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# Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance

Ken Ishida

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Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World
ISBN 978-3-319-96222-1 ISBN 978-3-319-96223-8 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018948205

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# Preface and Acknowledgements

This book draws on my research of 1981–2017 and examines how the foreign policy of the Axis can be compared and analyzed in the context of international politics. After attending a seminar by Ernst Nolte in 1981 and researching Renzo De Felice's archive in 1986, I was struck by the historical incongruity of each Axis country, which prompted me to start a long journey studying commonalities as well as peculiarities among ultra-nationalist Japan, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. This monograph is a part of my work as a researcher commuting between Europe and East Asia over the last thirty years. During this period, I incurred many debts to researchers around the world, many of whom are unable to read Japanese. With this publication, then, I hope to reach out to the English-language historiography on comparative foreign politics.

My greatest debt is to the archives and universities in Japan, Italy, Germany, Britain, Austria, France, Spain and the United States. In addition, because of my physical and psychological distance from European countries, I am grateful for the assistance and friendship of many archivists and scholars, especially Antony Best, Filippo Focardi, Lutz Klinkhammer, Effie Pedaliu, Mario Rossi and Stefania Ruggeri.

Exploring sources in Europe, I am also indebted to many senior professors, in particular to Denis Mack Smith, Ian Nish and Jens Petersen. They were extremely helpful to the unestablished scholar from the Far East that I was, enabling me to gradually understand the relationship among the Axis powers. At various stages, Yasuo Baba, Richard Bosworth, Shuichi Kato, Elisa Signori and Susumu Takahashi

encouraged me to pursue this ambitious project based on a multinational perspective. The staff of Chiba University were supportive, too, while the academic situation deteriorated into the serious global competition of economic rationalism over those thirty years.

This work has been made possible with the help of a number of people in different ways. My warmest thanks are due to the following individuals: Aki Adachi, Patrizia Bertoletti, Luca Borzoni, Marah Dickson-Wright, Valdo Ferretti, Adelaide Frabotta, Linda Germi, Reto Hofmann, Janis Mimura, Kei Murase, Hajime Onozaka, Jože Pirjevec, Keiko Sakai, Michael Smitka, Tomohiro Suemasu, Yu Suzuki, Atsuroh Toba and Patrizia Todaro.

Owing to my father's career as an exchange professor, I was exposed to the experience of living abroad, including in the United States, Mexico, Tanzania and West Germany, from my childhood onward, which led to my interest in the subject of comparative studies of various nations. Moreover, my mother's engagement in civil and peace movements such as the anti-Vietnam War campaign stimulated my interest in international relations. Hence, this study is dedicated to my parents.

Chiba-shi, Japan Ken Ishida

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ACS | Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma |
| ADAP | *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik* |
| AP | Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 |
| ASMAE | Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero Affari Esteri, Roma |
| BA | Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde |
| CAB | Cabinet |
| CDG | Carte Dino Grandi |
| DBFP | *Documents on British Foreign Policy* |
| DDI | *I documenti diplomatici italiani* |
| FGCL | Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti |
| FGCLUC | Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti, Ufficio di Coordinamento |
| FO | Foreign Office |
| FRUS | *Foreign Relations of the United States* |
| GFM | German Foreign Ministry |
| JFMA | Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo |
| NS | NS-Bestände |
| O. O. | *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* |
| PAAA | Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amt, Berlin |
| SIA | *Survey of International Affairs* |
| SPDCR | Segretaria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato |
| T | Treasury |
| TNA | The National Archives, Kew |

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CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

World War II is often described as a war between the Allied Powers and the Axis nations. Nevertheless, there are not too many historians who have conducted research on the relationship between the countries that formed the latter alignment. Much of the existing historiography looks at the diplomatic motives and conduct of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy and ultra-nationalist Japan in the 1930s, individually.[1] As a result, many researchers tend to understand this tripartite alliance within the framework of the conventional wisdom that it was a "hollow alliance" in which the Axis powers somehow managed to form a coalition despite having very few commonalities.[2]

[1] Regarding the research on commonalities among the Axis powers, MacGregor Knox and Aristotle A. Kallis provide refined perspectives on Italo–German relations, but their works do not explore the Japanese side of the story, as the authors could not read Japanese. MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Aristotle A. Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). The literature on German–Japanese relations by the German scholar Bernd Martin and Italo–Japanese relations by the Italian scholar Valdo Ferretti is more descriptive than analytical. Bernd Martin, *Japan and Germany in the Modern World* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995). Valdo Ferretti, *Il Giappone e la politica estera italiana 1935–41* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1983).

[2] Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Rome-Berlin Axis*. 3 rev. ed. (London: Collins, c1949, 1969). A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, with a preface for the American readers, and a new introduction (New York: Simon & Schuster, c1961, 1996). Johanna

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_1

Within this framework of understanding, it is believed that the alliance was formed due to the opportunism of the Japanese and Italian decision makers. These leaders attempted to strike some kind of deal with other Western governments throughout the early 1930s yet failed to do so for various reasons. Only after that did they turn to Germany as a country that could save them from the diplomatic isolation that they themselves created by their aggression toward China and Ethiopia. However, even though there was little direct contact between the Axis powers, the European war provoked by Germany would not have become a world war without the actions of the Japanese and the Italians, who joined the war to support their common ally and broaden the theaters of war to Asia-Pacific and Africa. It must be said that World War II would not have broken out and developed as it did without the Tripartite Alliance. It is worth conducting a more thorough research of this important coalition and examining whether a global history of the Axis is possible.

This book will examine the foreign policies of ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy in the 1930s, as such an attempt is essential to understanding the road to the Tripartite Alliance and the relationship between the countries in this alignment. It will look not only at the Italo–Japanese relationship but also analyze and compare the diplomatic policy-making processes of these two countries. Despite the fact that many political scientists have exemplified the effectiveness of a comparative approach to highlighting the characteristics of certain political institutions, not too many historians have adopted such approach. Especially after 2004, the publication of research that looks at the diplomacies of the Axis powers through a comparative approach has decreased.[3]

Menzel Meskill, *Hitler & Japan: The Hollow Alliance* (New York: Atherton Press, 1960). Cf. Robert Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933–1940* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 12.

[3] Many recent works are more concerned with war, colonialism, and related fields than interwar foreign policies themselves. Mitsuyoshi Himeta et al., *Nicchu-Senso no Kokusai Kyodo-Kenkyu*, 5 vols. (Keiogijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2006–2014). Kazu Nagai, *Nicchu Senso kara Sekai Senso e* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2007). Akira Kudo, Nobuo Tajima, and Erich Pauer, ed., *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890–1945*, 3 vols. (Folkestone: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009). Giorgio Rochat, *Le guerre italiane 1935–1943: Dall'impero d'Etiopia alla disfatta* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005). Riccardo Bottoni (A cura di), *L'Impero fascista: Italia ed Etiopia (1935–1941)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008). Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Etiopia: L'ultima impresa del colonialismo* (Milano: Longanesi, 2010). Lutz Klinkhammer, Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi und Thomas Schlemmer (Hrsg.), *Die "Achse" im Krieg: Politik, Ideologie und Kriegführung 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010).

Some of the few works that make such an attempt are also inadequate in analyzing the foreign policies of these two countries.[4] Richard J. Samuels offers an extensive comparison of Japan and Italy in terms of modernization and democracy from a broad theoretical perspective, but his work focuses on the central role of leaders rather than on decision-making structures in explaining why they came to different decisions despite their similar historical backgrounds.[5] Therefore, his work has not sufficiently scrutinized how the decision makers were influenced by their environment or the structural settings of diplomatic policy-making institutions in which they existed. For the purpose of comparing the foreign policy decision-making structure of Japan and Italy, this study will focus on the foreign ministries of these two countries, and seek out the commonalities and differences between these institutions.[6] As shown

[4] Paul Brooker provides comparison of the three regimes in Germany, Italy and Japan, but his study is somewhat culturally and ideologically oriented and lays stress on domestic politics. Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). The articles in *Japan in the Fascist Era* develop comparative viewpoints regarding ideology and German–Japanese relations. However, they do not discuss the foreign policy-making process in much detail. E. Bruce Reynolds, ed., *Japan in the Fascist Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[5] Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003). Enzo Collotti compares various factors such as colonialism, propaganda and emigration. Nevertheless, foreign policies are basically described in the classical manner of diplomatic history. Enzo Collotti; con la collaborazione di Nicola Labanca e Teodoro Sala, *Fascismo e politica di potenza: politica estera 1922–1939* (Milano: La Nuova Italia, 2000). The following study highlights the foreign ministry's bureaucracy rather than foreign policy itself. Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895–1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).

[6] Influential biographies of Hirohito by Herbert P. Bix and Mussolini by Renzo De Felice and R.J.B. Bosworth have attracted considerable attention. However, they place emphasis on the personal peculiarities of these two figures without taking much account of the political structure that restricted them. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (London: Duckworth, 2000). Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Torino: Einaudi, 1974 & 1981). R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002). A similar tendency can be seen in many biographies such as the one by Stephan Large, which represents the Japanese emperor as an active figure who also influenced the diplomatic policy-making process when it was convenient for him to do so. Stephen S. Large, *Emperor Hirohito and Showa Japan: A Political Biography* (London: Routledge, 1992). Robert Mallett's work also emphasizes that Mussolini's geopolitical vision dominated the every aspect of foreign policy. Mallett, op. cit.

in Chapter 8, this book also deals with individuals, classifying them into categories. These leaders are only components of a structure, and their decision-making mechanisms reveal how they changed or maintained their positions.

The Tripartite Alliance is commonly understood as a product of the expansionist ideology espoused by the charismatic leaders Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Prince Fumimaro Konoe and promoted by their eccentric sub-leaders Joachim von Ribbentrop, Count Galeazzo Ciano and Yosuke Matsuoka, who were heretics in their foreign ministries. On the other hand, the traditional diplomats have been regarded as rational and moderate actors, whom fanatic decision makers deprived of their reasonable options to cooperate with the West.[7] However, if one looks closely into the development of events from 1932 to 1936, it becomes apparent that such conventional wisdom is not always true and often misguided. Even the "realistic" diplomats in these countries acted under the name of anti-communism and regional hegemony, and often assumed that they were racially superior to the people of the countries in which they intervened.[8] There was a decision-making mechanism that made it difficult for either of the foreign ministries to prevent the escalation of aggression by their governments. Historians must therefore place emphasis not only on the personalities of the important individuals in Italy and Japan but also on the structural aspect of the foreign policy-making process.

It is often said that the cultural diversity between the non-Western and Western nations is so great that Japanese and Italian foreign policies cannot be aligned. Yet Japan and Italy, which were contemplating forming an alliance in the 1930s, did share commonalities in their foreign policies despite the structural differences in their decision-making

[7]Felix Gilbert, "Ciano and his Ambassadors," in *The Diplomats*, eds. Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 512–536. Fabio Grassi Orsini, "La diplomazia," in *Il regime fascista: Storia e storiografia*, a cura di Angelo Del Boca, Massimo Legnani e Mario G. Rossi (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1995), pp. 319–328. Wolfgang Michalka, *Ribbentrop und Die Deutsche Weltpolitik 1933–1940* (München: Fink, 1980). Rainer F. Schmidt, *Die Außenpolitik des Dritten Reiches 1933–1939* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002). Shin'ichi Kamimura, *Gaiko Gojunen* (Tokyo: Jiji Tsushinsha, 1960), pp. 148–165. Shin'ichi Kitaoka, *Nihon no Kindai*, Vol. 5: *Seito kara Gumbu e, 1924–1941* (Tokyo: Chuo Koron-shinsha, 1999), pp. 261–299.

