deeply concerned with Manchuria, and whose personal careers reflected the Second Department's tradition of mixing political means with military ends. Of all the organizations in the General Staff or War Ministry, the officers of the Second Department were the ones whose normal duty made them the least likely to recognize the boundaries between the political and the military spheres, or to respect them if they did. Once the draft Estimate was submitted and its assumptions accepted, the 1927 policy, cleared of its ambiguities and confusions, was the most familiar, best staffed, and most widely understood and accepted response. After it had passed through the cycle of conferences and discussions among all Department and Bureau Heads and had received the approval of the "Big Three"--the Chief of the General Staff, the Minister of War, and the Inspector General of Military Training--this plan became the formal army policy for 1930. Its acceptance meant that the army had officially decided to seek a solution, in Manchuria, to the Manchurian Question, and that it was prepared to do this unilaterally, as an internal military matter, regardless of the officially proclaimed policy of the civilian political leadership. The 1930 plan institutionalized insubordination for the army.

The 1930 plan failed ignominiously. Its weakness lay in the very mixing of political and military matters that characterized it. The plan's first option, that of pressuring Chang Hsueh-liang into recognizing Japanese rights in Manchuria, could not be implemented by the army alone. To be effective, it would have to be national policy, using economic and diplomatic pressures, and carried out with the cooperation of the cabinet and the Foreign Ministry. Neither Prime Minister Wakatsuki nor Foreign Minister Shidehara was willing to apply the type of pressure needed to satisfy the army's demands. Nor could the army itself attempt to apply them without openly going outside its recognized area of professional competence and thereby precipitating a major jurisdictional dispute with its most watchful rival, the Foreign Ministry. Although the 1930 plan committed the army to seek specific solutions to the problem of Manchuria, it did not create the institutional means of implementing the plan.

By the time the annual planning cycle started again, in April, 1931, the weakness of the 1930 plan was recognized within the General Staff. The 1931 draft Estimate was drawn up by the same Second Department officers who had drafted the previous Estimate. Again, the Estimade focused heavily on Manchuria. This time, however, the thirty-page document began from the conclusions reached in the previous Estimate. Accepting the earlier three-option plan as still valid, it concentrated on the problem of implementation. It noted that Chinese "bad faith" was continuing, and that the Japanese government was not acting as resolutely as the army had wished. It suggested that "we can take practical steps to protect our rights," and turned specifically to a discussion of Option Two, the replacement of Chang Hsueh-liang. It disposed of the question of Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria with the statement, "Of course, if we can substitute the rule of a pro-Japanese for that of Chang Hsueh-liang, we can place it under the sovereignty of the central Chinese government." The Estimate's discussion of Manchuria concluded with the statement "If Manchuria is not disposed of, and if the government does not comply with the opinion of the army, it will be necessary to expect resolute action to be carried out."[47]

When the General Staff's department heads met to consider the draft Estimate, Second Department Head Tatekawa suggested that his Section Chiefs also be allowed to attend, because they were the ones who had actually drawn up the document. Although this was an unprecedented suggestion, in the circumstances of 1931 the Department Heads approved.[48] Lt. Colonel Hashimoto Kingorō of the Russian Section recorded the supposedly secret session in his diary.

According to Hashimoto, much of the discussion centered on ways the army could manage the settlement of the Manchurian problem. The question of retaining the three options of the 1930 plan was debated and accepted. The meeting then turned to ways of actually carrying out the plan. The question arose: what was the army to do if a serious

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47. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 50.

48. Ibid., p. 49.

incident should break out in Manchuria? During the 1930 discussions, the department heads had recommended that the army take a "wait and see" position. In 1931 all agreed that the army should take the measures necessary to defend itself, but the nature and extent of those measures were left undecided. This led to the question of what the army was to do if "something should occur" in Manchuria but the Japanese government failed to act. The answer, again, was that the army itself should "be sympathetic" toward it and act in self-defense.[49]

Despite their vagueness, Hashimoto's notes of the department heads' meeting and the 1931 Estimate itself make it clear that by April 1931, the army not only was prepared for a unilateral settlement of the Manchurian Question but that it had found a mechanism for doing so. It was prepared, if necessary, to abandon Option One, pressure on Chang, and proceed directly to Option Two, Chang's replacement. A self-protective military reaction to a serious incident would be the means; it fell well within the army's capabilities, and could be handled as a strictly internal military matter that posed little problem of massive and effective interference from Foreign Ministry officials. Only the question of timing remained to be settled.

Within the General Staff the strongest pressure for quick decisive action in Manchuria came from the Second Department's China and Russia Sections, and specifically from Shigetō, Nemoto, and Hashimoto.

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49. Ibid., pp. 50-51.

Their sections had been the ones most deeply involved in drawing up both the 1930 and 1931 Estimates. Convinced that simple pressure had already failed, these officers actively advocated Chang's overthrow and replacement. As reflected in the comments on Chinese sovereignty in the 1931 Estimate, they seem not to have much cared whether the new Manchurian regime was independent or nominally under Chinese sovereignty, so long as it was indeed "friendly" to Japanese interests.[50] In their discussion of the 1931 Estimate the department heads had agreed that the Kwantung Army should spring into "self-protective" action if an incident should occur. In May 1931, just after the formal acceptance of the 1931 Estimate as official army policy, Shigetō, Nemoto and Hashimoto privately agreed that an incident must occur.[51] Their plan, according to Nemoto, was to clandestinely use propaganda and provocations to incite some of Chang's troops to begin an incident; once begun, the Kwantung Army would be free to do the rest. The plan was submitted to Brigidier General Tatekawa and was formally approved by him.[52]

The Second Department's desire for a quick solution to the Manchurian problem and its willingness to use clandestine methods to achieve it reflected its peculiar institutional characteristics. Of all the

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50. Even after the Manchurian Incident exploded, the officers of the General Staff, including the intelligence officers of the Second Department, continued to think of Manchuria as part of China. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 75.

51. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, pp. 54-55; Storry, Double Patriots, p. 69.

52. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 55.

staff organizations in army headquarters it alone had a direct operational capability; its Special Service Organs and covert penetration agents could and did mount covert operations without going through the normal operational chain of command. It was both a staff agency that played an integral part in the planning process and an operational organization specializing in clandestine operations. Further, the nature of their overseas duty and their area-defined staff assignments made its officers intimately familiar with and concerned about developments on the mainland.

These characteristics were shared by no other department in the General Staff or the War Ministry. Perhaps as a result, while these latter organizations accepted the 1931 Estimate as a policy to be pursued, their approach was that of professional officers carefully studying a new problem and preparing plans to meet it. In June, 1931, the Chief of the General Staff and the Minister of War authorized their staffs to begin work on a plan to implement the Estimate. A joint conference committee was established, composed of five colonels who were section or bureau chiefs, and chaired by Colonel Nagata Tetsuzan.[53] The document they produced, "Outline of a Policy for Settling the Manchurian-Mongolian Question," was a carefully worked-out staff study with specific recommendations for steps the army should take to carry out the policy enunciated in the Estimate. It contained eight major points.

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53. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 61.

1. The army would maintain close liaison with the Foreign Ministry in its efforts to end the anti-Japanese policies of Chang Hsueh-liang's regime. However, the General Staff would be guilty of poor leadership if, through undue discretion, it stopped the actions of the Kwantung Army.
2. If the army was prevented from acting in the face of an expanded anti-Japanese movement, the domestic right-wing could be expected to exert pressure. [on the government?]
3. To prevent opposition from within the Cabinet, the Minister of War was to insure that each cabinet member fully understood the real circumstance in Manchuria.
4. The Military Affairs Bureau and the Office of Information would insure that the press and general population had complete understanding of the situation in Manchuria.
5. In order to ward off interference by the Western powers, the Ministry of War, General Staff, and Foreign Ministry would insure that a) the story of the anti-Japanese movement in Manchuria was widely disseminated, and that b) before any action took place, the powers were informed that the Japanese would scrupulously observe all existing treaties.
6. The Operations Department of the General Staff was to draw up specific operations plans and coordinate them with the Kwantung Army.
7. The necessary preparatory steps would take about one year. Therefore, the target date for implementing the Estimate would be in the Spring of 1932.
8. The Kwantung Army was urged to be patient, to put up with the anti-Japanese agitation, and to try to dampen any incidents that might occur before the target date.[54]

Unlike the Second Department officers' plan, this study recommended no clandestine operations nor was it devised in a conspiratorial manner. It was the result of the ordinary planning process within the army's staff organization, directed at implementing an official army policy, and comprehensive within its imposed parameters. Without such specific planning the army, as an institution, was incapable of carrying out its own policies, as the fate of the 1930 Estimate had shown.

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54. "Man-Mo Mondai Kaiketsu Hōsaku no Taikō," in Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 7, p. 164.

By the end of June 1931, however, as a result of the work done by these staff officers, the army had a workable plan, with specific objectives set for each major component involved, and with a stated date for completion. With the acceptance of this study, the army's commitment to an independent settlement of the Manchurian problem moved from the planning to the implementation phase, and did so as official army policy, not as a simple conspiracy of radical nationalists.

In the Kwantung Army

The Officers of the Kwantung Army staff, like those in the General Staff's Second Department, were advocates of quick decisive action in Manchuria. Yet despite their eagerness for action and their exposed position in Manchuria, as late as early 1929 the Kwantung Army staff had drawn up no specific operations plans for military actions against any opposing forces.[55] The operations plans for war with Russia had been prepared by the General Staff, and the Kwantung Army simply prepared to play a subordinate if essential role in a total army effort. Saitō's plan for blocking off Manchuria had been a one-time proposition, no longer feasible after Chang Tso-lin's death.

In Kwantung Army staff discussions it was generally agreed that, if a serious incident occurred, the Kwantung Army could not assume a defensive position; it would have to attack Chang's troops and overthrow

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55. Japanese Operational Planning Against the USSR, p. 19.

his government.[56] The reason for this lay in the weakness of the Kwantung Army and the limitations imposed by Japanese tactical doctrine. The Kwantung Army consisted of only one division of infantry and six battalions of railway guards, about 10,400 men in all. These troops, in peacetime, were strung out in small garrisons from Changchun in the north to Port Arthur.[57] Facing them were roughly 250,000 regular Chinese troops, many of them battle-tested veterans of the long civil war. Chang had 45,000 men in Mukden Province alone, and another 110,000 between Peking and Tientsin.[58] Ten thousand men were stationed at Mukden North Barracks, just yards from the South Manchurian Railroad. Further, Chang had his own air force with a reported strength of one hundred forty military aircraft.[59] The Kwantung Army had no planes. Facing such odds, the Kwantung Army could not afford to let itself get pulled into a purely defensive position; it could not survive even a short war of attrition. Further, a defensive position would deprive the army of its one real tactical advantage, its ability to move rapidly, employ surprise and overwhelming shock power at the time and place of its own

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56. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, p. 363.

57. A detailed, unit-by-unit comparison of the strength and dispositions of the Japanese and Chinese forces in Manchuria is listed in the General Staff's "Manshū Jihen shi, Dai-Ichi kan," Gendaishi Shiryo, vol. 7, Manshū Jihen, pp. 278-279.

58. U.S. Army, Imperial Japanese Army in Manchuria, 1894-1945, pp. 67, 69.

59. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 114.

choosing. If an incident occurred that seemed to be leading to a military confrontation, the Kwantung Army could survive as a fighting force only by quickly massing, carrying the attack, and destroying Chang's army. This would necessarily mean the fall of his government as well, since his political strength lay in the existence of his army. Despite this situation and Chang Hsueh-liang's adherence to the Kuomintang, in the demoralized state of the Kwantung Army during the army's investigation of Chang Tso-lin's death, no systematic plans were made for a confrontation with Chinese troops.

This situation changed with the arrival of Lt. Colonel Ishiwara Kanji and Colonel Itagaki Seishirō. In October 1928, Ishiwara was transferred from the faculty of the Military Academy to the Kwantung Army, as Operations Officer. When he arrived the command structure was still essentially unchanged from what it had been at the time of Chang Tso-lin's assassination; Muraoka, Saitō, and Kōmoto remained at their posts. These three men all strongly believed that Manchuria should be separated from China proper, by force if necessary, and a friendly regime established there under Japanese protection. Ishiwara had argued for several years that Manchuria was Japan's essential resource base for the inevitable "final war" with the United States. Even though he began from different premises, he agreed that Manchuria should be brought under Japanese control and that military force would be necessary to accomplish this.