[8]The following article analyzes the racism in Japan and Italy in detail. Ken Ishida, "Racisms Compared: Fascist Italy and Ultra-nationalist Japan," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2002), 380–391.

mechanisms. Some of the early Axis literature instead exaggerates the totalitarian features of Axis diplomacy.[9] Attempting to take an analytical stance between cultural determinism and simple generalization is highly problematic. In addition, the cognitive gap between the various views of individual actors and systems of international relations should be bridged through our knowledge of foreign policy. A tentative solution is to use a comparative method standardized by classification of the actors (see Chapter 8) in the Axis countries and to identify the decision-making mechanism of each foreign ministry.

This study will bring the contrast between commonalities and differences among the Axis powers into relief. Indeed, Japan and Italy both initially tried to avoid total confrontation with Britain, since they were not economically as strong as Germany. Nevertheless, their aggressive foreign policies resulted in their gradually marginalizing themselves from the League of Nations and the Versailles-Washington system. An important turning point for the globalization of the Axis came in 1937, when uncompromising attitudes grew, and self-centered aggressive rhetoric multiplied. This becomes apparent only if their international relations are analyzed through a comparative approach. The following chapters will review the above-mentioned conventional understanding, whose shortcomings can be understood by paying attention to their multinational context.

Finally, this study seeks to contribute to the current historiography by exploring three specific elements: first, the similarity and dissimilarity of Japanese and Italian political structures based on foreign policy ideology; second, individuals' attitudes toward the international agreements relating to the League of Nations and Versailles-Washington system as well as their quest for regional hegemony; third, relations with Britain and Germany as well as neighboring countries in Asia, Europe and Africa. These elements will reveal that Japan and Italy shared analogous characteristics, namely imperialism, racism and anti-communism in the late period of international cooperation, which also helps to illustrate why and how they chose the road to the Tripartite Alliance.

[9] Ernst L. Presseisen, *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy 1933–1941* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958). K.D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Berlin: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969). Cf. Patrick Finny, *Remembering the Road to World War Two: International History, National Identity, Collective Memory* (London: Routledge, 2011).

## 1.1 The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Structures of Japan and Italy

For the purpose of describing the similarities and dissimilarities between Japan and Italy, it is necessary to offer a brief analysis of the foreign policy decision-making structures of these two countries through comparison of each other as well as with Britain and Germany during the 1930s. Contrasting Italian and Japanese diplomatic policy making with that of Britain can highlight the differences between the fascist system and the democratic one. However, although the British Foreign Office was considered to be one of the most influential ministries in framing foreign policies, its decision-making mechanism was more consociational than determined. Moreover, the peculiarities of Japan's and Italy's foreign policies will come into focus by comparing them to Germany's. Even though all three Axis powers were often regarded as totalitarian, the absoluteness of these three "dictatorships" differed.[10] The basic elements for comparative analysis are shown in the Fig. 1.1.

In the British foreign policy decision-making process, the cabinet, the Foreign Office, Parliament and public opinion all took part in a tug of war. Particularly in Britain, the Foreign Office played a more independent role in its diplomatic policy-making process and exerted very strong control over the basic direction of policy than in other democratic countries such as the United States and France. However, the individuals who had the ultimate authority to undertake governmental decision making were not the bureaucrats but the cabinet ministers. Every minister was important. Even Neville Chamberlain, who was eager to act on his own initiative, could not ignore political opinions raised by other ministers without risking a breakdown of his cabinet. And since these ministers were elected politicians, they could not remain indifferent to the arguments of the opposition and public opinion, which were expressed through Parliament and the press. Multiple individuals determined the democratic British foreign policy-making process.

Nazi *Führerprinzip* (leader principle) drew a sharp contrast with the British policy-making process. The German political structure was more top-down, and Hitler's influence was very dominant, especially after he

[10]For more detailed analyses in Japanese, see Ken Ishida, *Nichidokui Sangoku Domei no Kigen* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2013), pp. 9–13.

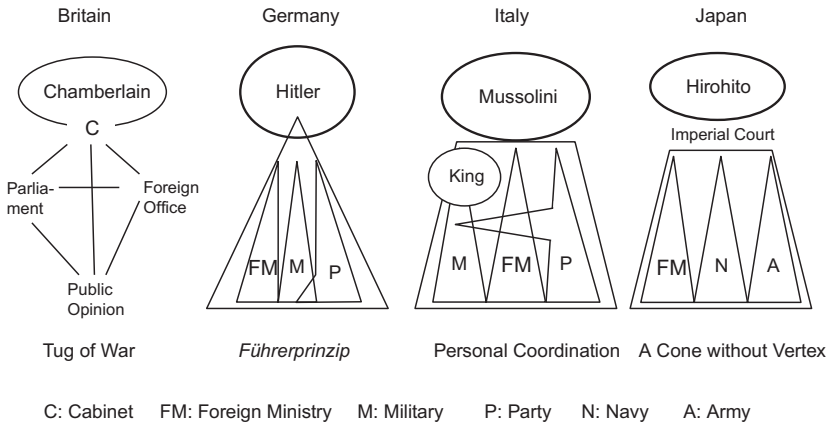


**Fig. 1.1** Foreign policy decision-making structure

ruthlessly purged party members in 1934. He exercised firm control over certain fields of foreign policy in which he was interested, such as the *Anschluß* (German annexation of Austria) and *Drang nach Osten* (push eastward). It is true that the Nazi ideology did not totally penetrate the foreign ministry and military, whose institutional positions were preserved, and the German bureaucratic structure was not completely destroyed by Nazi coercion. Several historians also argue against "program theory" from a pluralistic point of view.[11] Nevertheless, in comparison with Italy and Japan, there was a clear hierarchical decision-making structure, in which Hitler reigned at the top, and this structure was not shaken wholly until the fall of the regime.

As the National Fascist Party imposed dictatorship in Italy, it is tempting to assume that the Italian political structure under its rule was similar to that of Nazi Germany. Yet Mussolini did not cast an overwhelming

[11]Wolfgang Schieder and Christof Dipper (Hrsg.), *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg in der internationalen Politik (1936–1939)* (München: Nymphenburger, 1976). Wolfgang Michalka, op. cit. See for examples of "program theory": Klaus Hildebrand, *Deutsche Außenpolitik 1933–1945: Kalkül order Dogma?* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971). Andreas Hillgruber, *Deutsche Großmacht und Weltpolitik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1977). Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933–1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

influence as Hitler did. Nor could he subject the entire political structure to a reign of terror against his sub-leaders. He was like a coordinator among the military led by the king, the foreign ministry and the National Fascist Party. Fascists were more enthusiastic about presiding over every state institution than the Nazis were. They made determined efforts to subjugate the military without success. On the other hand, the newly appointed foreign minister, Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, could appoint his friends to preferential posts. Although the personalization of politics and arbitrary decision making were typical of the fascist regime, Mussolini had no difficulty in adapting to the internal and external situation. At one point in the late 1930s, he dreamed of acting as a mediator between Nazi Germany and the West while invading Ethiopia and interfering in the Spanish Civil War.

In the Japanese system the emperor embodied the ultimate spiritual value, and the other actors were "equally" positioned to assist him at their respective distances. As a consequence, the Japanese structure was too vague to arbitrate sectional rivalries over foreign policy in the foreign ministry, navy and army. Unlike Germany and Italy, the "imperial court group" functioned as a buffer zone enabling the emperor to evade political responsibility by hiding behind a structure similar to a cone without the vertex. The political position of the emperor, as stated in the prewar Japanese constitution, resembled that of Italy's king, yet the myth of the imperial line, unbroken for centuries, made him more sacred. Since the godlike emperor did not assume leadership of the country, the massive "system of irresponsibility" created "submission to *faits accomplis* and refuge in one's competence and jurisdiction."[12] A German naval attaché had to mediate between the Japanese army and navy because they were quarrelling so fiercely.[13] Yet the government as well as the foreign ministry in Japan often pursued aggressive policies that were forcibly accomplished by their subordinates and the lower-rank officers in the bureaucracy and military during the 1930s.

[12]Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, expanded ed. by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, c1963, 1969), pp. 20, 103, 128. The following study describes the Japanese decision-making system as a "truncated pyramid system." Chihiro Hosoya, *Nihon Gaiko no Zahyo* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1979), pp. 206–208.

[13]Maruyama, op. cit., p. 87.

Thus, the foreign policy decision-making structures of the Axis countries did not have a checks-and-balances function to limit explosive aggression. Despite the differences in ideology, interests and the method of formulating foreign policies, it is worth extracting commonalities shared by the Japanese and Italian foreign ministries in order to analyze their diplomacy. Both countries adopted the stance of anti-communism, which not only led them to abhor the Comintern and Soviet Union but induced them to attack the League of Nations, China and Spain, which they regarded as being contaminated by communist agents. In juxtaposition with systematic communist ideology, anti-communist sentiments were vaguer and used to arouse hostility against certain political targets such as the *Kuomintang* (Nationalist Party) government and the Spanish Popular Front. Moreover, anti-communism was easily accepted by the traditional diplomats as it provided them with a pretext for their bellicose policies.

Japan and Italy both developed a coordination mechanism to address internal disputes between various factions: they adopted aggressive foreign policies to divert attention abroad. Nonetheless, aggressive expansionism also resulted in creating frictions with other imperial powers. On account of their need to distinguish friend from foe in the process of military ventures, the Japanese and Italian traditional diplomats started to feel internationally isolated.

## 1.2 The Prehistory of the Axis Formation

Before moving on to the overviews of each chapter, it is necessary to offer a brief explanation of the situation prior to reckless aggression and examine the background to the ultra-nationalism and fascism that emerged in Japan and Italy. These two nations were similar in a sense that they achieved unification of the state in the late 1860s and embarked on their colonial expansionism in the late nineteenth century, over half a century after Britain and France had started the direct partition of the non-Western world. In their constitutions, which were not revised until the end of World War II, the Japanese emperor and Italian king, who were held sacred and inviolable, had the supreme command of their respective military forces.

Their countries' economies depended primarily on agriculture, in which about the half of population was engaged, yet low productivity weakened the domestic markets and impoverished many farmers.