In April, 1929, Kōmoto was relieved of his assignment, reprimanded for the assassination of Chang Tso-lin, and sent back to Japan.

His replacement as Senior Staff Officer was Colonel Itagaki Seishirō, commander of the 33rd Infantry Regiment then stationed in Mukden. Itagaki was an experienced, seasoned officer whose career until this time had followed the classic military success pattern. A graduate of the War College, he had alternated between staff and field command assignments. One of his two previous China tours had been spent in Hankow, as a company grade officer commanding troops, while the second tour was in Peking as an assistant military attache.[60] Where Ishiwara had spent most of his career working in the military education system, Itagaki had been in the field and on the working staff. Ishiwara was a teacher and theoretician, capable of synthesizing ideas into over-arching explanatory concepts. Itagaki was a practical professional soldier, familiar with the detailed planning of staff work and experienced in actually executing plans in field operations. Together, Ishiwara and Itagaki made a formidable team, in in which the strengths of each balanced out the weaknesses of the other.

Upon assuming his assignment as Senior Staff Officer, Itagaki requested a series of briefings to familiarize himself with the position and problems of the Kwantung Army. This provided an opportunity for a much-needed general review of the changing Manchurian situation, and the proposed briefings became instead a major Kwantung Army intelligence conference. It convened on May 1st, 1929, with Itagaki presiding, and was attended by the Kwantung Army senior staff officers and

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60. Gendaishi Shiryō, Vol. 7, p. lvii.

two senior Second Department intelligence officers stationed in Manchuria, General Hata of the Mukden Special Service Organ and Colonel Hayashi Masahachi, the Military Advisor at Kirin.[61] While the conference focused in part on the Kwantung Army's traditional concern--the Russian threat--it dealt primarily with the increasing tension in Manchuria since Chang Tso-lin's death and with the possibility that an all-out military confrontation might result from an incident. With no operations plans prepared, the Kwantung Army would be incapable of either decisive reaction or effective defense. It was decided that study should begin immediately on "all aspects of military movements" vis-a-vis Chang Hsueh-liang's forces.[62] At the same time the conference recommended that a "Study for an Operations Plan Against the Soviet Union" be begun and suggested ground reconnaissance tours by members of the Kwantung Army staff as a way to start.[63] The reconnaissance tours could serve two purposes. By actually travelling over the terrain the staff would be familiarized with the topography over which troops would possibly have to move in case of war with Russia, and so could plan more realistically. They would also have the chance to

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61. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," p. 366. The Kirin Military Advisor also headed the Special Service Organ in that city.

62. Ibid., p. 366.

63. Ishiwara had originally suggested the reconnaissance, and Itagaki quickly recognized their value. Mark R. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji (1889-1949) and the Japanese Army (unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1972), p. 102.

pinpoint Chang Hsueh-liang's major garrisons and to examine their physical surroundings, invaluable information for operational planners.

The first reconnaissance tour began on July 3rd, 1929, and ended on July 14th. It took the five or six staff officers north through Harbin, Tsitsihar, Hailar, Manchouli, Taonan and Tailai.[64] They travelled by rail, in civilian clothes. Ishiwara, who was project director for the tour, gave each staff officer a specific strategic problem to examine and discuss. On the first night's stop at Changchun, Ishiwara presented his ideas on the coming war with America, how and why it would occur, and the importance of Manchuria as Japan's resource base in that struggle. He urged the officers of the staff to go beyond defensive planning, whether against Russia or Chang Hsueh-liang, and to plan instead for seizure and administration of Manchuria.[65] Although these ideas were Ishiwara's, the actions he urged were long-familiar ones in the Kwantung Army staff. While his sweeping views of history and war helped convince his listeners of the correctness of the seizure, his institutional innovations were more important. He suggested, and Itagaki agreed, that systematic, detailed staff planning be started with the specific aim of seizing and governing Manchuria.

Planning began immediately. Even before the reconnaissance tour was over Captain Sakuma Ryōzō was instructed to organize a staff

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64. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 76.

65. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 104. Peattie discusses Ishiwara's concepts of war, history and the "Final War" on pp. 48-84.

research project on the occupation and administration of Manchuria. Shortly after returning to Port Arthur, Ishiwara drafted a memo, "Kwantung Army Plan for the Occupation of Manchuria and Mongolia," on the general principles that should prevail in the administration of occupied Manchuria. In it he argued that the warlords and politicians then governing Manchuria should be permanently driven from power, and a Japanese military government temporarily set up. The military government, he wrote, was to maintain security while the long-term governing and development of Manchuria was to be done by the inhabitants themselves, with each group pursuing its own particular speciality. The Japanese would be administrators and managers of heavy industry, the Koreans farmers, and the Chinese the small entrepreneurs and laborers. This arrangement would create harmony in Manchuria, end warlord misrule, and give Japan the all-essential resource base for the eventual war with America.[66]

Captain Sakuma's full-scale staff study, "Study Concerning the Administration of Occupied Manchuria," was completed in September, 1930. It reflected the ideas in Ishiwara's memo. It justified the occupation of Manchuria both as a military necessity for its resources in modern war and as a humane action freeing the inhabitants from misrule and exploitation by warlords. The study asserted that an uncorrupt,

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66. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, pp. 368-369, and Nakano Yoshiji, Manshū Jihen no Shinsō, Gendeishi Shiryō, 11, Manshū Jihen (Zoku), pp. 286-288.

effective government of occupied Manchuria could not only be completely self-sufficient but, without increasing taxes, could take major steps to help develop the area and increase productivity. It proposed that the Japanese take charge only of the central Manchurian administration, with every effort made to avoid interference in the daily life of the population.[67] Two months later, in December, 1930, this report was accepted by the Kwantung Army as its official policy.[68]

The overthrow of Chang Hsueh-liang's government necessarily meant the use of military force. The Kwantung Army staff meticulously planned the operation. The staff reconnaissance trips were continued; in October, 1929, southwest Manchuria west of Kiaoyang was examined. Officers from the Sixteenth Division, then in Manchuria, were taken along and given mock tactical exercises involving war with China, including assault on Mukden.[69] In the spring of 1930 the fortifications at Mukden were subjected to careful scrutiny, and in the summer the area east of Liaoning was studied. After the eastern frontier region was explored in the autumn all important Chinese garrisons had been located, examined, and operations plans drawn up against them.[70]

With the reconnaissance trips providing them with invaluable tactical intelligence, the Kwantung Army staff drew up the basic

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67. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, pp. 43-47.

68. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 110.

69. Ibid., p. 105, and Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 77.

70. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, pp. 105-106.

operations plan. There was some disagreement within the staff over what the specific objective of the operations plan should be and where the Kwantung Army should assemble. Three draft plans were considered, each with a different objective. One, echoing Saitō's 1927 plan, would seal Manchuria off from China proper and assemble the army north of the Liao River between Liaotung and Shanhaikuan. The second was a plan to strike directly at the center of Chang Hsueh-liang's strength, Mukden and Mukden North Barracks. The third plan, more cautious, would assemble the army within the Kwantung Territories, prepared to move as necessary.[71]

The strike at Mukden was the plan adopted.[72] Mukden was not only the political center of Manchuria, it was the main source of Chang Hsueh-liang's military strength as well. In Mukden North Barracks ten thousand Chinese troops served as a permanent garrison force. Destruction of that force and occupation of Mukden would not only put the Kwantung Army at a psychological and military advantage, it would also create a local political vacuum, to be filled by a new government. Perhaps at least as important, the direct strike at Mukden fit Japanese tactical doctrine and would allow the army to use its mobility, surprise, and concentrated firepower to the greatest advantage.[73] Once Mukden was

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71. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 81.

72. The decision was "Whatever the situation, we will assemble the force at Mukden and occupy the citadel." Honjo Shigeru, Honjo Nikki (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1968), p. 310.

73. Testimony of Itagaki Seishiro, IMTFE, pp. T 30,258-259.

secure, the Kwantung Army was to advance rapidly northward to seize the other major cities of Manchuria.[74] The specific plans for these movements occupied the Kwantung Army staff through much of 1930. The knowledge gained during the reconnaissance tours was combined with careful terrain analysis and studies of tactical and strategic problems involved in operations against each objective.[75] By the end of 1930, the basic military plans were complete, and for the first time in its existence the Kwantung Army had the ability to mount an immediate, coordinated, sustained attack on the Chinese forces in Manchuria.

The Kwantung Army's plan was militarily sound and well-staffed. Given the disparity of forces in Manchuria, the limitations inherent in the structure of the Japanese army, and the tactical doctrine by which it operated, it was probably the only plan that could give the Kwantung Army a chance of success. With the completion of the operations plan, the Kwantung Army could seize the initiative as soon as hostilities began; only a triggering incident was needed to activate it.

## The Independent Army

By early 1931 the Japanese army was effectively independent of the civilian political leadership in its policy toward Manchuria. Dismayed by both the domestic and foreign policies of the cabinet and facing a major and increasing threat to a vital position, the army allowed

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74. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 107.

75. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 82.

matters of policy to enter into its military planning process; indeed, made policy as part of its plans. The policy question was introduced into the planning process by the officers of the Second Department, the staff agency that traditionally had mixed political and military concerns in carrying out its intelligence mission. Once accepted into the plans, however, the policy question of Manchuria was approached by the other staff officers as a standard military problem, to be studied, planned, and resolved by appropriate action according to the familiar standard operating procedures of the organization.

Within the Kwantung Army a somewhat similar process was at work. Faced with a serious and growing military problem, the Kwantung Army staff began its own planning to meet the threat. But the Kwantung Army already had a long tradition of intervening in Manchurian political affairs, and its staff officers simply assumed that desirable political results would follow its military action, i.e., Chang Hsueh-liang's regime would be toppled. Itagaki and Ishiwara stepped into this situation, elevated the overthrow of Chang from a desirable by-product of self defense to the primary goal of military action, and made that action possible by careful staff planning. While Ishiwara's ideas exceeded the intentions of the General Staff, at least in 1929, they answered the needs and situation of the Kwantung Army, and amounted to a rationalization and professionalization of a long-standing tradition.

## CHAPTER X

## THE DUTIFUL INSUBORDINATES:
## SECOND DEPARTMENT AND KWANTUNG ARMY OFFICERS
## IN THE MANCHURIAN INCIDENT

### Implementing the 1931 Estimate

Despite a tradition of clandestine operations and independent action, in the spring of 1931 the officers of the Second Department and the Kwantung Army were still working within the institutional bounds of the Imperial Army, in pursuit of acknowledged organizational goals. If the army's plans now incorporated political as well as military goals, its officers could still perform as disciplined, professional military men in trying to achieve those goals. By 1931 the steps the army, as an institution, had taken to settle the Manchurian question had outstripped the private plottings of any of its small groups of officers. Even the sweeping and imaginative plans of Itagaki and Ishiwara for occupation of Manchuria were, by 1931, merely Option Three of the accepted army plan.

Nevertheless, officers in both the Second Department and the Kwantung Army were dissatisfied with the army's handling of the Manchurian problem. The careful, step-by-step approach laid out in the report of the June 1931 joint conference, "Outline of a Policy for Settling the Manchurian-Mongolian Question," seemed slow and overly cautious to them. The postponement of action until the spring of 1932 was particularly exasperating. In the Kwantung Army, both Itagaki and Ishiwara were completing their standard three-year tours, and could expect to be transferred out of Manchuria before the scheduled action occurred. Moreover, the Kwantung Army was already prepared for military action, with its plans made and men trained, and the anti-Japanese movement was increasing in intensity. From the point of view of the Kwantung Army, immediate action was called for.[1]

This view was shared by key Second Department officers. Shigeto Chiaki, Chief of the China Section, had participated in the joint conference but was bitterly opposed to its conclusions. He told Hashimoto Kingorō that its recommendations would have been appropriate four years earlier, but that it was unrealistic to wait patiently another year while the Chang Hsueh-liang government hounded the Japanese from Manchuria.[2]

Toward the end of June Major Hanaya Tadashii, Vice-Chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ, returned to army headquarters to argue against the one-year delay. In a secret meeting with department and section heads he pleaded the Kwantung Army's case for military occupation of Manchuria, to be accomplished by the fall of 1931. The Second Department officers Tatekawa, Shigeto and Hashimoto openly agreed with Hanaya and expressed approval of the actions he proposed. They were the only ones, however. Tōjō Hideki, Director of the War Ministry's

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1. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 116.

2. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 62.

Organization and Mobilization Section, and Nemoto Hiroshi of the China Sub-section, both agreed that while the goals were appropriate not enough preparations had yet been made. Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya, Director of the Military Affairs Bureau Koiso, and Nagata Tetsuzan heard Hanaya out without comment pro or con.[3] Hanaya returned to Manchuria, his attempt at persuasion a failure.

This question of timing, not a conflict of goals, gave rise to the conspiracies leading to the Manchurian Incident. Before the joint conference had recommended the delay, both the General Staff and the Kwantung Army had expected an incident to trigger a military confrontation. Even though the committee had recommended restraint to the Kwantung Army, tensions remained high enough that an unexpected incident could easily occur. Faced with the decision to delay for a year, officers in both the Second Department and the Kwantung Army decided independently that an incident must occur.

The Second Department officers came to this conclusion first. In May, before the joint conference met, Shigeto and Hashimoto had already suggested, and Tatekawa approved, a plan to clandestinely instigate a disturbance. The plan was set aside after the joint conference's recommendations were accepted, much to the resentment of both men. Blocked within the General Staff by the conference decision, however, they could not use the normal channels of clandestine operations without

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3. This is Nemoto's version. Hanaya himself mentions meeting only Nemoto and Hashimoto, both of whom, he says, were more concerned with domestic reform than with Manchuria at that time. Hanaya Tadashi, "Manshu Jiken wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," Himerareta Showashi (Tokyo: 1956), p. 43.

openly defying official army policy. Deprived of the means of actually carrying out their plan, they could do little more than privately support the attempts by the Kwantung Army officers to instigate an incident.

In the Kwantung Army the staff had originally been willing to wait for rising tensions to produce an incident serious enough to justify military action. By late May, 1931, however, a consensus had been reached that the Kwantung Army should choose the proper time for action, and so increase its control over events. Ishiwara had suggested that an incident be purposely provoked, and the Kwantung Army be activated in response, essentially the same plan Shigeto and Hashimoto were then proposing in the General Staff. By the end of May a Kwantung Army staff study group, working under Itagaki, had recommended that the army actively use force rather than wait for an incident to erupt.[4] Less than a month later the joint conference decided on the one-year delay and instructed the Kwantung Army to show restraint until then.

It was at this point that actual insubordination began. Until then only Kōmoto had stepped beyond the bounds of disciplined professional activity. Neither Itagaki and Ishiwara in the Kwantung Army nor Shigeto and Hashimoto in the Second Department were willing to wait a year for the completion of the army staff officers' careful, bureaucratic preparations. When Hanaya failed to convince central headquarters to act quickly, the Kwantung Army officers decided to act alone,

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4. Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 114.

in secret, against the specific instructions coming from Tokyo headquarters. This was insubordination, and required clandestine means to carry it out. Like their colleagues in the Second Department, the Kwantung Army officers could not officially use the normal army tools of clandestine operations. Unlike Shigeto and Hashimoto, however, Itagaki and Ishiwara did have some independent resources they could use without direct General Staff oversight. Itagaki, as Senior Staff Officer, was the Kwantung Army's official link with the Mukden Special Service Organ. He could impose requirements on the Organ, and had access to its facilities.[5] Hanaya, an active member of the conspiracy, was second in command of the Organ. Because of its dual nature as a communications center and secret intelligence organ, the Special Service Organ provided an ideal base for clandestine operations, authorized or not.

The specific ideas on how to use these resources may have come from Lt. Colonel Kanda Masatane of the Korean Army. The contingency plans prepared by the Kwantung Army for operations outside Mukden required the bulk of the army to take the offensive, leaving the Kwantung Territories and Railway Zone virtually unprotected. To cover this military vacuum, support from the Korean Army was required.[6] In early 1931, Kanda travelled to Liaotung to confer with the Kwantung Army staff and serve as the Korean Army's liaison officer. Kanda was a "Russia Expert," a classmate of Hashimoto, who had served repeatedly with the

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5. IMTFE, p. T 22,208.

6. This was accepted practice; a mixed brigade from the Korean Army had been deployed to Manchuria in 1928 to cover the Kwantung Army's anticipated Shanhaikuan operation.

Second Department. He had been Chief of the Aigun Special Services Organ during the Siberian Expedition, had originated plans for conducting extensive clandestine operations against Russia from all around its borders, and had established the Harbin Special Services Organ as the most important single intelligence base for clandestine operations against the Soviet Union. He was Hashimoto's predecessor as Chief of the Russian Section of the Second Department.[7]

While Kanda was serving on the Korean Army staff a series of disturbances focused his attention on the Koreans living just across the Manchurian border. Among the 100,000 Koreans in that area, safely outside of Japanese police jurisdiction, were a large number who supported the Korean independence movement. It was also a recruiting ground for the Chinese Communist Party. Using the slogan "Smash Japanese Imperialism," the Communists in April 1930 organized large numbers of these Koreans for violent anti-Japanese demonstrations.[8] Fearful that such activities might spill over into Korea proper and give the Communists a firm foothold in the peninsula, in mid-1930 Kanda suggested that the portion of Manchuria bordering Korea be taken over by Japan and the malcontents cleared out. A light Japanese military railroad ran through the area; Kanda suggested that the army secretly recruit some Japanese and Korean civilians living in the area to bomb

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7. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, pp. 69-70; IMTFE, pp. T 7619-7638, T 38,238-241.

8. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 74.

the railroad. This bombing would then provide an excuse for the Korean Army to cross the border and establish a military-controlled "neutral zone."[9]

Whatever its origins, the plan worked out by the Kwantung Army plotters closely resembled Kanda's earlier suggestion. The Mukden Special Service Organ had numerous contacts among the several hundred Japanese adventurers in Manchuria. Like the China adventurers of an earlier time, these were men seeking their fortunes on the mainland. Some were advocates of Japanese expansion, some were simply men who saw no opportunities in Japan itself, and chose to take their chances in Manchuria. These were the men Itagaki and Hanaya chose to create the incident.[10]

The original plan was to organize about one hundred of these _Manshū ronin_ and dress them in the uniform of Chang Hsueh-liang's army. They were then to attack the Japanese Consulate in Mukden, Japanese hotels, and the Japanese army barracks in Mukden (where they were only to fire into the air). They were also to attack the South Manchuria Railway bridges near the city, but since these were guarded they were to retreat as soon as a fire-fight developed. Finally, they were to explode a small bomb on the track itself.[11] This seemingly large-scale rampage of Chang's troops would suffice for the Kwantung Army to react

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9. _Ibid._, p. 74-75.

10. _Ibid._, p. 62.

11. _Ibid._, pp. 112-113.

in self-defense; the offensive nature of the operations plan would then insure that the Manchurian problem would be settled.

This ambitious plan had one serious flaw. Since it was not an authorized army clandestine operation Itagaki and Hanaya could not officially reveal it to headquarters, and no official funds could be obtained to finance it. For uniforms, weapons, pay for the ronin, etc., the conspirators needed about fifty thousand yen.[12] They could not raise the money.

While Itagai, Ishiwara and Hanaya were working out their plans for an incident, the army itself was making its own institutional preparations. In the annual August personnel assignment cycle Tatekawa was shifted from the Second to the First Department, to become Chief of Operations for the General Staff. Tatekawa was a known advocate of a settlement to the Manchurian problem, and had been a key figure in getting the problem into the army's planning process. His past assignments had been such that he probably had more knowledge of North China and Manchuria than virtually any other general officer on the Staff. He also was an obedient officer and a supporter of the 1931 Estimate. When the joint conference had recommended the one-year delay he had reversed his previous approval of Hashimoto and Shigeto's plans for clandestinely instigating an incident. When Colonel Imamura Hitoshi was transferred to the First Department from the Ministry of War, Tatekawa immediately gave him a copy of the joint conference report, "Outline of

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12. Ibid., p. 63.

a Policy for Settling the Manchuria-Mongolia Question," and told him to study it because he would be making the specific operations plans for implementing it.[13] During these same August transfers Lt. General Honjo Shigeru became Commander of the Kwantung Army.

The August, 1931 assignment cycle was important because the men transferred then would be in those same positions when the spring 1932 deadline arrived for solving the Manchurian question. Informing the various new and old commanders on official policy for the coming year and, if necessary, insuring coordinated action was an annual problem, disposed of at the Army and Division Commanders' Conference, held in Tokyo just after the personnel cycle. In 1931, Manchuria was the major matter of discussion at the conference. On the second day Chief of the General Staff Kanaya explicitly and personally informed the commanders of the three Field Armies (Korean, Kwantung, and Taiwan) of the policy contained in the "Outline of a Policy."[14]

On the final day of the Conference, Minister of War Minami bluntly attacked the civilian government's military reduction program, and identified Manchuria as a specific area of army concern. He noted that the rising anti-Japanese sentiment in Manchuria was a real danger to Japanese interests there, and stated that Japan must settle the

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13. Imamura Hitoshi, "Manshū Hi o Fuku Koro," Himerareta Shōwashi (December, 1956), p. 61.

14. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, p. 401. In his dairy Honjo mentions only that he met with Kanaya and Minami; he says nothing about what was discussed. Honjo Shigeru, Honjo Nikki (Tokyo: Hara Shyobo, 1968), pp. 8-9.

problem. He urged the army to prepare itself to do its duty.[15] In both his open attack on the government's military policy and in his statement on Manchuria, Minami clearly went beyond purely professional military concerns into matters of policy. One Japanese author goes so far as to say it was virtually an invitation by the Minister of War to the army to begin action in Manchuria.[16] But Minami's words were in line with the recommendations in the "Outline of a Policy for Settling the Manchuria-Mongolia Question." His statement served to alert the Army and division commanders of the seriousness with which the high command viewed these problems.

The problem of insuring coordination in Manchuria was settled at an informal party following the conference. If and when the Kwantung Army became militarily engaged, the Korean Army offered the only ready source of reenforcements. Lt. Colonel Kanda, who had served as liaison officer between the Kwantung and Korean Armies, was reportedly uncertain that the commander of the Korean Army, General Hayashi Senjūrō, would react quickly enough in a fluid and confusing situation. With Tatekawa's support and encouragement, Kanda and Hashimoto set up the party to insure coordination.[17]

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15. Ibid., p. 402. The Manchurian portion of Minami's speech is reproduced in Gendaishi Shiryō, vol. 7, p. 145.

16. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 78.

17. Seki,"Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 404.

The party was attended by Kwantung Army Commander Honjō, his Chief of Staff Brigadier General Miyake Mitsuharu, Itagaki, Korean Army Commander Hayashi, Kanda, Taiwan Army Commander Masaki Jinzaburō, Tatekawa, Hashimoto, Shigeto, Nemoto, the new Second Department Head Hashimoto Toranosuke, Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya, Vice Minister of War Sugiyama Hajime, Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau Koiso Kuniaki, and Nagata Tetsuzan. No maids or geisha were present; three lieutenants from Hashimoto's Russia Section did the serving.[18] Nagata and Koiso outlined the plans being made within central headquarters to settle the Manchurian problem, cited the domestic and international problems the army staff was working to resolve, and described the steps being taken to carry out the policy.[19] The Kwantung Army officers gave an assessment of their military situation and the general preparations for military action they had taken, and explicitly requested assurrances of support from the Korean Army. Hayashi agreed.[20]

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18. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 79.

19. Shimada, Kantōgun, p. 96.

20. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 56. Crowley, Japan's Quest for Autonomy, p. 117, asserts that further liaison occurred in August when Ishiwara was in Tokyo and briefed Tatekawa and his staff on the operations plans made by the Kwantung Army. These plans were purportedly accepted by the General Staff's Operations Department without objection. He cites an interview with Imamura as his source. However, Ishiwara was conspicuously absent from all accounts of either the Commanders' Conference or of any ancillary affairs, and Peattie, Ishiwara Kanji, p. 417, n. 66, could find no record in Ishiwara's diary of a trip to Tokyo in August, 1931. In his account in Himerareta Showashi, pp. 60-71, Imamura himself mentions no such briefing; as the Operations staff officer explicitly charged with drawing up specific operations plans for the 1932 Manchurian settlement, it is doubtful that Imamura would have overlooked such a significant briefing.