Both nations attempted to solve these problems through overseas expansionism and managed to increase the amount of exports, investments and industrial outputs by the beginning of the 1920s. However, the Japanese and Italian economies were still at the developmental stage and therefore the vulnerable financial institutions could not absorb the shock of the Great Depression. Deflation lowered the earnings rate, which consequently resulted in mass dismissals and strict labor management. Rural areas, which suffered from structural deficiencies, could not absorb the unemployed as they had been able to for the previous ten years. As a consequence, these two countries sought more colonies to which they could send their surplus populations, as well as new export markets for their domestic products.[14]

The National Fascist Party's seizure of power in 1922 changed the political environment of Italy. Although Mussolini tried to fascistize the foreign ministry, he could appoint only about seventy National Fascist Party members to the consular services during the reform of the ministry in 1927. The Manchurian Incident of September 1931 presaged an era of military expansionism and aggressive diplomacy. The Japanese breached the League Covenant, and at the same time challenged the Nine Power Treaty of February 1922, which had declared that the international community should maintain the sovereignty of China and its Open Door policy. As the treaty was one of the components of the Washington Treaty system, together with the Five Power Treaty on naval disarmament and the Four Power Treaty regarding the Pacific region, Japanese actions inevitably threatened the integrity of the broader international system. Six months after Japan's departure from the League of Nations in March 1933, Nazi Germany followed suit by withdrawing from the League and Disarmament Conference in October 1933. On top of that, the admittance of the Soviet Union to the League in 1934 caused new criticism against the League.

[14]For information on the Japanese and Italian economies, see the following works. John A. Davis, "Economy, Society, and the State," in *Italy in the Nineteenth Century 1796–1900*, ed. John A. Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 235–241. Gianni Toniolo, *L'economia dell'Italia fascista* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1980), pp. 5–16, 26–28, 58–63, 73–75. Masanao Ito, "Kyoko no Kozo," in *Nihonshi Koza*, Vol. 9: *Kindai no Tenkan*, ed. Rekishigaku Kenkyukai, Nihonshi Kenkyukai (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2005), pp. 160–164, 172–175, 178–179. Yoshio Ando, ed., *Kindai Nihon Keizaishi Yoran*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1979), p. 6.

Britain was the country that both the Japanese and Italian governments viewed as the most important power at that time, as its empire extended to East Asia via the Mediterranean. In addition, many conservative politicians and traditional diplomats in the three countries often did not trust the United States and France, whose governments were considered to be motivated only by domestic political interests. Therefore, whereas the British government had to support the League due to the pressure of public opinion, it also began to appease the Axis for defending its empire.[15] The Axis states—and especially the Japanese and the Italians—could take advantage of the fact that the power that could check them—namely, Britain—was reluctant to do so. Nazi Germany destroyed the Versailles system through its reintroduction of conscription and radical rearmament from 1935 onward. Japan's violent clash in continental China also threatened the post-war international system. Fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935 gave the final blow to the universal collective security created under the League of Nations.

In terms of the policy-making process, the year 1932 was the first turning point for Japan and Italy in the sense that they took their first steps toward military expansionism. This year, parliamentary democracy in Japan came to an end after Tsuyoshi Inukai, the last party prime minister before World War II, was murdered in the May 15 Incident. Moreover, the individual who became the foreign minister was Koki Hirota, an experienced career diplomat but still thirteen years younger than his predecessor, Yasuya Uchida. As a result, the Japanese diplomats became immune to the constraints of party politics as well as old-fashioned customs and could cast a stronger influence within the policy-making circle. In Italy, Mussolini expelled Dino Grandi from the foreign ministry, Italo Balbo from the Aviation Ministry and Giuseppe Bottai from the Ministry of Corporations as part of the *cambio della guardia* (change of guardian) policy from 1932 to 1933. As Grandi was a veteran National Fascist Party sub-leader who had fascistized the diplomatic bureaucracy during his control of the ministry, traditional

[15] Peter Bell, *Chamberlain, Germany and Japan, 1933–4* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 90–95. R.A.C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 15, 45–50. Frank McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement and the British Road to War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 23–25.

diplomats, initially, felt less restrained by the National Fascist Party after his replacement.[16]

Newly acquired Manchukuo in 1932 and Ethiopia in 1936 could not satisfy the Japanese and the Italians, because they held excessive and unrealistic expectations about the resources potential of these regions. Owing to the fact that these two countries had limited economic and military capability, it was also difficult for them to establish an efficient colonial rule.[17] Frustrated by their slow progress, the Japanese ultra-nationalists and Italian fascists continued to push their government to acquire more colonies and markets.

The year 1936 was the second turning point for both countries. Although the Japanese "national" government came under the strong influence of the army after the May 15 Incident, the cabinets headed by two admirals, Makoto Saito and Keisuke Okada, still preserved the traditional pro-West attitude. However, in 1936 both of them became the target of another *coup d'etat* attempt, the February 26 Incident, perpetrated by a militant faction within the army, which killed the ex-premier, Saito. Hirota, who became prime minister after the incident, could not retain government integrity and encouraged the trend toward military control. As the new regime also failed to restrain the army and navy from pushing their respective plans for aggressive expansionism, Hirota employed his coordination skill only to urge the others to accept the hard-line policies advocated by the military. The foreign ministry was eager to unify the decentralized foreign policy-making process yet escalated the skirmish in China into full-scale war in July 1937.[18] Needless to say, such an action also dealt a heavy blow to any hopes that Japan could contribute to international cooperation and détente.

[16]Although Kallis wrote "the dismissal of Grandi was a blow to the traditional diplomats" (Kallis, op. cit., p. 92.), their initiatives were encouraged to a certain degree under Mussolini's coordination (see Chapter 3). Cf. Enrico Serra, "La burocrazia della politica estera italiana," in *La politica estera italiana (1860–1985)*, a cura di Richard J.B. Bosworth e Sergio Romano (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), pp. 83–84.

[17]The name of "Manchukuo" will be used in its historical context as a Japanese-founded and controlled state between 1932 and 1945. Shin'ichi Yamamuro, *Kimera: Manshukoku no Shozo* (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 1993), pp. 185–187. Toniolo, op. cit., p. 333. Banco di Roma (edito a cura di), *Vademecum economico per l'A. O. I.* (Verona: Mondadori, 1937).

[18]Maruyama, op. cit., pp. 354–355. Tetsuya Sakai, *Taisho Democracy Taisei no Hokai: Naisei to Gaiko* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992), p. 202.

In Italy, Mussolini monopolized the post of foreign minister until 1936, after he succeeded in getting rid of Grandi from the power center by appointing the latter as ambassador to Britain. As Mussolini was easily influenced by those who frequently conversed with him, it was important for pro-Western actors in the Italian government to surround him with calculable diplomats instead of fanatic fascists, and in some senses they were successful at this. In addition, only diplomats could translate his inflammatory remarks into language more appropriate for communication with foreign governments. The traditional diplomatic service retained a certain degree of control over foreign policy and therefore played an important role in Italy's decision to start the Ethiopian War in October 1935. Nonetheless, the influence of the foreign ministry was severely weakened when Mussolini appointed his son-in-law, Galeazzo Ciano, as foreign minister a month after the occupation of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Ciano pretended to be "vice duce" and attempted to exhibit bravado in his handling of foreign policies, since he was a latecomer in the fascist regime. In order to display his power against senior fascists and traditional diplomats, Ciano started a new military venture by intervening in the Spanish Civil War in July 1936.[19]

The third turning point came in 1937, when the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded (see Chapter 7 for details). Although its significance has been mostly ignored in current scholarship, it pertains more to its redesign than its simple enlargement, metamorphosing from anti-Soviet cooperation into an anti-Western bloc. Without substantial foundations, however, the new order could offer nothing but ambiguous views of a global Axis alliance. Despite many confrontations and differences, the three countries were intoxicated with their complacent images. From that perspective, the Axis served as a far-reaching instrument for expansionism. Thus, as mentioned above, the years from 1932 to 1937 were crucial for Japan and Italy as well as for the path to World War II. The following chapters will deal with how such a development took place in the foreign policy decision-making mechanisms of both countries.

[19]Fulvio Suvich, *Memorie, 1932–1936*, a cura di Gianfranco Bianchi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 18. Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, a cura di Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 272. MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939–1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5. Ken Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats in the Ethiopian War: The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Fascist Italy," *Hogaku Zasshi* of Osaka City University, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1996), 994.

## 1.3 A Brief Overview of Chapters

Each chapter will focus on a specific theme.

Chapter 2 will survey the ideological backgrounds of foreign policy. It examines how the two foreign ministries perceived the world and escalated their aggressive expansionist policies during the latter half of the 1930s. Within this process, they mobilized whatever ideology they found useful in legitimizing their attempts to accomplish regional hegemony. Unlike the Fascists in Italy, Japanese diplomats tended to see fascism only as a form of government rather than a systematic ideology. Although Mussolini opportunistically emphasized for the sake of Axis cooperation that Japan resembled fascist states, most actors in both countries did not perceive Japanese ultra-nationalism as fascism.

Nonetheless, there still were many ideological characteristics common to both Japan and Italy. Japanese and Italian regimes justified their invasion into China and Ethiopia under the typical imperialistic rhetoric that they were endeavoring to civilize inferior people in the racial hierarchy. Ironically, their racism also prevented them from building better relationships. Yet, both foreign ministries expressed strong antipathy toward communism, which provided a crucial common ground for them, and their anti-communism ended up isolating them from the rest of the world. In the course of anti-communist cooperation, they multiplied enemies at the League of Nations, and even among the Western powers because of their quest for regional dominance.

Chapter 3 will scrutinize the role of the foreign ministers Hirota and Mussolini within the foreign policy-making mechanism of these two states. Neither of the two leaders secured overwhelming supremacy in their decision-making circles as Hitler did in Germany. Therefore, the foreign policy decision-making process of ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy, which could be characterized as a strange mixture of indecisive discourse and aggressive opportunism, depended on the power balances inside and outside the governing regime, whereas Hitler's speeches and addresses often provided decisive direction to the internal and external politics of Nazi Germany.

Hirota and Mussolini acted as coordinators among the competing government actors. They even succeeded in rejecting disarmament at the price of international cooperation in order to gain the internal consensus on military expansionism. Hirota managed to maintain the integrity of the Japanese government by arousing antagonism against the League

of Nations as well as international communism, and inducing the decision makers to band together against these common threats. Mussolini, on the other hand, placed the foreign ministry under his control by assigning different roles to different diplomats. By doing so, he created an environment that encouraged diplomats to compete with each other rather than to challenge his authority. Mussolini left open as many options as possible without clarifying which should be selected.

Chapter 4 will deal with the aides of Hirota and Mussolini, Mamoru Shigemitsu (1933–1936) and Fulvio Suvich (1932–1936), the undersecretaries for foreign affairs in their respective countries, in comparison with British technocrat Leith-Ross.[20] These two figures are commonly understood as the symbols of traditional diplomacy, but they seldom managed to restrain the ultra-nationalists and fascists from engaging in military adventurism. Although Shigemitsu and Suvich placed importance on upholding the relationship with the great powers, especially Britain, and also attempted to restrict levels of aggression to the norms accepted by the other imperial powers, both of these undersecretaries also believed that their respective states must establish regional hegemony in East Asia and Central Europe.

In addition to their imperialistic orientation, Shigemitsu and Suvich had a distaste for socialism and democracy. Therefore, they even meddled in the internal affairs of China and Austria. It should also be noted that the Japanese and Italian foreign ministries caste a certain degree of influence on diplomatic policy-making circles in the years before 1936, and also, both Hirota and Mussolini entrusted their undersecretaries with policies directed toward neighboring regions, particularly where finance and economics were concerned. Initiatives of Shigemitsu and Suvich failed in the long run. Still, their inclination to dominate the regions adjacent to their nations was passed on to their successors, who pursued this goal in a more aggressive manner later in the decade.