The events at the Commanders' Conference were supportive of official army policy, not a clandestine attempt to create a Manchurian incident. But the conference did provide an opportunity for the Kwantung Army conspirators to advance their own plot. Itagaki left Manchria a few days early for the Conference, arriving in Tokyo on July 30th. He immediately arranged a meeting with Hashimoto and Shigetō in a Tokyo restaurant. There he described the Kwantung Army plan for creating an incident, told them of the financial problem, and asked for their help in raising fifty thousand yen. Both agreed.[21]

This willingness to support an unauthorized clandestine operation to create an incident was as close to outright insubordination as the Second Department officers came in the Manchurian Incident. It was a very short step from the previously authorized policy of inciting an incident to the unauthorized act of creating one. In both cases the incident was to be merely the trigger, the occasion for carrying out plans already agreed to. The officers most deeply involved in Manchuria--the Kwantung Army staff and the Second Department's China and Russia Specialist--agreed that further delays in implementing the policy set out in the 1931 Estimate would only result in greater difficulties and more unfavorable conditions. Given the army's decision to delay action for a year, however, the intelligence officers at least flirted with insubordination on this occasion, even if in a supporting role rather than the lead.

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21. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, pp. 76-78.

Despite their willingness to support the plot, however, Hashimoto and Shigetō faced exactly the same problem blocking the Kwantung Army officers; they could not use official funds for an unauthorized clandestine operation, especially one meant to subvert current army policies. Both Hashimoto and Shigetō were involved in the domestic reform movement, and they may have had civilian contacts who might have been interested in supporting such a plot. If so, they were unable to convince any to do so. In mid-August, however, help appeared from an unexpected source, the Tokyo Asahi Shimbun.

Fujita Isamu was president of the Tokyo Asahi Shimbun and a relative of Shigetō Chiaki. Seven years earlier, in 1924, Fujita had sponsored research by Tokyo University professor Yoshimoto Miyoshirō into the bandits of Korea. Yoshimoto stayed in Korea, along the Korean-Manchurian border, for most of those seven years and made numerous contacts with the bandits. He discovered that most had begun as simple farmers in Manchuria, but under pressure from the local officials had eventually drifted into banditry. Their center of operations was between the Korean border and the Kwantung Territories. Of the three thousand bandits there, Professor Yoshimoto was known to and accepted by about one thousand of them. In 1931 he returned to Tokyo with a plan to arm these thousand with good weapons and use them to create an autonomous zone, a "peaceful paradise," along the Korean-Manchurian border.[22] Fujita enthusiastically endorsed the idea, and began searching for a

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22. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 91.

source of weapons. He turned to his relative in the army, Lt. Colonel Shigetō.

On the 18th of August, 1931, Fujita called on Shigetō at his house. He explained that he had invested in a gold mine in Korea that was having problems with bandits, and asked Shigetō's help in procuring one thousand rifles, four or five machine guns, and an ample supply of ammunition. He offered to pay thirty thousand yen.[23] Shigetō, a professional in the army's clandestine operations unit, was not taken in by Fujita's cover story. Instead, he immediately tried to persuade Fujita to contribute the necessary funds for the Kwantung Army's plot. After outlining the plot, at first vaguely and later in full detail, and after calling in Hashimoto and Captain Wachi Takaji (a member of the China Section who also knew of the plot) he won Fujita over. Fujita agreed to finance the incident.[24]

Meanwhile, Itagaki, Ishiwara and Hanaya in Manchuria had been joined by Captain Imada Shintarō, an Assistant Advisor to Chang Hsueh-liang who was attached bo the Mukden Special Service Organ. Upon receiving word from their colleagues in Tokyo that funds were available, the Kwantung Army conspirators returned to their active planning and

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23. Ibid., pp. 92-93.

24. Ibid., p. 109. Fujita himself contradicts this, however. In his testimony at the Tokyo Trials Fujita claimed that Shigetō brought him fifty thousand yen and asked him to safeguard it. When Shigetō returned for half the money, Fujita said, Shigetō told him, "I have made it known that I got the money from you, so you agree with this." IMTFE, pp. T 1463-66.

their recruitment of adventurers. According to Hanaya's diary, the date for the incident to occur was set for September 28th, 1931.[25]

By the end of August 1931, concrete steps had been taken both by the official army establishment and the Kwantung Army plotters and their Second Department associates to accomplish the goals of the 1931 Estimate. With Minami's speech at the Commanders' Conference the army began to publicly intrude in the policy-making process, as part of the general preparations the "Outline of a Policy" had recommended. At the same time the conspirators were completing their own preparations for a more rapid solution to the Manchurian problem. The goals of both groups were the same; the disagreement was one of timing and methods.

## The Crisis Erupts

Events in Manchuria outran the plans of both groups. In July a dispute over an irrigation ditch arose between Chinese and Korean farmers at the village of Wanpoashan. The Chinese farmers, backed by Chinese police, attempted to fill in the Koreans' irrigation ditch, which cut across Chinese property. Since the Koreans were legally Japanese subjects, Japanese consular police from Changchun stopped the Chinese and provided guards for the Koreans working on the ditch. When news of the incident reached Korea it sparked a series of anti-Chinese riots throughout the peninsula that left almost four hundred Chinese dead, and generated violent anti-Japanese demonstrations and activities

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25. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 101.

throughout China, strengthening the already strong anti-Japanese movements.[26] Manchuria bristled with tension. Following immediately after the Wanpoashan Affair came the news of the murder of Japanese army Captain Nakamura Shintarō by Chinese soldiers in northwestern Manchuria.

Nakamura Shintarō was a Second Department "China Expert" assigned to the China Section under the immediate supervision of Lt. Colonel Nemoto Hiroshi.[27] In early May 1931, Nakamura had left Tokyo for a deep penetration mission toward the border of Soviet-controlled Outer Mongolia. At Mukden he picked up a passport, as required for all Japanese travellers, and identified himself as an "educationalist engaged in historical and geographical studies."[28] He proceeded to Harbin, the site of the main Japanese intelligence center for clandestine operations against the Soviet Union. In early June he left Harbin with Sugii Nobutarō, an ex-Japanese army sergeant who was then a hotel owner in Mongolia and a Russian and a Mongolian interpreter. On the 27th of June, while eating lunch in a village northwest of Taonan, Nakamura's party was examined by a group of Chinese soldiers. Claiming his passport was void, they arrested Nakamura and his party and, saying they were going to the capitol of Inner Mongolia, led the Japanese into the mountains, where they killed and robbed them. News of Captain Nakamura's

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26. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, pp. 143-144.

27. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 65.

28. John B. Powell, My Twenty-five Years in China (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1945), p. 183.

disappearance did not surface until mid-July. On the 17th of July the Kwantung Army organized a secret search for him, and three days later learned of his death.[29]

Coming on top of the Wanpoashan Affair, the murder of Captain Nakamura raised tensions to a critical level. Doihara Kenji, now one of the foremost "China Experts" in the army, was recalled from his machinations in north China to take charge of the army's investigation of the Nakamura Incident. On August 18th he became Chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ, his base for the investigation.[30]

While Doihara was conducting his investigation the Manchurian authorities first denied responsibility, then wavered and re-opened their own investigation; the affair and the tensions it created dragged on into mid-September. To the Kwantung Army staff the Nakamura Affair seemed an excellent opportunity to settle the whole Manchurian Question by implementing the 1931 Estimate; it was a truly serious incident, not a manufactured one, and could be acted on without unauthorized clandestine tactics. Ishiwara cabled headquarters in Tokyo importuning them to act. The response was a cable from Tokyo specifically ordering the Kwantung Army not to use the Nakamura matter as an

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29. Summary of the text of the official army investigative report, Japan Times, 20 September 1931, p. 8.

30. After Chang Tso-lin's assassination Doihara was reassigned to the Second Department's China Section. During the summer of 1931 he was back in China and Manchuria, trying to get Yen Hsi-shan to attack Chang Hsueh-liang's forces. He failed. Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, Vol. I, pp. 414-415.

excuse for action.[31] With this Hanaya journeyed to Tokyo near the end of August to once again try to persuade headquarters not to miss this opportunity to solve the Manchurian problem. He met with Tatekawa and Military Affairs Bureau Chief Koiso. Both refused to give official permission for the Kwantung Army to act. But if an unexpected incident should result in an armed clash between the Kwantung Army and Chinese forces, Hanaya asked, would central army headquarters be willing to let the Kwantung Army handle the affair without undue interference? Tatekawa replied that, while he could not speak for the government, the army itself would not intervene unless absolutely necessary.[32] This can be interpreted as at least tacit approval by Tatekawa of the Kwantung Army conspirators' plans. But it also was fully in accord with the established military principle of the operational independence of field commanders.

Before he returned to Manchuria, Hanaya met with Hashimoto and Nemoto. At this meeting Hanaya explained the planned clandestine operation in current detail. Hashimoto urged putting the operation into effect if all preparations were indeed completed; Nemoto argued that it would be unduly difficult so long as the Wakatsuki government remained in power; it would be better to wait until the cabinet collapsed. Preparations were complete, however, and in the face of army refusal to use the Nakamura Incident to move in Manchuria, the Kwantung Army conspirators

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31. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," in Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 406.

32. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen," Himerareta Showashi, pp. 43-44.

were determined to act unilaterally. Hanaya told Nemoto "The arrow has already left the bowstring."[33] Surprised at this response, Nemoto reported it to Shigetō, who understood. Shigetō in turn informed Fujita. True to his word, Fujita promised to provide the necessary money. Captain Wachi of the China Section acted as the courier for the initial payment to the Mukden Special Service Organ.[34]

While the Second Department officers were transmitting the money to Mukden, events in Manchuria began to unravel the plot. Brigadier General Miyake, Kwantung Army Chief of Staff, knew the details of the operations plan for Mukden and the contingency plans, and as a professional soldier he must have recognized their significance. But he did not know of Itagaki's and Ishiwara's plot to create an incident.[35] He shared his staff members' desire to settle the Manchurian problem, but like his predecessor Saitō, Miyake was unwilling to disobey orders. When Tokyo ordered the Kwantung Army not to use the Nakamura Incident as an excuse for action Miyake obeyed, despite the strong urging of his staff that they do just that. By September 12th, apparently worried that his staff officers were plotting to use the Nakamura Incident despite his admonitions, Miyake cabled Tokyo to send Tatekawa and Koiso to Manchuria to observe the high state of tension existing there.[36]

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33. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," Taiheiyō Sensō e no Michi, I, p. 407.

34. Ibid., p. 408.

35. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," in Himerareta Shōwashi, p. 44.

36. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," p. 418.

This message came only a week after Mukden Consul-General Hayashi had warned Foreign Minister Shidehara that Itagaki and other officers were planning to use Japanese adventurers to create an incident "around the middle of this month."[37] Early in September one of the adventurers hired for the incident drunkenly bragged about it in a Mukden brothel, where a consular police informant overheard him. Consul-General Hayashi learned of it from the police report, and Minister of War Minami learned of it from an irate Foreign Minister Shidehara.[38] These two messages, coming from such disparate sources but both warning of impending trouble in Manchuria, convinced Chief of the General Staff Kanaya to send a senior officer to Port Arthur to prevent any rash or unauthorized action by the Kwantung Army. Tatekawa was designated, and on September 14th was ordered to go to Manchuria.

According to Hashimoto's diary, Tatekawa was unhappy about his assignment and did not want to end the impending action, but was nevertheless prepared to carry out his orders.[39] As Tatekawa was making his arrangements to go, Hashimoto cabled Hanaya at the Mukden Special Service Organ purportedly warning him that the plot had been discovered,

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37. IMTFE, ex. 3739, pp. T 37,315-316.

38. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen wa Koshite Keikaku Sareta," p. 45, and Nakano, Manshū Jihen, pp. 127-138.

39. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 126.

and urging that it be carried out before Tatekawa could arrive.[40] But not all of the money to pay for the incident had yet been sent to Manchuria. However, Doihara Kenji, who was then in Tokyo to give his report on the Nakamura Incident, knew of the plot although he had not been an active participant in it. He was to return to Manchuria on the 15th of September, the same day Tatekawa was preparing to leave. Hashimoto and Shigeto gave Doihara ten thousand yen, to be delivered to Itagaki before Tatekawa could arrive.[41] Doihara took the money, and left Tokyo thirty minutes ahead of Tatekawa. But instead of travelling straight through to Manchuria, as Tatekawa did, Doihara stopped for a night in Seoul, at Kanda's quarters. He consequently arrived in Mukden a full day after Tatekawa.[42] The money he carried was of no use in the incident.

It was not needed. When Hashimoto's telegram arrived on September 15th, Itagaki, Ishiwara, Hanaya and Imada held a hurried conference to decide whether to postpone the incident or carry it out.

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40. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," p. 434. On page 419, Seki states that the actual contents of the messages are unknown. However, on page 434 he cites the gist of the final telegraph as "Exposed. Do before Tatekawa's Arrival." Hanaya, in his account, simply states that he received a message that Tatekawa was coming. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," p. 47.

41. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, pp. 131-134.

42. Seki, "Manshū Jihen Zenshi," p. 435. Doihara never explained why he chose to stop that night. Shigetō and Hashimoto interpreted it as an outright attempt to sabotage the operation, and distrusted Doihara ever after. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 135.

Hanaya argued for postponement, young Imada for immediate action.[43] The discussion lasted until two o'clock in the morning, but at its conclusion Hanaya and Imada were convinced that the plot was called off.[44] At noon the next day, however, Ishiwara called them back and told them that the plot would indeed be carried out. The adventurers could not be used, however; there was neither time nor money for them. It was agreed that Imada would take responsibility for setting the charge on the railway tracks. The site chosen, at Liutiachu, was about half-way between Chang Hsueh-liang's Mukden North Barracks and the Kwantung Army's defense garrison, an ideal place to trigger an incident.[45]

When Tatekawa arrived on September 18th, he was met at the Mukden train station by Itagaki. Hanaya arrived with a carriage, and the three of them retreated to the Kikubun Inn. Tatekawa did not state the nature of his business, nor did the two Kwantung Army officers ask. Itagaki left early, suggesting that Tatekawa was probably tired. Hanaya stayed on drinking sake with Tatekawa until the general, drunk, went to sleep.[46] While this was happening, Imada's men slipped onto the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway and set off the charge.[47]

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43. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," p. 46.

44. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 147.

45. Ibid., p. 148.

46. Ibid., p. 148, and Hanaya,"Manshū Jihen wa Kōshite Keikaku Sareta," p. 46.

47. Lieutenant Kawamoto Suemori and his men actually set off the charge. This was the patrol that reported the explosion and the start of the fire-fight with Chinese troops. Hanaya, "Manshū Jihen wa Kōshita Keikaku Sareta," p. 46.

The blast on the South Manchurian Railway tracks occurred slightly after ten o'clock PM on the evening of September 18th, 1931. The Japanese railway guard patrol that ran to investigate the explosion reported it was ambushed, and returned fire. The company to which the patrol belonged quickly sent reenforcements, collided with a force of Chinese troops, and engaged it in a fire-fight.[48] This was sufficient to trigger the desired incident.

After he had left Tatekawa and Hanaya, Itagaki had stopped at the Mukden Special Service Organ, idly chatting with staff members. He was therefore present when word of the clash arrived. In his own words,

> From the report of the railway guards it was clear that the incident was not a mere infringement upon rights and interests in the shape of blasting the railway, but a planned challenge of the Chinese Regular Army against the Japanese Army; and it was judged that the Seventh Brigade of Peitaying [Mukden North Barracks] was in action against us. Therefore, I keenly felt that the risk was so close that if we hesitated a moment the leased territories attached to the South Manchurian Railway and the Japanese troops would be encircled and attacked by the Chinese Army in Mudken.[49]

Although Itagaki was being disengenious in his testimony, two other officers wholly ignorant of the plot, Colonel Hirata of the railway guards and Twentieth Regiment Commander Shimamoto, both came to the same conclusion. Their reaction was to urge the activation of the operations plan and launch the attack. Itagaki, of course, quickly

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48. Testimony of Itagaki Seishiro, IMTFE, pp. T 30,262-264.

49. Ibid.

agreed, mobilization was ordered, and Kwantung Army headquarters in Port Arthur was notified.[50]

The first message from the Mukden Special Service Organ reached Kwantung Army headquarters at 11:40 PM. Captain Katakura Tadashii, on duty that night, immediately notified the staff. The message stated that Chinese troops had bombed the South Manchurian Railway and engaged Japanese forces in a fire-fight, and that consequently Kwantung Army units in the area were moving to the attack.[51] General Honjō was roused from bed, and an emergency staff meeting called. At about 12:30 AM a second message arrived stating that the Chinese troops at Mukden North Barracks had attacked in battalion strength, that some five or six hundred troops were involved, and that they were moving up machine guns and some field artillery.[52] Ishiwara, as Operations Officer, recommended that the primary operations plan be implemented immediately; if it were not, the Chinese forces might aggravate the situation even more. He told Honjō "We must resolutely mobilize the whole strength of our military might to seal the fate of the enemy within the shortest possible time."[53] The rest of the staff expressed agreement. After a few minutes of meditation, Honjō

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50. _Ibid._, pp. T 30,264-265.

51. Testimony of Ishiwara Kanji, _IMTFE_, p. T 22,118.

52. _Ibid._, p. T 22,119.

53. _Ibid._

also agreed, saying "Yes, let it be done on my own responsibility."[54] The Manchurian Incident had begun.

## Reasons for the Plot's Success

The clandestine operation mounted by the Kwantung Army staff officers succeeded so well because it fit the expectations of their colleagues in Manchuria and on the General Staff in Tokyo. Tensions were high in Manchuria and still mounting; a serious unprovoked incident was a recognized possibility. According to Honjō, Chang Hsueh-liang's troops garrisoned near the site of the explosion had in the past frequently slipped up to the tracks and placed obstructions on it.[55] Japanese railway guard patrols were fired on by Chinese police in June, 1931, and beginning in September some of Chang's one hundred forty military aircraft regularly made threatening passes over the Japanese barracks at Mukden.[56] Thus the involvement of regular Chinese troops in a major provocation was entirely plausible to those officers not involved in the plot.

It succeeded, too, because it was only a triggering action, and not a widespread complex conspiracy. The military situation facing the Kwantung Army, the operations plans it had adopted, and the tactical doctrine of the Japanese army all required that, in the event of an

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54. Ibid.

55. Deposition of Honjō Shigeru, IMTFE, p. T 19,259.

56. Testimony of Colonel Hirata Hukihiro, Commander of the Railway Guards battalion at Mukden, 1931, IMTFE, pp. T 19,282-283.

incident, the Kwantung Army would immediately seize the initiative. Any other course would destroy the Japanese garrison's only real military advantages--its discipline, mobility, and ability to surprise--and would leave it at the mercy of a larger, better equipped enemy. The plotters merely had to convince Honjō that a serious incident had indeed begun; military necessity, as seen by a field commander, left little choice but to attack. As Honjō explained:

> The military strength of the Kwantung Army which should protect not only all the lines of the South Manchuria Railway but also the above mentioned interests and had to defend the Army itself was composed of one peace-footing division and six independent defense battalions and numbered only 15,000 or 16,000. On the other side the military strength of the Manchurian side numbered as many as 200,000, so it was evident that not only the South Manchuria Railway but also our army, residents, and interests would have been ruined if the army had idly hesitated. This was the reason why I issued to the units under my control orders to use force without asking for instructions from headquarters with the responsibility and the right which had been naturally given to me. This is why there were some forces which started activities before the arrival of my orders, and why there were some forces which started attacks previous to the enemy's offensive. At the same time, I believe that no matter what country it may belong to this is in keeping with the character of any army called upon to defend itself against a large force with far smaller numbers.[57]

Perhaps another reason for the plot's success was that the effort to trigger an incident was the only act of insubordination committed in the effort to solve the Manchurian Question. The solution to the problems in Manchuria was in 1931 a central concern for the army

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57. Deposition of Honjō Shigeru, IMTFE, p. T 19,261.

as an organization, not just that of a small band of conspirators. The overall goals being pursued by both the army and the insubordinates were essentially the same; only the questions of timing and methods divided them. It was not a matter of Itagaki, Ishiwara et al. leading a reluctant army into operations in Manchuria; rather, on September 18 they simply triggered a formally approved army action sooner than the army's leadership had intended. Once the Kwantung Army had sprung into action, the army's decision makers accepted the incident as an opportunity to implement plans laid out in the 1931 Estimate.

When word of the incident reached army headquarters in Tokyo, on the morning of September 19th, an emergency conference was called, attended by the central decision-makers of the army: Chief of Staff Kanaya, Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya, Vice Minister of War Sugiyama, Military Affairs Bureau Chief Koiso, Nagata Tetsuzan, Second Department Head Hashimoto Toranosuke, Shigeto Chiaki, and Imamura Hitoshi. Of these, only Shigeto knew of the Kwantung Army officers' plot. All agreed to a resolution "To support the actions of the Kwantung Army, and agree that the Korean Army should provide reenforcements."[58] While most of these officers at Tokyo headquarters were not yet ready to precipitate an incident, they were willing to take advantage of one.

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58. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 157.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE MAKING OF MANCHUKUO

The precipitation of the Manchurian Incident was largely the work of Kwantung Army staff officers. The culmination of the Incident six months later, with the establishment of Pu-yi as the Regent of an independent Manchukuo, was due primarily to the efforts of a small group of "China Experts" in Manchuria. They established a new independent state with a viable political structure, carefully built upon locally accepted political institutions, and led by reputable local leaders amenable to foreign control. This was an accomplishment that raw military force alone was powerless to achieve. It required the subtle touch of the practiced political minipulator, not the harsh shove of the military tactician. Colonel Doihara Kenji, now Chief of the Mukden Special Service Organ, proved himself master of the subtle touch. With the aid of the advisors and other Special Service Organ officers he literally created Manchukuo.

When Lt. Kawamoto planted the bomb, the Kwantung Army conspirators had intended to use the resulting incident as an opportunity to occupy all Manchuria and impose direct military administration on it in accordance with the elaborate planning and studies they had done. This was, of course, Option Three of the plan authorized by the 1931 Estimate, and so was technically a sanctioned goal. However, the army's leadership in Tokyo reserved for itself the prerogative of choosing the options, and on this question there was considerable disagreement. Option Three meant the forcible separation of Manchuria from China, the violation of the territorial integrity of China, the flouting of the Nine Power Treaty, and the probable alienation of the United States and European powers. To Itagaki and Ishiwara these were matters of little concern when compared to the strategic and economic advantages to be gained by seizing Manchuria.

To the officers in Tokyo, however, these were very serious concerns. Option Three was considered the last resort, not the ideal solution. The officers of the Second Department and their ex-chief, Tatekawa, had agreed with the Kwantung Army officers on the need for a quick solution to the Manchurian question, but even they had no intention or desire to actually separate Manchuria from China. Shigetō told newsman Fujita that his plan was to overthrow Chang Hsueh-liang and replace him with a more moderate Chinese leader, Chu Chen.[1] Tatekawa openly favored the replacement of Chang Hsueh-liang by another, more cooperative Chinese leader, but he argued against any attempt to impose direct Japanese rule in Manchuria.[2] The officers of the General Staff department most deeply and directly involved in Manchuria were thus advocates of Option Two, replacement of Chang, but did not contemplate challenging Chinese sovereignty over the area.

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1. Testimony of Fujita Isamu, IMTFE, p. T 1,465.

2. Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," Gendaishi Shiryo, Vol. 7, p. 187.

The officers of the other General Staff departments and the Ministry of War were not ready to go even as far as Option Two. The strong endorsement given to the Kwantung Army on the morning of September 19th was hurriedly withdrawn when word reached headquarters that the Cabinet had instructed Minister of War Minami not to enlarge the conflict.[3] However, although they were willing to follow the Cabinet's lead and order an end to the Kwantung Army's fast-moving offensive, they were not willing to forego the opportunity to settle the Manchurian problem. On that same morning Vice Chief of the General Staff Ninomiya, Chief of the Military Affairs Bureau Koiso, and Chief of the Inspector General's General Affairs Department Araki Sadao agreed to use the incident to pressure Chang Hsueh-liang into guaranteeing Japanese rights in Manchuria.[4] This was Option One of the Estimate.