[20]Whereas the biographies of Shigemitsu have been published in Japan by Yukio Watanabe and Tomoki Takeda, the role of Suvich is virtually ignored in Italy even today. Yukio Watanabe, *Shigemitsu Mamoru: Shanhai Jihen kara Kokuren Kamei made* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1996). Tomoki Takeda, *Shigemitsu Mamoru to Sengo Seiji* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2002). One of the few articles concerning Suvich is the following: Tomaso De Vergottini, "Fulvio Suvich e la difesa dell'indipendenza austriaca," in *Le fonti diplomatiche in età moderna e contemporanea: Atti del Convegno internazionale Lucca, 20–25 gennaio 1989* (Roma: Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivistici, 1995), pp. 404–417.

Chapter 5 will examine two important diplomatic negotiators of Japan and Italy, Shigeru Yoshida and Dino Grandi, who served as ambassadors to Britain for political understanding. Both of these individuals arrived in London after experiencing political setbacks, Grandi after being driven to resign from foreign minister in 1932, and Yoshida after failing to become foreign minister in Hirota's cabinet in 1936. They had every intention of returning to the power center as well as winning imperialistic concessions from Britain.[21]

Yoshida and Grandi were perceived as "pro-British" in "pro-German" circles, but neither of them actively opposed the expansionism of their respective states, nor did they think their governments should relinquish their hold. Nonetheless, both intentionally overestimated the readiness of their home governments and the British to appease each other. Yoshida repeatedly attempted to "lecture" British diplomats on the importance of taking a conciliatory attitude toward Japan. His objective was to strengthen pro-Anglo-American circles in the Japanese government. Grandi, on the other hand, struggled to persuade Mussolini of Britain's sincerity in appealing for good relations with Italy. Grandi even sent false information to both governments as part of his effort to leave the way open for the promotion of his objectives.

Chapter 6 will focus on both the traditional diplomats and new political actors in Japan and Italy, and clarify how these countries got stuck in the mud of aggressive foreign policies. Many traditional diplomats asserted their unwillingness to pursue a line that could result in total confrontation with Britain. The traditional diplomats, such as Yakichiro Suma and Raffaele Guariglia, pleaded in their post-war memoirs that they only adopted a realistic stance on the issues. Yet there is ample evidence to suggest that their claims are not accurate. There were a few exceptions, including Foreign Minister Naotake Sato and Undersecretary Giuseppe Bastianini, who criticized their foreign policies in Japan and Italy even after 1936. Still, they were too powerless to change the course of government.

[21] There are two well-documented biographies of these figures by John W. Dower and Paolo Nello. Nevertheless, this chapter will take a distinctive approach from these works by comparing both these politically influential negotiators with another ambassador to Britain, Joachim von Ribbentrop of Nazi Germany. John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878–1954* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979). Paolo Nello, *Dino Grandi: La formazione di un leader fascista* (Bologna: Mulino, 1987).

Moreover, as they began large-scale military intervention in China and Spain, new key actors, Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe and Vice Duce Galeazzo Ciano, repeated aggressive slogans against the Western powers but often wore a double face of internal consumption and external bluff. Their ambiguous attitudes were similar to those of Hirota and Mussolini. However, the huge difference was that there no longer existed many capable diplomats at home who could assist them in applying brakes to extreme choices that would antagonize all the other powers.

Chapter 7 will look at how Japan and Italy continued to marginalize themselves. In the two months between November and December 1937, five important international events occurred in sequence: the Brussels Nine Power Treaty Conference, the conclusion of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, Italian recognition of Manchukuo, German mediation of the Sino-Japanese War, and Italian withdrawal from the League of Nations. As these three nations urged their aggressions onward, Axis diplomacy started to become more globalized. It was transformed from a simple rejection of the inter-war international system into a new revisionism of each country's individual quest for dominant regional power.

While the Axis countries still tried to strike a deal with the West and Britain through negotiation and intimidation, the globalized Axis and its search for a new order inevitably antagonized the British Empire. Although the internal dispute over foreign affairs in the three countries is often schematized as rivalry between "pro-Axis" and "pro-British" factions, in the decision-making process, most actors considered the relations among the Axis powers and with Britain as being interconnected. On one hand, Japan, Italy and Germany soon sought their own distinct ideology and interests in an arbitrary manner; on the other, they could not collaborate to serve common ends in East Asia.

Chapter 8 summarizes this study by unfolding the categories of actors in the foreign policy decision-making process. The argument revolves around the individuals' conduct rather than the personalities of those in charge to understand why and how, structurally, individuals ended up choosing unintended partners. The actors in the foreign policy-making process can be classified into four types: promoter, follower, critic and observer.

Japan and Italy shared three common characteristics in their foreign policies. First, core members who could act as policy promoters of policy arrangements formed were few in number. Second, many diplomats were forced to remain in the position of negotiator, whose role was only

to execute the policies formulated at the power center instead of taking part in the policy-making process. Third, although there were some policy-oriented diplomats abroad, these followers could only have a limited impact on forming foreign policy, so most of them only acted as observers, at best. The promoters, including coordinators and planners, stepped on the accelerator of invasion since many negotiators did not oppose expansionism itself and the few critics had been already ignored. It was too late to apply the brakes by then, and the Axis nations headed on a course of unlimited aggression.

Ultra-nationalist Japan or Fascist Italy should not be interpreted as another "Sonderweg" falling into cultural particularism or determinism, as there were many similarities between the two decision-making systems. It goes without saying that there were peculiarities in these two structures, yet it is also important to bring differences into relief against the commonalities.

Japan and Italy had a less solid structure than Britain and Germany due to the irresponsible sectionalism in Japan and personalization of politics in Italy. Moreover, from the beginning of the 1930s, traditional diplomats and ultra-nationalists or fascists shared common characteristics, such as their support of imperialism, racism and anti-communism. Furthermore, after the invasion of China and Ethiopia, many diplomats were transformed from promoters into followers or observers who no longer criticized the government's pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy.

After the drastic staff changes in the foreign ministry in 1936, the Italian decision-making structure became confined to the inner circle that developed around Mussolini and Ciano, and their opinions started to become the most important factor in the decision-making process. In Japan, the bureaucracy continued its usual personnel transfers, even after 1936, but the ministry could no longer determine the course of crucial foreign policies, because it started to submit itself, passively, to *faits accomplis* in China, as presented by the military. The following chapters will show the details of such events.

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CHAPTER 2

# The Ideological Backgrounds of Axis Foreign Policies

This chapter analyzes the ideas of Japanese and Italian diplomats in the Axis alliance. It examines how the two foreign ministries perceived the world and escalated their aggressive expansionist policies during the latter half of the 1930s. In legitimizing the desire for regional hegemony, they identified ideas that could be implemented. As seen in the case of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of 1939, Axis diplomacy was, essentially, more opportunistic than ideological. Although ideology played an important role, it served as a means of justifying the expansionist policies of the Japanese and Italian foreign ministries whose diplomats were not dedicated to a specific ideology limiting their foreign policies. Until the mid-1930s, their "realistic" views induced them to straddle the political issue of the British Empire rather than contest it.

It is true that the foreign ministries in Japan and Italy underwent institutional reforms in compliance with the new political atmosphere instigated by the Paris Peace Conference, which introduced cultural and intellectual elements into the field of diplomacy. In Japan, some of the young diplomats formed the *Gaimusho Kakushin Doshikai* (Foreign Ministry Reform Association), which achieved the establishment of an Information Board in 1920. When the board was first constituted, its second division was headed by Yosuke Matsuoka and later Koki Hirota. In 1921 the Information Board officially covered propaganda and public relations but also developed as a center of radical reformists headed by Toshio Shiratori, who was a notorious ideologue of

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_2

"imperial diplomacy." However, the cultural and intellectual influence of prominent thinkers on foreign policy was not conspicuous or direct.[1]

During the time of Hirota's ministry from 1933 to 1936, Shiratori harshly criticized Hirota for his "pro-Soviet policy." Shiratori's argument gradually shifted from anti-communism to the anti-Jewish plutocracy of the Anglo-American world. Even though his book was well sold in 1941, he failed to become undersecretary because of his eccentric ultra-nationalism. Moreover, Shiratori's reformist group was so factional that they could cast only a limited influence on their promotion in the foreign ministry.[2]

It must also be remembered that Matsuoka and Hirota, as foreign ministers on the road to the Tripartite Alliance, played an important role in directing Japan toward the course of aggressive expansionism. As will be shown in this chapter, their arguments were more superficial or demagogic than cultural or intellectual. Additionally, in Hirota's case, for example, it would be difficult to clarify which ideological grounds led him to adopt the foreign policy that he did; this point will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.[3]

In Italy, institutional reform of the foreign ministry in the 1920s was strongly associated with the domestic logic of the fascist regime, which

[1]The recent books in English on Japanese intellectuals of that period do not mention the intercourse between them and diplomats. Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). David Williams, *Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and post-White Power* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004). Oliviero Frattolio, *Interwar Japan beyond the West* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012). The latest Japanese monographs on foreign policy neglect the elements of ideology, culture and public opinion. Masaaki Miyata, *Eibei Sekai Chitsujo to Higashi-Ajia niokeru Nihon: Chugoku womeguru Kyocho to Sokoku* (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 2014). Yuichi Sasaki, *Teikoku Nihon no Gaiko 1894–1922: Naze Hanto wa Kakudai Shitanoka* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2017). Even the book on cultural diplomacy emphasizes more bureaucratic aspects than intellectual ones. Fumio Kumamoto, *Taisen Kanki no Tai-Chugoku Bunka Gaiko: Gaimusho Kiroku nimiru Seisaku Kettei-Katei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2013). The discrepancy between diplomatic and intellectual history is still large.

[2]Ryoichi Tobe, *Gaimusho Kakushin-ha: Sekai Shin-Chitsujo no Gen'ei* (Tokyo: Chuko-Shinsho, 2010), pp. 105, 110–113, 147–150, 268, 280–283. Toshio Shiratori, *Tatakahi no Jidai* (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobo, 1941), pp. 32, 74.

[3]Tobe, op. cit., pp. 3–6, 11–19, 67–73, 105–107. Matsuoka Yosuke Denki Kankokai, ed., *Matsuoka Yosuke: Sono Hito to Shogai* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), p. 129. Brooks, op. cit., pp. 39, 175.

rewarded every fascist who had contributed to the seizure of power. In 1927 the Italian foreign ministry was fascistized through Undersecretary Dino Grandi's institutional reform, in which the ministry also subsumed the *Fasci all'estero* (Fasci Abroad) as a strong cultural propaganda tool abroad. This organization was originally founded by Giuseppe Bastianini, a radical fascist at that time, who even advocated exporting fascist revolution. Nonetheless, his ideas of "imperial patriotism" and "Fascist International" were rejected by Benito Mussolini, who postponed provocative propaganda for the sake of foreign relations and the emigration problem in the 1920s. Accordingly, Bastianini was removed as the head of the *Fasci all'estero*. As Grandi also supported Mussolini's purge of Bastianini, who was his political rival, it was only after Grandi was dismissed that Bastianini became undersecretary for foreign affairs.[4]

Even though the *Fasci all'estero* was a center of Fascist culture abroad, Grandi and Bastianini had little contact with Fascist intellectuals. Neither did Count Galeazzo Ciano, who was the minister of press and propaganda and later, the foreign minister, signing cultural treaties with the Axis powers and establishing strong intellectual connections. In addition to the power struggle inside the regime, government corruption, which did not often occur in Japan before the war, was so entrenched in fascist Italy that personal contacts mattered more than theoretical thinking.[5]

[4]Luca De Caprariis, "'Fascism for Export'? The Rise and Eclipse of the Fasci Italiani all'Estero," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 35 (2000), 156, 166, 167–169, 172, 173, 178. Matteo Pretelli, *Il fascismo e gli italiani all'estero* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2010), pp. 34, 103–104. Emilio Gentile, "La politica estera del partito fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei Fasci italiani all'esetro (1920–1930)," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. XXVI, No. 6 (1995), 935. Giampiero Carocci, *La politica estera dell'Italia fascista (1925–1928)* (Bari: Laterza, 1969), p. 28. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO371/14159, W1094/1094/36 (1929/1/31). TNA, FO371/14384, C172/172/19 (1929/12/20). TNA, FO371/15232, C278/278/19 (1931/1/3).

[5]Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma (hereafter ACS), Segretaria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato (hereafter SPDCR), B37, F Bastianini, s.n., s.d., Lo sfacciato nepotismo di S. Ecc. Bastianini. The latest books in English on fascist intellectuals also did not throw light on their cultural relationship with the Italian Foreign Ministry. Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). A. James Gregor, *Mussolini's Intellectuals: Fascist Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Recent works focus more on culture, such as images, arts and literature, than on foreign policy. Riccardo Bottoni (A cura di), *L'Impero fascista: Italia ed Etiopia (1935–1941)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008). Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). The following book covers

The most aggressive instigator of pro-German and racist policy in Italy was another fascist sub-leader, Roberto Farinacci. He organized a racist campaign whose target was changed from "Jewish bolshevism" and "non-Aryans" after his visit to the Nazi party rally in 1938. Nevertheless, Farinacci's secretary was Jewish, which Ciano cynically suggested should have been considered by foreigners as an Italian lack of sincerity. In fact, Farinacci utilized the anti-Jewish campaign to exclude moderates from the power center.[6]

Japanese and Italian diplomats resorted to the expedient of using ideology more pragmatically than systematically. The ideological element did not determine their foreign policies but gave them convenient tools with which to justify their policies.[7] Here three important factors are addressed: fascism, racism and anti-communism. First, in terms of Italo-Japanese relations, fascism was a common point of reference. Even so, the diplomats in both countries were aware of its negative implications. Second, in comparison with Nazism, racism held a double meaning for Japan and Italy: while each nation strove to display its superiority in its region, a deep antagonism between "yellow" and "white" underlay the Axis. Third, anti-communism represented the sole ideology with which Japan, Italy and Germany were unequivocally aligned. It also nourished the general feeling of hatred for internationalism. These three factors illuminate the similarities and dissimilarities characteristic of the foreign policies of ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy.

the comparative literature of Japanese writers on the Sino-Japanese War and Italian writers on the Ethiopian War. Ken Ishida, *Fashisuto no Senso: Sekaishiteki Bummyaku de Yomu Echiopia Senso* (Tokyo: Chikura Shobo, 2011), pp. 143–200.

[6]Harry Fornari, *Mussolini's Gadfly: Roberto Farinacci* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), pp. 177, 179–186. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 146. Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti, F16–27, B24, F2, Note dell'Informazione diplomatica (17/2/1938). Giuseppe Bottai, *Diario, 1935–1944*, ed. Giordano Bruno Guerri (Milano: Rizzoli, 1983), p. 128. Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question in Italy, 1922–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 397.

[7]Even though Konoe, Matsuoka, Mussolini, and Ciano made ideological declarations during the time of aggressive expansion, their idea of establishing regional hegemony was too megalomaniac to materialize. Frattollio, op. cit., pp. 14, 24, 27. Aristotle A. Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 118, 133, 150, 153–154.

## 2.1 Fascism as a Point of Reference

The first factor, fascism, was controversial in Japan. For example, Koki Hirota was considered to bear responsibility for promoting the "totalitarian trends" in Japan in the late 1930s and was executed as a Class A war criminal after the war. He studied at the private school of *Genyosha* (Dark Ocean Society), the parent body of Japanese fascism, as it has been called. The *Genyosha*, founded in 1881, supported Japanese expansionism in East Asia and included prominent ultra-nationalists such as Mitsuru Toyama. However, it is comparable to the *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana* (Italian Nationalist Association), an old-fashioned imperialist group, rather than to the *fasci di combattimento* (ex-combatant leagues), some of whom even stressed libertarian ideals. Japanese fascist movements, basically, did not emphasize dictatorship, since they did not assume "the absolute value entity" of the emperor gave him the power of a decision-making agent who enjoyed subjective freedom.[8] Thus, lacking clear decisions from the emperor, Hirota played an ambiguous role expanding military campaigns against neighboring countries in East Asia. Although Hirota himself did not take much positive initiative, his personal background and right-wing education cultivated his air of magnanimity toward most of the internal requests for an aggressive foreign policy.

The Italian ambassador to Japan, Giacinto Auriti, reported in 1932 a rumor that a fascist regime would be established in order to overcome the isolated position of Japan after the Manchurian Incident. Yet he denied the possibility of such a regime in Japan because the Italian regime had not won great popularity among the Japanese masses.[9] Those who were regarded as influential "protectors of fascism," the vice president of the Privy Council, Kiichiro Hiranuma, and the war minister, Sadao Araki, asserted that fascism was out of step with the "spirit of the Meiji emperor," who was the founder of the modern Japanese imperial

[8] Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, expanded ed. by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, c1963, 1969), p. 16. Cf. Ibid., pp. 19–20, 353–354, 360. Hirota Koki Denki Kankokai, ed., *Hirota Koki* (hereafter *Hirota*) (1966; rpt. Fukuoka: Ashi Shobo, 1992), pp. 8–10. Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (New York: Vintage Books, c1982, 1983), p. 35. R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 8, 122.

[9] ASMAE, Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Giappone, B3, F5, N. 91/58 (2/2/1932).

system.[10] The word *fascism* contradictorily functioned in Japan as the litmus test for right-wing thought whether the idea was of foreign origin or purely Japanese.[11]

Yosuke Matsuoka, diplomat and politician, and later the foreign minister concluding the Tripartite Alliance in 1940, was a peculiar figure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. On numerous occasions, he was considered to be a fanatical ultra-nationalist. He often harshly criticized Western democracies and defended Japan's invasion of Manchuria. Matsuoka served as chief delegate at the final discussions of the Manchurian question and delivered a speech before the Extraordinary Assembly of the League of Nations on December 8, 1932, announcing that "some of the people in Europe and America may wish even to crucify Japan in the twentieth century. Gentlemen, Japan stands ready to be crucified! But we do believe, and firmly believe, that, in a very few years, world opinion will be changed and that we also shall be understood by the world as Jesus of Nazareth was."[12]

After his haughty speech, criticized by the Western press, Matsuoka traveled to Italy with the purpose of asking the fascist government to vote for Japan in the League of Nations. He even visited the grave of Mussolini's parents "to express his respect for Mussolini's mother who gave birth to the great man." Matsuoka interviewed Mussolini on January 3, 1933, and wrote his impression: "I preached the essence of Japanese spirit to Prime Minister Mussolini. He agreed that the revolution could be accomplished not by material but by spirit. … I said to the Fascists in Rome that I met a man living with God who has nothing to fear."[13] In spite of Matsuoka's flattery and admiration for Mussolini,

[10] ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B3, F5, N. 373/214 (25/4/1932).

[11] Even in 1937, the year when the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded, the word *fascio* was considered alien, evil and prejudicial to Japanese politics. Kumao Harada, *Saionji-ko to Seikyoku*, Vol. 6, pp. 133, 195, 240.

[12] Natsumi Takeuchi, ed., *Matsuoka Zenken Dai-Enzetsu-shu* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1933), p. 28.

[13] *Tokyo Nichi-Nichi*, 12/1/1933. ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B5, F1, Rapporti politici (12/1/1933). Cf. David J. Lu, *Agony of Choice: Matsuoka Yosuke and the Rise and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1880–1940* (Lanham, ML: Lexington Books, 2002), pp. 84–85, 88. Matsuoka also met German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath in November 1932 on the way to Geneva. Neurath noted that Matsuoka was very energetic and stood out among other Japanese who "spoke in the oriental roundabout way." Politisches Archiv, Auswärtigen Amt (hereafter PAAA), R28553, RM 1158 (10/11/1932).

on February 24, 1933, the League Assembly adopted the Lytton report statements to which only Japan was opposed.

Another eccentric politician who met Mussolini was Seigo Nakano, the founder of the Japanese fascist party, the *Tohokai* (Eastern Association), whose members wore black shirts. He brought a message from Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe to Mussolini in December 1937. Ciano noted in his diary that, according to Nakano, Japan would not be able to have a friendship with "the Jewish-British plutocracy," which hindered newly emerging imperial powers such as Japan and Italy.[14] Coming back from Europe, on March 13, 1938, Nakano gave a speech stressing his sympathy with Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, who were "political men" reconstructing the world order and different from the Japanese elite climbing the bureaucratic career ladder.[15] Even pro-fascist figures such as Matsuoka and Nakano saw ideology as a means to an end with the ultimate objective of shaking the establishment, at home and abroad.

On the other hand, a report from the Italian Embassy in Japan three days before the May 15 Incident in 1932 accurately analyzed that Japanese fascist groups were essentially reactionary and degraded their patriotism to mere crimes of individual violence and political assassination. It also pointed out that the term *fascism* was overused as a synonym of *anti-parliamentarianism* and had become a target of criticism in Japan. The report judged it wrong in itself to compare the Japanese movements with Italian fascism.[16] Also biased by cultural prejudice, in July 1936, Auriti observed: "… nothing but force and military success could profoundly impress such a warlike people."[17]

Having experienced Japan's attack against Shanghai in 1932, Ciano, too, saw through "the deceitful ideology of emancipation of Asia by Japan." During his stay in China as a diplomat from 1927 to 1933, Ciano sympathized more with China than with Japan.[18] He even

[14]Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943* (hereafter Ciano, *Diario*), a cura di Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1980), p. 47.

[15]Yasuo Nakano, *Seijika Nakano Seigo*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shinkokaku Shoten, 1971), pp. 285–287. Nakano committed suicide after a severe interrogation by military police because of his maneuvering against the Tojo government in 1943.

[16]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B3, F1, N. 438/251 (12/5/1932).

[17]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B13, F1, N. 496/212 (2/7/1936).