On the morning after the explosion, then, the army was oddly divided, simultaneously in agreement and in disarray over Manchuria. Virtually all policy-making levels within the force saw the incident as an opportunity for implementing the 1931 Estimate, but disagreement over the option to be pursued was clear-cut and followed well-defined organizational lines.

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3. Nakano, Manshū Jihen, p. 157, and Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire, p. 172.

4. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p.75.

Conscious Insubordination

By evening on the 19th of September the Kwantung Army had secured Mukden and Yinkow and had Changchun under control.[5] By then the Kwantung Army had also received instructions from both Minister of War Minami and Chief of the General Staff Kanaya relaying the Cabinet's decision that the conflict should be contained.[6] These orders brought an emergency meeting of the Kwantung Army staff. Itagaki, Ishiwara, and other staff members argued strongly that the offensive should continue and that an expedition should advance to Kirin. Tatekawa, who attended the meeting, strongly opposed any extension of the Kwantung Army into northern Manchuria.[7] The discussion ended inconclusively.

The following day another meeting was held. Tatekawa again argued against an advance into northern Manchuria, suggesting the Taonan-Changchun line as the point of furthest attack. But he then suggested that the Kwantung Army implement Option Two of the Estimate by attacking Kirin and Taonan, thereby effectively driving Chang Hsueh-liang's forces from South Manchuria.[8] Troops from Mukden North Barracks were streaming into Kirin, and the Japanese residents of the city were tense, expecting trouble, and clamoring for army protection. A strike on the city could be justified by this situation while still

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5. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, p. 168.

6. Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," p. 184.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 187.

fulfilling its primary function of driving Chang's forces out.[9] During the day a message arrived from Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya stating in part:

> After taking the general situation into consideration, the General Staff agreed to the policy, decided upon at the cabinet meeting of the 19th, yesterday, as to how to dispose of the incident hereafter. Please understand, however, that you are not restricted in taking necessary actions for accomplishing your proper duties or for self-defense of the army, should the change of circumstances so demand.[10]

The discussion on the Kirin expedition continued until 3:00 AM, when Honjo reluctantly agreed with his staff that the expedition was indeed necessary. Kirin fell to the Kwantung Army the following day.

The decision to attack Kirin ran directly counter to the Cabinet's policy of non-enlargement, and was consciously made in defiance of those instructions, largely at the urgings of Itagaki and Ishiwara. Despite the apparent insubordination, however, Honjo was on reasonably firm military ground when he made the decision. The General Staff's Chief of Operations, Tatekawa, had argued for it, and the Vice Chief of Staff explicitly recognized the Kwantung Army's right of "self defense." Every field commander has the authority to accomplish his mission and to ensure the defense of his force; Honjo's decision could be

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9. Part of the unrest was probably natural, resulting from the already high tensions, the existing anti-Japanese feeling, and a reaction to the events in Mukden. But part was purposely created by Lt. Colonel Osako Michisada, Chief of the Kirin Special Service Organ, specifically to provide the Kwantung Army with a plausible reason for advancing. Ibid.

10. IMTFE, pp. T 32,835-836.

defended on either ground. Nevertheless, for apparently good military reasons, the Kwantung Army took action that undercut a known Cabinet policy that had been accepted, at least in principle, by the army's top leadership itself. And the decision was made by a commander who was not a party to any plot or conspiracy, although he was being manipulated by conspirators.[11]

The strike on Kirin left Mukden and the Kwantung Territories virtually defenseless, and this, in turn, drew the Korean Army into Manchuria to provide the promised support. Together these actions resulted in a major political crisis in Tokyo, as the Wakatsuki cabinet attempted to re-establish control over the army and over Japan's Manchurian policy. The impact of these developments was felt in the Kwantung Army when it attempted to repeat the Kirin success in Harbin. In cooperation with the army, "China Expert" Amakasu Masahiko of Harbin, like Osako in Kirin, hired adventurers to create unrest and demands by the Japanese residents for army protection.[12] This time, however, both

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11. Honjo, benign and simple soldier that he was, later justified his decisions as the obviously correct ones to make, given the existing military situation. But he believed that his decisions in September 1931 led directly to the China involvement, the Pacific War, and Japan's defeat and occupation. He held himself personally to blame for the whole tragic sequence. In early October 1945, he wrote a short deposition explaining his actions. Beginning with a calm description of the events of September 1931, it becomes increasingly agonized as it draws near the end. After writing it, Honjo committed suicide. He apparently never knew that his trusted subordinates were manipulating him, or that the incident was staged. His deposition is included in IMTFE, pp. T 19,254-270.

12. Nakamura, Manshū Jihen, p. 140, and Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Seiryaku Nikki," p. 187.

the civilian and army leadership in Tokyo were adamant; the Kwantung Army was officially and firmly informed that "troops were not to be sent to Harbin even if the situation suddenly became critical."[13] The Kwantung Army plotters' plan for occupying and administering all of Manchuria was thus blocked. Option Three was impossible to implement in the face of determined opposition from headquarters. To make the point unmistakably clear, Minister of War Minami cabled Honjo:

> In view of the general situation at home and abroad, it is not proper for the army to carry out direct military administration. No time shall be lost in letting Chinese autonomous agencies, such as the General Chamber of Commerce, take charge thereof. The task of the army shall be confined only to negotiations and liaison with such agencies.[14]

It was in these circumstances that the Kwantung Army staff turned to Tatekawa's suggestion to use Option Two. Tatekawa had cabled his recommendations to Tokyo, and on the 22nd of September Vice Chief of Staff Ninomiya had wired back his acceptance.[15] There thus seemed to be developing a general consensus within the army that Chang Hsueh-liang would be replaced by a more cooperative Chinese leader; efforts toward this end could then expect support from headquarters. Late in the day on the 22nd the Kwantung Army staff met to consider its alternatives and options. Colonel Doihara Kenji was included in this meeting, the first he had attended since the incident broke out.

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13. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 68.

14. IMTFE, p. T 32,836.

15. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 75.

He suggested a way to resolve the problem; the Kwantung Army should forego its plans for a military administration of Manchuria and settle for a modified Option Two. It would "encourage" the establishment of an independent Manchuria by an ostensibly local, grass-roots independence movement.[16] The Kwantung Army was not to be openly involved, but would clandestinely guide the shaping of the new regime, and insure that real power lay in Japanese, not Chinese, hands; the Kwantung Army would, naturally, lend its protection to the new order that the Manchurians themselves had apparently established. This idea was adopted and the next day, September 23rd, 1931, Doihara was appointed provisional Mayor of Mukden, the key official in the key Manchurian city.[17] He was ordered by the Kwantung Army to rule the city until a Chinese autonomous agency could take control.

The September 22nd staff meeting marked the beginning of full insubordination by the Kwantung Army. The planning for the triggering incident had been done quietly, clandestinely, by a small cabal of officers; the decision to create an independent Manchuria in direct defiance of official military orders was made at a formal Kwantung Army staff meeting. It was made, further, not only with the acquiescence but at the specific suggestion of the chief Second Department representative in Manchuria, Doihara Kenji. In the creation of Manchukuo the two army organizations most deeply involved in clandestine operations

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16. Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," p. 189.

17. IMTFE, p. T 15,715.

and political manipulation, the Kwantung Army and the Intelligence Service, joined together knowingly to defy both the military and civilian leadership in Tokyo.

Yet, in acting out this insubordination, the officers involved performed essentially the same daily operations which they had been trained to do, and that their organizations had done before with Tokyo's sanction. They engaged in the secret political manipulation of Chinese leaders in Manchuria in an attempt to find a non-military solution to the primary military problem plaguing the army. Even in this operation their goals did not vary from those of the army as laid down in the 1931 Estimate, nor did their day-to-day actions go far beyond the standard operating procedures that had been gradually acquired over decades of activity by their somewhat peculiar military organizations.

## Ingredients of an Independence Movement

Despite their September 22nd decision, the Kwantung Army and the Intelligence Service officers in Manchuria alone could not have created an independent Manchuria; at best they could have used military force to displace Chang Hsueh-liang. However, there were important groups within the Manchurian polity who were not only eager to see Chang gone, but were willing to help establish Manchuria's independence from China.

One such group was the so-called "Civil Faction" (as opposed to the various warlord and military-based factions), made up largely of Mukden businessmen and community leaders. It included men such as

Tsang Shih-i, Governor of Liaoning (Mukden) Province; Yu Chang-han, manager of the Anshan iron mines; Yuan Chin-hai, Vice President of Chang Hsueh-liang's civil government arm, the Northeastern Political Council; and Chang Ching-hui, Director of the Chinese Eastern Railway. The leader of the Civil Faction was Wang Yung-chieng, head of Chang Tso-lin's Finance Buretu until he resigned in protest over Chang's destabilizing fiscal policies.[18] Influential, respected men, they and their colleagues in the Mukden Merchants' Association had given solid support to Chang Tso-lin in the earlier nineteen-twenties, but had split with him after his occupation of Peking in the Second Fengtien-Chihli War. Their primary concern lay with the stability and prosperity of Manchuria, a goal seriously threatened by the Changs' continued participation in Chinese civil wars and politics. Manchuria's interests could be best protected, in Civil Faction eyes, by separating from China, or at least from Chinese politics, and establishing an independent republican state, if necessary, under Japanese military protection.[19]

Another group, more conservative, still mourned the fall of the Ch'ing dynasty and dreamed of reestablishing it in the Manchurian homeland. Twice before, in 1912 and in 1916, they had cooperated with the Japanese adventurer and "China Expert" Kawashima Naniwa in vain attempts

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18. Testimony of Yamaguchi Jūichi, founder of the Manchuria Concordia Society, IMTFE pp. T 18,825-830; Testimony of Itagaki Seishirō, IMTFE pp. T 30,270-277.

19. Yamaguchi Jūichi, IMTFE, p. T 18,824; and Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 119.

to accomplish their ends. As late as 1929 this "Restoration Faction" attempted to establish an independent Manchuria ruled over by Pu-yi's uncle, Kung Chin-wang. The would-be rebels organized a small army and prepared an independence proclamation, but they were unable to raise enough funds to finance their independence movement.[20] Hsi Hsia, Governor of Kirin Province and relative to Pu-yi and Chang Hai-peng, garrison commander at Taonan, were leaders in the Restoration Faction.[21]

A third group advocating Manchurian independence was the civilian Japanese community in Manchuria. These were the people most immediately threatened by the new Chinese militancy and the anti-Japanese movement, and they felt its effects in their daily lives. For most of these Japanese settlers Manchuria, not Japan, was home; to leave Manchuria meant losing homes, jobs, businesses, and the stakes of a lifetime. Acutely aware of their status as a racial minority in an increasingly hostile political environment, the Japanese settlers both demanded immediate protection from the Kwantung Army and advocated their own long-term solution to the Manchurian problem. Their suggested solution was an autonomous Manchuria, cut off from the influence of Chinese nationalism and protected by the Kwantung Army but based on traditional Chinese governmental institutions.

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20. Report of Chief of Public Safety Bureau of the Kwantung Government, 11 January 1929, in IMTFE, pp. T 19,151-156.

21. Itagaki Seishiro, IMTFE, p. T 30,274

This idea was most actively pursued by the Manshū Seinen Remmei (Manchurian Youth League), composed mostly of young employees of the South Manchurian Railway and some independent businessmen. They were serious enough in their pursuit of Manchurian autonomy that they were able to draw up a detailed plan for the organization of an autonomous government.[22]

They did not envisage making Manchuria into merely an overseas extension of Japan, nor did they want the Japanese to seize control and govern for their own benefit; such actions would only stimulate Chinese nationalism and aggravate the problem. Rather, these Japanese civilians argued that Manchuria should be a "paradise-like republic" based on the principle of racial harmony--all residents, of any race, were to be equal before the law and equal in opportunity.[23] This ideal combined the aspirations of both the Manchurian Chinese and the Japanese, who would join together against the warlord regime. Once the warlord rulers were gone and the "paradise-like republic" established, it was argued, all would benefit by lowered taxes and an end to the corrupt practices and disruptions the warlords brought. All would then be free to pursue their own interests without either prejudice or unwarranted favor. The Japanese could confidently enter into free competition in Manchuria; they were the advanced, modernized group, and could hardly fail to benefit.

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22. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, pp. 38-40.

23. Shimada, Kantōgun, pp. 82-83.

Although these three groups differed in their motives and goals, all agreed that Manchurian autonomy or independence was desirable, that a new regime not controlled by any Chinese warlord was essential, and that Japanese military protection was necessary to maintain the new regime's autonomy. Doihara and his associates did not have to create a totally new independence movement; they had only to encourage the existing ones to come into the open, coordinate them, and shape them into the forms they needed.

They planned to accomplish these ends in three steps. First, local governments genuinely reflecting local interests or power relationships were to be established where they did not already exist. Second, these groups were then to be encouraged, cajoled or coerced into declaring their independence from Chang and from China. Finally, a new national symbol--Pu-yi, the last Ch'ing emperor--was to be persuaded to serve as the center around which the independent local governments could coalesce into a unified independent state. At the local level Chinese interests would be given full play; only in the creation of the central government of Manchukuo were the means of exercising Japanese control to be established.

## Step One: Establishing Local Governments

Immediately after the September 22nd staff meeting the plan was put into operation. Captain Imada was dispatched to Kirin to join Lt. Colonel Osaka, head of that city's Special Service Organ. Together with Lo Chen-yu, a member of the Restoration Faction residing in Port Arthur, they convinced Hsi Hsia to declare Kirin's independence.[24] Imada and Lo then went separately to Taonan to convince Chang Hai-peng to do likewise.[25] Itagaki himself visited Harbin's Chang Ching-hui at Chang's Mukden residence to win his cooperation. By September 28th most of the important provincial leaders in Manchuria had declared their independence. Only Ma Chan-shen, the newly established military leader of Heilungkiang province, held out. Backed by his Soviet-supplied troops, he refused to acquiesce.[26]

The most serious difficulties lay in the capital city of Mukden itself. Mukden controlled Liaoning Province, the richest and most heavily populated part of Manchuria. Unlike the other provinces, Liaoning had been under the direct control of Chang Hsueh-liang; when his forces were swept out so was local government. In Mukden even the police and prison guards fled.[27] The Mukden local government had to be completely

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24. Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," p. 192, and IMTFE, p. T 18,942. Hsi Hsia reportedly hesitated at first, until Imada spurred him on by pointing a pistol to his head. Yoshihashi, Conspiracy at Mukden, p. 180. Given Hsi Hsia's previous involvement with independence movements and the Restoration Faction, this may have been a bit of acting on Hsi Hsia's part, to cover his actions in case things did not work out.

25. Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," p. 192.

26. Until the Manchurian Incident broke out, Ma Chan-shen had been Third Brigade commander at Heilo, and Wan Fu-lin was the Governor of Heilungkiang. But Wan was afraid Chang Hai-peng of Taonan would advance to Tsitsihar with Japanese support. To ensure Ma's formidable aid, he made Ma the commander of all Heilungkiang forces. Katakura Tadashii, IMTFE, p. T 18,947

27. Lytton Report, in IMTFE, p. T 2754.

rebuilt before it could declare its independence. As provisional Mayor of Mukden, Doihara personally guided the rebuilding.

The instrument Doihara chose for the rebuilding was the Peace Preservation Committee. An old Chinese form known by various names, these committees were basically local self-protection societies formed by merchants or gentry in times of troubles. Normally non-political, they functioned primarily to protect property and maintain essential local services until government could function again.[28]

The Peace Preservation Committee that sprang up in Mukden was headed by the prominent Mukden businessman who had once been governor of Liaoning province, Yuan Chin-kai. His aim, and that of his close associate Ting Chien-hsiu, was to play the traditional role of guardian of peace and property until government was re-established. The provisional nature of this Peace Preservation Committee was reflected in its informal organization; it had neither officer nor accounts, and operated by agreement among its members.[29]

Doihara's plan for using the Peace Preservation Committee was summarized by Japanese Consul-General Hayashi in a telegram to Foreign Minister Shidehara on September 28th:

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28. Katakura Tadashii, IMTFE p. T 18,927. Such groups did not always work to maintain order, of course; they could and did evolve into private governments commanding a band of thugs to dominate an area. See Owen Lattimore, Manchuria, Cradle of Conflict (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 226, for an example of this at the village level.

29. IMTFE, pp. T 33,608-609; Lytton Report in IMTFE, pp. T 2754-2756.

> According to what Doihara told Morioka, it is scheduled that the local Peace Preservation Committee organized at this time to maintain peace and order in the city of Mukden should be led and gradually made into the central organ in administration and a distinguished Chinese should later be appointed as Mayor, chosen by this committee. Furthermore he said that it was decided that the Self-Defense Corps now under the command of our Kempeitai [Military Police] should be transferred to the above Peace Maintenance Corps, and it was further decided to have them organize a considerable number of policemen. It is said that to date 1000 rifles were delivered for this purpose.[30]

By the second of October, Doihara apparently felt that the Peace Preservation Committee was strongly enough entrenched to be transformed into a formal organization. On that day he called on Ting Chien-hsiu, a member of the committee and close associate of Yuan Chin-kai, and persuaded him that the Peace Preservation Committee should open financial and business offices. This was recognized by all as a major step toward transforming the Committee into a formal local government.[31]

Three days later the Peace Preservation Committee became the shadow government of Mukden, and on the eighteenth the Committee recommended a distinguished Chinese, Chao Hsin-pao, for mayor. Chao demurred, but after a long talk with Doihara finally agreed to take the job, with the condition that Doihara and his entire Japanese staff running Mukden should resign.[32] Doihara complied. The key city of Mukden

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30. IMTFE, pp. T 33,605-606

31. Ibid., pp. T 33,608-609.

32. Ibid., p. T 33,616.

and with it Liaoning Province were once again in local Chinese hands--but they were hands approved by Doihara.

Throughout this stage Doihara neither dictated the form local government should take nor did he appoint puppets. Instead, he allowed the traditional Chinese system to operate in its customary manner, and then gave added support to his truly grass-roots institution. He did not interfere in Chinese affairs, but he did use them to pursue Japanese ends even as the local Chinese continued to pursue their own. He showed that he knew exactly what he was doing when a Japanese adventurer tried to interfere.

Soon after the Manchurian Incident broke out a group of Japanese, led by an adventurer named Yoshii Kiyoharu, gained control of an old multi-racial religious and charitable organization, the "Four Peoples' Preservation Committee." With the help of a Japanese general, Lt. General Ishimitsu, Yoshii tried to use this organization as a base for establishing a Japanese-dominated Manchurian regime. Yoshii's activities conflicted with Doihara's carefully-laid plans for the all-Chinese Peace Preservation Committee, and on the fifth of October he confronted Yoshii and Ishimitsu. Still only a colonel, Doihara severely admonished Lt. General Ishimitsu for foolishly associating with such adventurers as Yoshii. After roundly dressing down Yoshii, he "advised" both men to resign from the organization; to give meaning to his words, Doihara had with him his Japanese chief of police. Both Yoshii and Ishimitsu understood and obeyed.

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33. Ibid., pp. T 33, 608-609.

Step Two: Establishing Independence

The declarations of independence issued throughout south Manchuria in September 1931 meant little unless supported by a unified independence movement directed toward establishing a new state. This required a degree of political commitment and activism that the cautious and locally-oriented Manchurian Chinese were unlikely to provide spontaneously, however willing they may have been to see it happen. Doihara turned to the civilian Japanese settlers in Manchuria. The Manshū Seinen Remmei was not only militantly committed to an independent Manchuria, but its leader Kanai Shōji, was a personal friend of Doihara's.

The Manshū Seinen Remmei provided the manpower for the independence movement while the executive ability came from another organization of somewhat older Japanese men, the Yūhōkai. Most of its thirty or forty members worked for the South Manchurian Railway, as did its leader, Kazaki Ryōmei. One member, Nakano Koitsu, a lawyer with offices in Mukden and Dairen, was chosen to be the leader of a Self-Government Guidance Association.[34]

The task of the Self-Government Guidance Association is suggested in its name; it was to be the agency that convinced the local governments to join a unified independence movement. Although the respected and venerable Yu Chung-han, manager of Anshan mines and a member of the Civil Faction, was the ostensible head of the organization, ninety per

34. Testimony of Kazaki Tyomei, IMTFE, pp. T 2789-91.

cent of its members were Japanese. Two or three field representatives were assigned to each prefecture of each of the provinces. Kazaki described the work they did:

> I talked to the prefectural governors and government workers outlining to them the conditions in the other prefectures and showing them how much better it would be for the country if they were to have a stable, organized government that would work to promote the interests of the people, and that in order to do this it was necessary for them to seek independence from China.[35]

The central organ for this network was the Self-Government Guidance Board in Mukden, headed by Nakano. It was divided into eight sections: 1) Advisory, with both Chinese and Japanese members; 2) General Affairs, controlled entirely by Japanese and the real governing section; 3) Guidance; 4) Censorship; 5) Liaison; 6) Propaganda; 7) Training and Education; and 8) Finance.[36] This carefully organized board consisted of about one hundred twenty people, fifteen of whom were Chinese or Manchurian, the rest being Japanese. About twenty of the Japanese were from the Yūhōkai, while the remainder came from the Manshū Seinen Remmei. Financial support came from the Kwantung Army, and all policies were approved by Itagaki and his staff. Much of the information upon which the Board acted came from Doihara, who gave them the names of Chinese receptive to independence.[37] Doihara's role here was not to direct or command the Board, but to guide them in their

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35. *Ibid.*, p. T 2792.

36. *Ibid.*, p. T 2793.

37. *Ibid.*, p. T 2794.

liaison with the local Chinese. His knowledge of Manchuria's Chinese community allowed eager Japanese and willing Chinese to make fruitful contact.

By January 1932 the Self-Government Guidance Association had done most of its work. It issued a proclamation appealing to the people to overthrow Chang Hsueh-liang, to join the Self-Government Guidance Association as part of a popular movement toward independence, and to work together to set up a new administration that would work to improve the living conditions of all. By February 18th, 1932, declarations of independence had been published severing the Northeastern Provinces (i.e., Manchuria) from the Nanking government and the Kuomintang, and calling for the establishment of a new state. By March 1932, the new state of Manchukuo was in existence, and the Self-Government Guidance Association was quietly disbanded.[38] Its job was done.

## Step Three: Making of Manchukuo

The proposed new state needed some degree of legitimacy if it was to survive. The Kwantung Army proposed to install the last Ch'ing emperor, Pu-yi, as the new head of state, hoping that he could command the uncoerced loyalty, or at least the tolerant respect, of the Manchurians. Pu-yi refused, however; he preferred the safety of life in Tientsin to the hazards of a Manchurian throne.[39] Doihara was dispatched

38. Ibid., p. T 2795

39. Ibid., p. T 4363.

to change his mind. On October 26, 1931, shortly after he had insured that Mukden would be in acceptable hands, Doihara secretly left for Tientsin.

His movements were not as secret as he desired. The Consul General in Tientsin knew of his departure, his movements and his intentions.[40] When Doihara arrived in Tientsin Consul-General Kuwashima urged him to abandon his mission, but Doihara refused. Instead, he outlined his plan and the reasons for it. The existing provisional government in Manchuria would be willing to see Chang Hsueh-liang return, he claimed, and there was absolutely no prospect for a really authentic Manchurian demand for Pu-yi to head an autonomous Manchuria. Thus, the affair must be managed. To pretend that Japan had nothing to do with his coming, Pu-yi must land at Yinkow rather than Dairen, but this must happen before the port froze up. A prominent Chinese from Manchuria, Ching-liang, was then in Tientsin, and it could be made to seem that he had come to receive the emperor. The population of Manchuria was not then talking about Pu-yi very much, Doihara continued, but their silence could be explained away by claiming they were anxious about his decision. His appearance in Manchuria, even at the apparent risk of his life, Doihara concluded, could be made to look like a genuine Chinese movement by judiciously enhancing Chinese popular opinion and issuing statements welcoming him.[41]

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40. He was informed by Consul-General Hayashi in Mukden, who kept a close but helpless watch over the army's machinations.