[18]ASMAE, AP, Cina, B11, Telesp. 79 (5/2/1932); Telesp. 73 (7/2/1932). Ciano was chairperson of the Committee of Representatives at Shanghai and sent reports on the Shanghai Incident in February 1932, criticizing Japan's unlawful military operation and

observed that the Executive Committee of the *Kuomintang* (Nationalist Party) shared many commonalities with the Fascist Grand Council. In fact, Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi)[19] himself referred to fascist political theory and admitted its efficiency of governance in 1931. Moreover, the Blue Shirt organization founded immediately after the first Shanghai Incident of 1932 was once regarded as the equivalent of the fascist militia movement. Although China at the time had dictatorial tendencies, the Italian ambassador to China reported in 1934 that the analogy with fascism was not sustainable unless the movement in China was more organized and defined.[20]

In comparison to the German ambassadors to Japan and China, the Italian diplomats, even including Ciano during his service in China, were more neutral and less ideological. The German foreign ministry, as a whole, had to face the problem in its general struggle against Nazi foreign organizations as well as in the formulation of a pro-Chinese policy against the pro-Japanese policy of Joachim von Ribbentrop.[21] On the one hand, Herbert von Dirksen, the German ambassador to Japan, had joined the Nazi party by 1936. He held the "Nazi revolution" in high esteem for having radically changed the *Machtfaktor* (power factor). Dirksen thought the *Weltpolitik* (world politics) of Germany and Japan were moving in a similar direction and there was no reason to deny a cooperation between the two countries.[22] Oskar P. Trautmann, the German ambassador to China, on the other hand, was so antipathetic to Nazi ideology that he refused to make the "Heil Hitler" salute. Trautmann wrote to Dirksen that Germany had no use for Japan, whose interest in suppressing China contradicted Germany's open door

reign of terror. Ibid., B10, Cmd. 4040, Miscellaneous No. 5 (1932), League of Nations Correspondence and Resolutions respecting Events in Shanghai and Neighbourhood, Feb.–Mar. 1932.

[19]The spelling of Chinese names will be in accordance with those of Western documents of the 1930s.

[20]ASMAE, AP, Cina, B2, F1, Telesp. 207244 (1931/2/28). Giorgio Borsa, "Tentativi di penetrazione dell'Italia fascista in Cina: 1932–1937," *Il Politico*, Vol. 44 (1979), 414–415. Koichi Nomura, *Shokaiseki to Motakuto* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), pp. 190–191.

[21]John P. Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern Crisis, 1931–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 4–5.

[22]TNA, GFM33/4811, M336/M014490-014495 (2/3/1934).

policy toward East Asia.[23] The Nazi ideological confrontation was not only conspicuous outside Germany but also inside the regime, whereas Japanese ideology was too ambiguous even for Japanese ultra-nationalists to clarify anything more than their personal attitudes.

In spite of the negative reports on the Japanese affiliation with fascism, when the Axis extended to Japan seemed to counterbalance the Western democracies, on October 6, 1937, Mussolini did not hesitate to proclaim that "Japan was not 'formally' fascist, but their anti-Bolshevist stance, direction of policy and people's style bear resemblance to a number of fascist states."[24] He defined *fascism* as "organized and centralized authoritarian democracy based on nation." Still, he acknowledged that each nation had its "own" fascism.[25] While the core ideology of the regime was used to suit the founders' convenience, most Japanese traditional diplomats apprehended the meaning of Italian fascism pragmatically.

Just as Winston Churchill had appraised Mussolini as a "necessary antidote" to Russian communism in 1920s,[26] many actors in the Japanese foreign ministry viewed Mussolini in the same way. Naotake Sato, the former ambassador to France from 1933 to 1936 and foreign minister in 1937, was known as a pro-Western liberal. He wrote, even after World War II, that Mussolini had saved Europe from bolshevization and carried out social reform for public welfare. However, in Sato's opinion, the dictator was often possessed by the idea of exhibiting his strength internally and externally to consolidate his regime.[27] Although Foreign Minister Sato confirmed the significance of the German-Japanese Agreement on March 6, 1937, the German ambassador to Tokyo regretted that Sato was more eager to improve relations with Britain and even with Russia than with the Axis.[28]

[23] Fox, op. cit., pp. 5–6. TNA, GFM33/4811, M336/M014496-014504 (29/3/1934).

[24] Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* (hereafter O. O.), a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, Vol. XXIX (Firenze: La Fenice, 1959), p. 1.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Gaetano Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (London: Gollancz, 1953), p. 281. See also *The Times*, 21/1/1927.

[27] Naotake Sato, *Kaiko Hachijunen* (Tokyo: Jiji Tsushinsha, 1963), pp. 289–290.

[28] *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945* (hereafter ADAP), C-VI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), Nrn. 250, 294. *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* (hereafter FRUS), 1937-III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 84, 100. The following comment of the American Ambassador

Yotaro Sugimura, deemed a pro-Western liberal, too, was nominated to the Secretariat of the League of Nations in 1926 and collaborated on negotiations for the settlement of the Manchurian Incident with Matsuoka from 1932 to 1933. In order to improve the deteriorated relations with Italy he was appointed as ambassador to Italy from 1934 to 1937 and succeeded Sato in France from 1937 to 1938. In 1933 Sugimura described fascism as a form of corporatism similar to bolshevism in its rejection of parliamentary representatives. From his perspective, democracy popularized politics, which made Mussolini a modern hero due to his image as an instigator of continual revolution.[29]

Shigeru Yoshida, as ambassador to Italy from 1931 to 1932 and to Britain from 1936 to 1938, viewed Italian fascism through a Japanese lens. From his viewpoint, Mussolini's dictatorship was a consequence of Italy's hardship caused by military defeat, diplomatic failure and economic difficulties relating to World War I. Yet, to Yoshida, fascism seemed unsuited to the historical conditions in Japan. For his part, neither fascism nor communism was appropriate for Japanese society and politics.[30]

In contrast to the above three diplomats, Undersecretary Mamoru Shigemitsu regarded bolshevism, fascism and democracy as supranationalistic ideologies that crossed national borders. He conjectured that they were three contestants that competed to outdo each other for state control. While Mussolini considered war a test of national character that gave people the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities, Shigemitsu was more interested in how ideology could play an effective role in foreign policy.[31] Although Mussolini, too, adopted a pragmatic standpoint similar to the traditional Japanese diplomats, his notion of

to Japan, Joseph Grew, might be pertinent: "It would be as absurd to brand all anti-fascist states as 'communist' states as to include all dictatorships or states where the military party is in the supremacy as 'fascist' states." Ibid., p. 614.

[29]Yotaro Sugimura, *Kokusai Gaiko Roku* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1933), pp. 192–195, 202, 215.

[30]Shigeru Yoshida, *Yoshida Shigeru Shokan* (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1994), p. 631.

[31]Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo (hereafter JFMA), A. 2. 0. 0. X1, Shigemitsu Taishi no Oshu Houkoku, "Oshu no Seikyoku Kore ni Taisuru Teikoku no Chii" (1/3/1937). Takeda, op. cit, pp. 117–118. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1: *Gli anni del consenso 1929–1936* (Torino: Einaudi, 1974), p. 339.

fascism was more comprehensive than Shigemitsu's view of fascism as a mere tool.

Japanese political actors tended to divide ideology into the two extremes of purified spiritualism and cynical pragmatism. In Japan, the abstract meaning of "spirit" concealed the real nature of expansionism, while ideological interpretation swayed opportunistically as the internal and external atmosphere changed, except in the case of Japan's own ideological core of *kokutai* (sacred national polity).[32] From the Italian perspective, even though fascism was recognized as varying under different circumstances, the Japanese idea of fascism was too naive to allow the formation of an ideological common front with Italy.

## 2.2 Racism as a Hierarchical Prejudice

The second factor, racism, featuring prominently in recent comparative studies, is often believed to be one of the main characteristics of fascism: ultra-nationalists in Japan, fascists in Italy, and National Socialists in Germany all claimed that their own race was homogeneous, pure, and superior. Social Darwinism, interpreted as a racial struggle for survival, motivated and justified all three nations' attempts to conquer "inferior" races. Although describing the common features of fascist racism is relatively straightforward, scholars wishing to analyze racism comparatively face two particular problems.[33]

First, taking Nazism as the extreme example, it is easy to fall prey to the temptation to see racism in ultra-nationalists in Japan and fascist Italy as relatively mild.[34] Yet if the notion of racism in the Axis countries is

[32] Cf. Klaus Antoni, "*Karagokoro*: Opposing the 'Chinese Spirit': On the Nativistic Roots of Japanese Fascism," in E. Bruce Reynolds, ed., *Japan in the Fascist Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 62–63.

[33] A more detailed analysis of racism appears in the following works. Ken Ishida, "Racisms Compared: Fascist Italy and Ultra-Nationalist Japan," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2002), 380–391. Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 90, 210. Martin, op. cit., p. 171. MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 63–66, 70–72. Kallis, op. cit., pp. 42–52.

[34] See, e.g., Brooker, op. cit., p. 296. Martin, op. cit., p. 177. Kallis, op. cit., p. 45. See also Renzo De Felice, *Rosso e nero*, ed. Pasquale Chessa (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 1995), pp. 149–163.

allowed to move beyond anti-Semitism, to include anti-African, anti-Asian, anti-Arab and even anti-white sentiments, the comparative basis of racism in the interwar period changes fundamentally. As racism in general is too broad to investigate effectively, this chapter concentrates on racism evidenced by foreign policy, attempting to analyze xenophobia against Africans, Asians and Whites, at the time of the Ethiopian War. Since racism was not a systematic part of ultra-nationalist Japanese or fascist Italian ideologies, in contrast to Nazism, it is important to compare specific fields influenced by racist ideas, rather than the ideas directly.

Second, theories of racism have been so historically and culturally oriented that their analyses of racism tend to emphasize the idiosyncrasies of each political system.[35] Explanations seeking to enumerate particular features easily fall into the tautology that racism can take as many different forms as history and culture. Instead, it would be more effective to use commonalities to scrutinize the relationship between various incarnations of fascist racism.

Racism is an important key in the observation of Italo-Japanese relations between 1934 and 1935. In the first half of 1934 there was an attempt to arrange a marriage between a relative of Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie and a daughter of a Japanese viscount, but their engagement was cancelled because of Italian objections. Because Haile Selassie used the Japanese Imperial Constitution as a model for Ethiopia and sent a mission to Japan, not only Italy but also other Western powers became wary of future cooperation between the colored empires.[36] With a growing sense of crisis, Mussolini referred to Japanese economic competitiveness as the "yellow peril" in January 1934. After the Amau Statement,

[35] Brooker, op. cit., pp. 89–90, 149, 210. MacGregor Knox, "Expansionist Zeal, Fighting Power, and Staying Power in the Italian and German Dictatorships," in *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts*, ed. Richard Bessel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 119–123. See also Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (London: Duckworth, 2000), pp. 197, 313–314. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, pp. 253–256, 272–273. These two important biographies refer to racism not only as anti-white and anti-Semitic but also as a racial hierarchy. However, it would be necessary to clarify how one could differentiate the traditional prejudice of leaders from contemporary racism and how one could compare one racism with another.