41. IMTFE, pp. T 4364-66.

On November 2nd, Doihara spoke to Pu-yi. He told him that the time was favorable, but that he must move before the middle of November. Doihara assured Pu-yi that the Japanese Imperial family would welcome his restoration, that Japan would recognize his regime and conclude a military alliance with it. Although the Kuomintang might object, he said, the Kwantung Army would willingly destroy any armed attempt to invade Manchuria. Pu-yi was interested, seemed pleased, but refused; he would not leave his sanctuary.[42] Doihara turned to stronger measures.

Between Doihara's interview with Pu-yi on November 2nd and the sixth of the month, Pu-yi received several letters threatening his life. Some were signed by the "Headquarters of the Iron Blood Group" (Tekketsu Dan); others purportedly came from the Tientsin branch of the Chinese Communist Party. On the sixth, someone sent Pu-yi a present of a large basket of fruit. Under the fruit Pu-yi found two bombs which failed to explode. The bombs were Chinese-made and untraceable.[43] And on the night of November 8th, a riot broke out in Tientsin.

The indefatigable Consul-General Kuwashima checked into the cause of the riot, and on November 17th he informed Foreign Minister Shidehara that the cause had been Doihara.

> A secret investigation of his [i.e., Doihara's] plotted schemes revealed that he first attempted to contact the An-Fu faction on his arrival at Tientsin, but because they

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42. Ibid., P. T 4374.

43. Ibid., p. T 4385.

> did not comply, he finally contacted and persuaded Chang-pi, who had connections with the Peace Preservation Corps of this city, and Li Chi-chun, who is deeply connected to the Tsin-pang secret society and rogues in the city, and Ma Ting-fun, who is in confidence among the men of Liu Sue-chung, to bribe the Peace Preservation Corps, and buy off the 'plain clothes' organization and the troops of Liu Sue-ching. He supplied them with 50,000 taels as working funds, and using two or three of the garrison troops, let them secretly provide Li with armaments sent by the Kwantung Army. There is unmistakable proof that he had them participate in all of the riots plotted.[44]

Not all went as Doihara planned, however, Kuwashima reported. Agents of Chang [Hsueh-liang?] got word of the plot to the Public Safety Bureau, and the Peace Preservation Corps did not rally as planned.[45] The riot was not as large or spectacular as it was intended. Still, it was large enough for Pu-yi to get the message; he was no longer safe in Tientsin.. On the afternoon of November 11 1931, a small boat took Pu-yi and Doihara from Tientsin to Tangku, where they boarded a Japanese steamer, the Awaji Maru, and sailed for Yinkow.[46] Doihara had delivered an emperor to Manchukuo.

By mid-November Doihara had done all that was necessary to establish an independent state in Manchuria. Local Chinese governments had been established, the Self-Government Guidance Association was busy influencing the people whose names he had provided, and the future emperor was safely on hand in Port Arthur. Only one serious trouble spot

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44. Ibid., pp. T 4395-96

45. Ibid., p. T 4397.

46. Ibid., pp T 4379-80.

remained. To the north at Tsitsihar Ma Chan-shen still refused to accept the new situation. The Kwantung Army was aimed primarily at Chang Hsueh-liang's forces, but Ma had an army of 20,000 men in the field, and he could conceivably threaten the Kwantung Army's flank if it became seriously re-engaged with Chang.[47] His forces were thought to be supported by Soviet funds, and he controlled Heilunkiang Province, an area of paramount interest to Russia, not Japan. The General Staff in Tokyo, fearful of Russian intervention if the Kwantung Army threatened the Chinese Eastern Railway, absolutely forbade any military action in north Manchuria.

The Kwantung Army turned to political means once again. A working fund of $1,500,000 was set up for political purposes in north Manchuria, and Hanaya, of the Mukden Special Service Organ, was sent to negotiate with Ma.[48] The negotiations failed, fighting broke out and the Kwantung Army occupied Tsitsihar. Ma retreated, his forces intact, toward the town of Aigun on the Russian border, while the General Staff successfully demanded the immediate evacuation of the Kwantung Army from Tsitsihar. This was the first serious setback the Kwantung Army had experienced, and it threatened to restrict the emergent state of Manchukuo to south Manchuria alone. In late November, Doihara was made Chief of the Harbin Special Service Organ. His assignment was to remove Ma from the scene.

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47. Ogata, Defiance in Manchuria, p. 111.

48. Ibid., pp. 108-111, and Katakura, "Manshū Jihen Kimitsu Seiryaku Nikki," pp. 243-244.

Once in North Manchuria, Doihara arranged to meet Ma for an interview. Ma later said Doihara gave him $1,000,000 in gold bars and the post of Minister of War in the new government that was to be established in Manchuria.[49] Ma accepted; he did so, he said, in order to save his troops to fight again for China. Ma's army withdrew across the border into the Russian town of Blagovestchensk and was allowed to pass through Soviet territory into a different part of China. Ma himself remained in Manchuria to take up his new position, but without an army he was merely another harmless local dignitary. With Ma's power checked, the road was cleared for the creation of Manchukuo.

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49. IMTFE, p. T 3229, and John B. Powell, My Twenty Five Years in China, p. 199.

## CHAPTER XII

## CONCLUSION

The officers responsible for the Manchurian Incident and the creation of Manchukuo acted without authorization from army headquarters, in direct defiance of lawful orders. This was insubordination, but it was a remarkably dutiful insubordination. They acted in pursuit of goals that had already been accepted as official army goals. They used standard operating procedures learned and practiced on active military duty. The results of their actions, if not the acts themselves, were given _ex post facto_ sanction both by the army high command and the civilial political leadership. Despite their insubordination, these officers were organization men pursuing their organization's goals with methods long accepted as legitimate by the organization itself.

To a considerable extent the Manchurian Incident resulted from the army's own decision-making process and its institutional attempts to solve its major military problem. Every defense plan since 1905 identified Russia as the most probably future opponent. With a small, lightly-armed infantry force, the Japanese army necessarily depended for its success on rapid mobility, surprise, and shock power at the point of attack, at times and places of its own choosing. It could only defeat Russia in a short, sharp war, before the Russian forces could fully deploy. This could only be done if the Japanese army could rapidly carry the fight to the plains of northern Manchuria. This basic military problem, seldom addressed by analysts of Japan's foreign policy, lay at the heart of the army's actions in Manchuria.

The nature of the army's military problem dictated both the tactics it could use and the shape of the operations plans its officers drew up. The troops could perform well only those programs they had practiced, and the army could deploy quickly only after adequate preparations had been made. The major operations plans, those for a war against Russia, were drawn up in the General Staff. The Kwantung Army's role in these plans was to maintain the security of the Manchurian base and the lines of communication until the main army could deploy. When, after the death of Chang Tso-lin, the Japanese position in Manchuria became increasingly tenuous, the Kwantung Army itself made operations plans for neutralizing the potentially threatening forces of Chang Hsueh-liang. These plans, made under the leadership of Itagaki Seishiro and Ishiwara Kanji, were legitimate and proper military preparations for an army facing possible conflict with locally superior forces. But once the plans had been drawn up and the troops were trained the force was ready for combat. Only a triggering incident was needed to transform legitimate defensive plans into a program for offensive, unauthorized action.

The plans made in the General Staff in Tokyo helped legitimize the incident that sprang the Kwantung Army into action. The 1930 and 1931 Estimates had identified Manchuria as an area of the highest concern, and had specified an autonomous Manchuria as militarily necessary, and therefore a proper goal of military planning. The operations plans made in headquarters specified three options for the army to pursue: Chang Hsueh-liang was to be pressured into guaranteeing Japanese rights in Manchuria; Chang was to be overthrown and replaced by a cooperative warlord; or the Japanese army was to occupy and administer Manchuria directly. This was an internal army plan; the options were alternative courses of action for the army to pursue, at the discretion of army authorities. The Estimates, and the operations plans made to support them, made an independent settlement of the Manchurian problem into accepted, official army policy.

The 1930 and 1931 Estimates, and the plans made to implement them, marked the beginning of independent army action in Manchuria. Officers of the General Staff thoroughly examined the Estimates and the highest authorities in the army approved them in accordance with established, accepted procedures. The plans made to implement the Estimates were not conspiratorial in nature; they were carefully staffed military operations plans, designed to solve a major military problem using military means, and drawn up with the full knowledge and guidance of the army's leadership. To be sure, in making those plans and approving the Estimates, the army's leadership took upon itself the responsibility for altering an important part of Japan's foreign policy. Despite this, the army acted within its legal bounds.

The political future of Manchuria was, strictly speaking, not the proper concern for Japanese military authorities. But so long as the army had to prepare to fight Russia on the plains of northern

Manchuria, the internal politics of Manchuria were a matter of immediate interest to army staff officers. Military success depended on rapidity of deployment; anything that hindered or prevented that deployment threatened the entire war plan. A potentially hostile regime in Manchuria was therefore a definite military handicap, one more factor that had to be considered by the professional staff officers who prepared operations plans. To the extent it impinged on military operational requirements, the political structure of Manchuria was in fact part of the military problem.

The Japanese army responded to this political component of its military operational problem by developing the means for political operations, and by 1930 and 1931 it had gained considerable expertise in the techniques of political manipulation. The Second Department with its advisors, agents, and Special Service Organs had successfully manipulated warlords and local politicians ever since the warlord period began. Between 1912 and 1926 the Kwantung Army had used its military power to alter or stabilize Manchurian political conditions. Both had done so with the concurrence of the central army authorities and of the civilian political leadership. The Second Department supported the First Manchurian Independence movement in 1912 with the knowledge of the army's leadership, and ended that support as soon as it was ordered to do so. It supported the Second Independence Movement in 1915 with the full authorization of both military and civilian leaderships. Kwantung Army officers were largely responsible for the Japanese decision to back Chang Tso-lin in 1916, and the entire clandestine operation during the

Siberian Expedition was carried out with the backing of the Prime Minister. From General Utsunomiya's plan to encourage a divided China in 1912 through General Shirakawa's intervention in the rebellion of Kuo Sung-lin in 1925, the Second Department and the Kwantung Army clandestinely, legally, and effectively intervened in the political affairs of China and Manchuria.

This experience became significant in 1930 and 1931 when the political future of Manchuria became a serious policy question. The growing importance of the political component of the military problem brought with it the increased importance of those sub-units that had specialized in political operations in Manchuria. The Second Department, especially, grew in importance. As part of the General Staff, it legitimately participated in the planning process at headquarters, but it was also a clandestine operational organization specializing in political manipulation. As Ogata observes, its clandestine operations were effectively beyond the control of national leadership, outside the normal channels of military operations, and subject to neither normal political constraints nor routine military discipline. This was the one staff organization with experience in the political question that had become the central part of the problem for army authorities. In the classic "satisficing" manner the Japanese army's General Staff incorporated into its own plan the approaches used by its sub-unit specializing in that specific problem area. The Second Department in the General Staff, and the Kwantung Army in the field, were the sources of the army's new-found willingness to make major policy decisions. The essentially non-military, policy-making nature of their operations was to some extent disguised by their legitimate emphasis on the military problem. Their approaches and techniques were formulated within the army, in pursuit of army goals, adapted to army problems, and expressed in army terms. They were "in-house" techniques, devised by experienced and capable officers; as such, they were accepted by the leadership and staff of the army.

Conspiracies abounded during the Manchurian Incident, and the setting off of the Incident itself was a conspiratorial insubordinate act. But its degree of legitimacy must not be overlooked, since that was what allowed it to succeed. The officers responsible for the Incident could simultaneously admit their insubordination and honestly state that they believed they were acting in the interests of the army, for the good of the nation, and in direct pursuit of goals admittedly essential for a viable independent security policy.

Manchuria was more than a military problem. Manchuria was, for Japan, the critical part of the entire China question and therefore central to the conduct of Japanese foreign policy. The political status of Manchuria was a problem with which Foreign Ministers Shidehara and Tanaka both had struggled. It impinged on Japan's relationship with China, with Russia, with Europe and the United States. It was a major domestic political issue that deeply divided the two major political parties. The foreign policy and domestic political aspects of the Manchurian question and of the Manchurian Incident have properly received more scholarly attention than has the military problem. Yet it was the military problem, as seen from within the military organization, that spurred the officers to take direct, independent action. The institutional characteristics of the army did not cause the Manchurian Incident or in any sense make the Incident inevitable. These characteristics did, however, make the Incident possible by providing the mechanism, the motivation and the opportunity for the officers to act.

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