[36] TNA, FO371/18032, J3147/1330/1 (21/12/1934); J1627/1330/1 (18/6/1934). Haile Sellassie I, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress 1892–1937: The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Sellassie I*, trans. and annotated by Edward Ullendorff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 208–209.

considered to be the Japanese Monroe Doctrine (see Chapter 3), Mussolini appealed for Western solidarity against this "yellow peril" and Japanese "vanity." His notion of *stirpe* (a spiritual and cultural hierarchy of races) also drove fascist Italy to demand *spazio vitale* (living space) in Ethiopia. According to Mussolini and many diplomats, Italy now needed to acquire a "place in the sun" just as other white races had accomplished.[37]

Similarly, the director of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Information Board, Eiji Amau, later claimed in an interview that Japan was "a spiritual leader pointing the way to the general reawakening and rehabilitation of the Asiatic people." At the same time, he also insisted on the Japanese right to expand in the name of "biological considerations," defending the application of force in dealing with China.[38]

During the first half of 1934, even before the preliminary negotiations for the London Naval Conference had taken place, reports from the Italian admiralty referred to the danger of the "yellow race" and saw the Japanese insistence on naval parity from the standpoint of a racial confrontation.[39] Although in practice the Italian navy was more concerned about naval parity with France, Mussolini mentioned the need to set up a barrier against the rising power of the Japanese Empire, framing his argument in racial terms.[40]

In this context of tension, the Japanese government decided to appoint a highly reputed diplomat in the League of Nations, Yotaro

[37]The spelling of the name of Amau (instead of Amo) will follow the spelling used in Western documents of the 1930s. *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 17/1/1934. Cf. *The Times*, 29/1/1934. PAAA, R85842, I. 519 (26/4/1934). Kallis, op. cit., p. 51. Ken Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats in the Ethiopian War: The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Fascist Italy," *Hogaku Zasshi* of Osaka City University, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1996), 1003.

[38]PAAA, R85844, J Nr. 3574 (1/10/1934).

[39]Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, Roma, Fondo: Archivio di Base, 3182/6, No. 224 (G/3/2/II) (24/3/1934); 3191/1, No. 380 U.T. (21/6/1934).

[40]Ibid., 3278/6, No. 381 U.T. (23/6/1934). PAAA, R85842, I. 519 (26/4/1934). Salvatore Minardi, *Il disarmo navale italiano (1919–1936): Un confronto politico-diplomatico per il potere marittimo* (Roma: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1999), pp. 307–313. Mussolini later supported the Japanese proposal at the naval conference in order to profit from its threatening position against Britain. Valdo Ferretti, *Il Giappone e la politica estera italiana 1935–41* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1983), p. 96.

Sugimura, as ambassador to Italy in May 1934.[41] In contrast, in September 1934, Admiral Nobumasa Suetsugu, an influential voice against the naval treaties and later, home minister, claimed that unequal treaties had been imposed by the white race against Japan, and that it was Japan's duty to liberate the yellow race from this oppression through the divine principle of the "peace-maintaining" empire. In the course of negotiations, the Japanese navy insisted on claiming naval equality with the United States and Britain.[42]

Japan's relations with Italy became more complex, especially after the Wal Wal incident in December 1934, when Japanese right-wing groups formed a movement to raise money to aid Ethiopia. One member in particular, Mitsuru Toyama, was a well-known ultra-nationalist and leader of the *Kokuryukai* (Black Dragon Society), with whom Foreign Minister Koki Hirota also had a connection.[43] Another right-wing group, the *Daiajiashugi Kyokai* (Great Asianism Association), also supported Ethiopia and counted many influential members including Yosuke Matsuoka.[44] In terms of the Asian perspective, Matsuoka stated that the Japanese and Chinese are "different races," commenting that the Japanese were far superior.[45] In a speech delivered on August 27, 1934, Matsuoka urged that Japan should advance with a keen awareness of the "great Japanese race" countervailing Chinese and Western deviousness.[46]

Because many Japanese newspapers also criticized the government's foreign policy in the Italo-Ethiopian disputes, on July 17, 1934, Hirota finally denied and modified the claims of the Japanese *chargé d'affairs* to Rome, who had said that the Japanese government had no political interests in Ethiopia (see Chapter 3).[47] Consequently,

[41] PAAA, R85843, I. 519 II (24/5/1934).

[42] *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, 21/9/1934. TNA, CAB29/147, N. C. M. (35), 9th meeting (27/11/1934).

[43] JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/I 1-2, Vol. 1, No. 1442 (5/6/1935).

[44] Iwane Matsui, the head of the association and later the responsible general for the Nanking atrocity, proclaimed that its aim was to spread Japanese ideals abroad, and especially to guide China in "the right direction." Takashi Okakura, *Echiopia no Rekishi: "Shiba no Joou no Kuni" kara "Akai Teikoku" Hokai made* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1999), p. 250.

[45] *New York Times*, 29/4/1934.

[46] Yosuke Matsuoka, *Showa Ishin* (Tokyo: Daiichi Shuppansha, 1938), p. 73.

[47] Masanori Taura, "Ie-Funso to Nihon-gawa Taio," *Nihon Rekishi*, No. 526 (1992), 80–83. ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B10, F1, Telegr. P. 1180 R/174 (I/7/1935). Ibid., F2, Telesp. 228825 (23/8/1935).

the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* lamented, on the front page, the "unbounded aims of Japanese imperialism, gathering all the colored races against whites in Europe and America." It then praised Mussolini's firm stand against the concealed expansionist intention of the *gialli di Tokio* (yellows of Tokyo).[48] In Italy, numerous street demonstrations and the inflammatory claims of the newspapers over this issue evidenced serious racial hatred.[49] The Japanese newspaper *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* criticized Mussolini for ordering Italian newspapers to attack Japan, and for turning the Italo-Ethiopian dispute into a form of racial antagonism in order to make Britain and France support Italian foreign policy.[50]

Although Italian diplomats were not as racist as the fanatic fascists influenced by Nazi Germany, their attitudes were prepossessed by the typical imperialistic attitude of "civilizing mission." Undersecretary Fulvio Suvich, in his memoirs, describes Ethiopians as nothing but "barbarians."[51] Speaking of the Japanese, by contrast, in October 1935, Suvich emphasized that Italians did not confuse Asians with "the savages of Africa." In addition, facing the economic sanctions imposed by the League of Nations, he asked the Japanese about the possibility of increasing oil exports to Italy the following month.[52] Most diplomats frequently changed their racial stances in relation to other international factors, but they resorted to their feelings of racial prejudice when it suited them.

Throughout 1935, Pompeo Aloisi, the head of the Italian delegation to the League of Nations, continually tried to expel Ethiopia from the League for its "backwardness." He disagreed that Ethiopia should enjoy the same rights as "civilized nations," and even after the massive use of poison gas, he proclaimed that Italy was spreading "freedom and civilization" to the Ethiopians.[53] Though the Japanese Embassy in Rome

[48] *Corriere della sera*, 23/7/1935.

[49] JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/I 1-2, Vol. 1, No. 86 (23/7/1935). ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B10, F2, Telegr. P. 1322 R/C (23/7/1935). FRUS, 1935-I, p. 613. TNA, FO371/19120, J3192/1/1 (26/7/1935).

[50] *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 24/7/1935.

[51] Fulvio Suvich, *Memorie, 1932–1936*, a cura di Gianfranco Bianchi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 291.

[52] Ferretti, op. cit., pp. 44, 56. ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B10, F1, Colloquio con l'Ambasciatore del Giappone (22/11/1935).

[53] Francis P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 641–642, 680. George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*

approached Aloisi, who had previously served as the Italian ambassador to Japan, in an attempt to improve the Italo-Japanese relationship, there was little sign of sympathy on his part.[54]

Raffaele Guariglia, chief of the Department of Ethiopian Affairs, was another strong advocate of Italian expansionism in Ethiopia. He wrote a two-volume memorandum for Aloisi, accusing Ethiopia of "cruelty, barbarity and injustice" in order to justify to the League of Nations Italian aggression in Ethiopia. Guariglia also dreamed of a glorious victory in a war against Ethiopia, an opportunity to avenge the disgrace of the Italian defeat at Adowa in 1896.[55]

Mamoru Shigemitsu, undersecretary of the Japanese foreign ministry, similarly wrote in a secret report of August 1935 that Japanese economic expansion would contribute to the emancipation of the "savages" and raise the position of colored races. Needless to say, such arguments took for granted that within this racial group the Japanese would assume a position at the top of the hierarchy, and would have priority in terms of economic penetration and political dominance. Contesting the whites on one hand, they formulated a new racism discriminating against the "inferior" coloreds on the other.[56] However, such frank remarks by Shigemitsu and Matsuoka were rather extraordinary in comparison to other Japanese diplomats.

The new racism of the Japanese Empire against the traditional racism of white supremacy expressed itself in ways that caused Western

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 311. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter DBFP), 2-XIV (London: HMSO, 1976), Nos. 151, 330, 537. *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935-II (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 180–181, 342–350.

[54] Ferretti, op. cit., pp. 26, 45, 64. Aloisi also explicitly blamed the "Jews and Freemasons in the League of Nations for anti-Italian attitudes during the Ethiopian War." Pompeo Aloisi, *Journal* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 326, 330.

[55] *League of Nations Official Journal*, November 1935, 1355–1594. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922–1946* (hereafter Guariglia, *Ricordi*) (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), pp. 226–227, 259–261. Id, *Ambasciata in Spagna e primi passi in diplomazia*, a cura di Ruggiero Moscati (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1972), p. XII. Baer, op. cit., pp. 21–22.

[56] JFMA, A. 2. 0. 0. X1, "Kokusai Kankei yori Mitaru Nihon no Sugata" (1/8/1935).

imperialists much anxiety.[57] For example, even before the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, a certain number of Japanese, especially those inspired by the propaganda of right-wing groups, volunteered to help the sister empire of the colored race in Africa. Although the Japanese government barred these volunteers from making the voyage, the Italian authorities were sensitive to false rumors that Japanese troops had landed at ports close to Ethiopia.[58]

Such perceptions and events exhibited the adaptation of means to a political end. Mussolini manipulated racial hatred to mobilize the Italian people for the Ethiopian War, as well as to persuade the old colonial powers that he was simply maintaining white supremacy. For their part, the Japanese leaders also tried to convince people of the divine principle of "liberating" colored races, in order to give grounds for their own invasion of Asian countries.

In sum, different types of racism in Italy and Japan aggravated Italo-Japanese relations and increased the tension of an impending international crisis. While Italian racism was based on the traditional notion of a "civilizing mission," albeit tainted with a fascist bellicose tone, Japanese racism amalgamated two contradictory ideas: emancipation from the whites and domination of other "inferior coloreds." Moreover, in attempts to claim equal rights with other imperial powers, both forms of racism stimulated and justified Japan and Italy's desire for expansive foreign policies.

Unlike Nazi Germany, ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy did not have an institution like Alfred Rosenberg's *Außenpolitische Amt*

[57]TNA, FO371/19118, J3044/1/1 (22/7/1935). TNA, FO371/19123, J3540/1/1 (5/8/1935).

[58]ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B13, F10, Telesp. 226730 (7/8/1935). Ibid., B13, F18, Telesp. 231542 (10/9/1935); Telesp. 204506 (6/2/1936). The National Archives of the United States, Washington, DC, Collection of Italian Military Records, 1935–1943, Microcopy T-821, Reel 354, Comando Superiore A.O., Ufficio Informazioni, n. 8891 (11/10/1935), 125. The Japanese foreign ministry and military repeatedly claimed that neither soldiers nor arms were sent from Japan to Ethiopia. ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B10, F2, No. 195 (12/6/1936), No. 224 (26/6/1936). Ironically, the last Western country exporting arms to Ethiopia was Germany, which even trained Austrian volunteers who wanted to fight against Italy in Ethiopia. Manfred Funke, *Sanktionen und Kanonen. Hitler, Mussolini und der internationale Abessinienkonflikt 1934–1936* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1970), S. 37. TNA, FO371/19121, J3343/1/1 (27/7/1935). ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B13, F9, Telesp. N. 436j/506 (26/6/1935); Telesp. 223193 (12/7/1935).

*der NSDAP* (Foreign Political Department of the Nazi Party), which attempted to organize a training center to systematically teach diplomats the racial *Weltanschauung* (worldview) of Nazi ideology.[59] However, the period from 1934 to 1935 represented a watershed for Japan and Italy, since both began to lose the balance between realistic diplomacy and a fanatical ideology that included racism. Whereas racism functioned internally to defend their aggressive foreign policies, it undermined their rational calculations in international politics.

In general, racism hindered cordial relations not only between Japan and Italy but also among all the Axis powers. Nazi racial elitism was directed against Italians, too, such that Mussolini was obsessed by an inferiority complex, particularly in relation to military efficacy. He insisted on keeping Italians fighting to show that they were effective warriors rather than mere "mandolin players."[60] The Japanese ambassador to Berlin repeatedly asked whether racial laws against *Farbigen* (coloreds) were applicable to the Japanese. The Japanese warned the German foreign ministry that German–Japanese relations would be seriously affected if the Japanese "race" was discriminated against.[61]

Mussolini's intentional deployment of racism against "the black and the yellow" during the pre-Ethiopian War period made it easier to adopt anti-Semitic legislation in 1938 when he tried to show solidarity with Nazi Germany. Both Mussolini and Ciano used Farinacci, the strongest advocate of anti-Semitism, to accelerate the imposition of the Axis on the Italian people. Nevertheless, Mussolini and even Ciano, who was considered to be a pro-Axis foreign minister, did not entirely trust Farinacci. Their policies and stances on the Axis varied, in subtle ways, depending on the internal reaction and international situation.[62]

On the other hand, the most provocative pro-Axis diplomat, Toshio Shiratori, also espoused Nazi anti-Semitism, which seemed strange to the Japanese. At the same time, his clique, known as "reformists" in the

[59] Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, NS 43/49, Denkschrift über das Außenpolitische Schulungshaus von Erwin Knauer.

[60] Kallis, op. cit., p. 40. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 115. Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, a cura di Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 452.

[61] PAAA, R28553, RM 1453 (20/10/1933); s. n. (11/10/1933). ADAP, C-IV, Nr. 69.

[62] Ken Ishida, *Chichukai Shin-Roma Teikoku eno Michi: Fashisuto Itaria no Taigaiseisaku 1935–39* (hereafter Ishida, *Chichukai*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), pp. 210–211.

foreign ministry, advocated liberation of the East from the West. They were also called the "Axis Group," which gathered about fifty members in the ministry and made a joint petition to Prime Minister Konoe to replace Kensuke Horinouchi with Shiratori as undersecretary in 1938. The traditional mainstream faction rejected the pressure and appointed Shiratori as ambassador to Italy in December 1938. Shiratori's group, which had once been powerful, was also purged in 1941 under the Hideki Tojo premiership by Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo, who had strongly objected to Nazi anti-Semitism.[63]

As far as racism is concerned, Italian actors possessed in common the traditional view of racial discrimination based on Western imperialism, whereas in Japan, ideological orientation often correlated with factional strife in a complex way. Although racism in Italy and Japan did not appear as a systematic element at the center of their ideological concern, as it did in Germany, it was important enough to prompt aggression against "inferior races" and to aggravate discrepancies even among the Axis powers. The notion of a "superior race" was intensified by Italy and Japan's victorious wars against Ethiopia and China, respectively, while their inferiority complexes in relation to advanced imperial powers drove both Italy and Japan to new military ventures and even to the most contradictory alliance with Nazi Germany, whose racist principles hardly promoted harmony with Italy and Japan, in an attempt to seek their dominant positions in a racial hierarchy.

## 2.3 Anti-communism as a Common Adhesive

The third factor, anti-communism, also had manifold aspects. As clearly seen above, fascism and racism did not tie the three Axis nations together, nor did they help to vindicate their aggressive foreign policies from the charges leveled at them by other countries. In order to develop

[63] Ryoichi Tobe, "Gaimusho Kakushin-ha to Shin-Chitsujo," in *Nihon no Kiro to Matsuoka Gaiko 1940–41*, ed. Kimitada Miwa and Ryoichi Tobe (Tokyo: Nansosha, 1993), pp. 123, 126, 135–136. Cf. Brooks, op. cit., pp. 160–164. Togo tried to avoid an intimate connection with Nazi Germany even when he was ambassador to Berlin. On the other hand, the German foreign ministry commented that many people in Japan did not have negative feelings about the racial question. One exception was Shigenori Togo, who was married to a German. Nobutoshi Hagiwara, *Togo Shigenori: Denki to Kaisetsu,* in *Gaisho Togo Shigenori*, Vol. II, ed. Togo Shigenori Kinenkai (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1985), pp. 214–216, 223–229, 235–236, 284. ADAP, C-II, Nr. 256.

*rapprochement* and to persuade others to regard them more favorably, Japan and Italy needed anti-communism. As a consequence, analyzing anti-communism can provide important points of comparison between both foreign ministries.

Three different aspects of anti-communism emerged in the Japanese and Italian foreign policies of that period. Both governments regarded the communist movement as an international network that combined its forces in an attempt to overthrow the existing world order, and both the governments, during the 1930s, used the first aspect, the "red" conspiracy theory, to criticize the League of Nations, which was said to be contaminated by communist influence. The second aspect involved launching anti-communist crusades through which the Japanese and Italian expansionists justified their military intervention, claiming they were emancipating China and Spain from communist control. The third aspect comprised the formation of a united front in opposition to the common enemy, driving all the neighboring countries to unite, internationally, against bolshevism. Initially, this movement included even Britain but later became absorbed into the Tripartite Alliance.

Before scrutinizing these three aspects in detail, it should be emphasized that the traditional diplomats in Japan and Italy committed themselves to adopting anti-communist foreign policies from the beginning, moving in a parallel direction to that of their governments. First, independently of ultra-nationalists and fascists, the traditional diplomats of both nations played an important role in internationalizing anti-communism, which not only led them to regard the Comintern and Soviet Union with utter contempt but also induced them to attack the League of Nations, which they perceived to be the Comintern and Soviet Union spearhead. Second, they surmised that communist agents had achieved dominance over China and Spain. Yet, their anti-communist sentiments were so vague that they could be utilized to launch an assault on specific political groups in China, Austria and Spain, as seen below. Third, diplomats in both Japan and Italy, especially, expected Britain to join their campaign against communism. However, they faced international isolation because of their aggressive intervention in China and Spain.

Mamoru Shigemitsu, who shaped Japanese diplomacy, tended to interpret the Chinese situation in the light of a communist plot. From the 1920s onward, he often viewed Chinese "revolutionary" diplomacy and anti-Japanese movements as a mere result of communist guidance. Accordingly, he dared to take a strong line deviating from Foreign

Minister Kijuro Shidehara's conciliatory diplomacy, which gave priority to the London Naval Treaty in 1930 over Chinese issues. Still, the Western powers considered Japan their bulwark against the spread of communism in East Asia even at the time of Manchurian crisis.[64]

The happy honeymoon of anti-communism between the Japanese traditional diplomats and Western democracies ended with the conclusion of the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact on November 25, 1936. Major General Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese military attaché in Berlin, was said to have largely carried on the negotiations with Germany. On the other side of the coin, mainstream diplomats in the German foreign ministry were not enthusiastic about the pact, while the ambassador to Britain, Ribbentrop, carried the project through. In fact, Ribbentrop and the Japanese army successfully pushed the Japanese foreign ministry to appoint Military Attaché Oshima as ambassador to Germany in October 1938. Although the Anti-Comintern Pact is often reckoned as a symbol of pro-Axis ultra-nationalist and Nazi foreign policy, traditional Japanese foreign ministry bureaucrats were involved in the affair.[65]

In January 1936, Hachiro Arita, who became foreign minister in April 1936, proposed to Undersecretary Shigemitsu and the ambassador to Germany, Kintomo Mushakoji, that Japan enter into political negotiations with Germany, whose interests against the Soviet Union corresponded with Japan's containment policy against that nation. During his brief return from Germany, Mushakoji also frequently discussed the matter with Undersecretary Shigemitsu, and both consented to form an anti-Soviet policy since it could satisfy the army, which sought to conspire with Nazi Germany. Foreign Minister Hirota (soon to become prime minister in March 1936) also, basically, agreed to the plan of creating an anti-Soviet and anti-communist agreement. Under Hirota's

[64] Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Showa no Doran*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1952), pp. 35, 50, 160–161, 168. Takeda, op. cit., pp. 74–75. Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933* (London: Hamilton, 1972), pp. 7, 53, 236, 299, 349, 358–359.

[65] Nobuo Tajima, *Nachizumu Kyokuto Senryaku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1997), pp. 144–151. Kumao Harada, op. cit., Vol. 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952), p. 18. Hachiro Arita, *Bakahachi to Hito wa Iu: Ichi Gaikokan no Kaiso* (hereafter Arita, *Bakahachi*) (Tokyo: Kowado, 1959), p. 90. Carl Boyd, *The Extraordinary Envoy: General Hiroshi Oshima and Diplomacy in the Third Reich, 1934–1939* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980), p. 68.

premiership in August 1936, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, in consultation with the military, framed the *Teikoku Gaiko Hoshin* (Imperial Foreign Policy Plan), which clearly supported cooperation with Germany to defend against Soviet promotion of communism.[66]

The *rapprochement* with Germany was not the sole factor in establishing anti-communist foreign policies. Although Italian Undersecretary Fulvio Suvich was tasked with protecting Austria against Germany, from 1933 to 1934 he tried to suppress Austrian socialists and encourage pro-fascist groups. Suvich succeeded in overthrowing Austrian parliamentary democracy and introducing a clerical authoritarian regime in Austria, which was soon replaced by another anti-communist force: his opponent, Nazi Germany.[67] This situation was similar to that of China, whose government Germany supported, and yet Japan attacked China, also in the name of anti-communism.

The more direct analogy to the Japanese invasion of China was the Italian armed intervention in Spain. Foreign Minister Ciano took the initiative of launching a fascist military campaign in the Spanish Civil War in July 1936. However, support to the Spanish insurgents had already been started, at least since the summer of 1933, by the Italian ambassador to Spain, Raffaele Guariglia, a traditional diplomat and strong advocate of Italian expansionism in Ethiopia. He actively carried out pro-fascism propaganda and an anti-French policy in Spain. Guariglia maneuvered to coordinate subversive activities against the Popular Front government among groups of Catholics, monarchists and the military, whose only common ground was anti-communism. He invited the founder of the Falange Española (Spanish fascist party), José Antonio Primo de Rivera, to Rome and arranged to consult over the uprising. Later, Italo Balbo,

[66] Hachiro Arita, *Hito no Me no Chiri wo Miru: Gaiko Mondai Kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1948), pp. 276–277. Tokushiro Ohata, "Nichidoku Bokyo Kyotei, Do Kyoka Mondai, 1935–1939," in *Taiheiyo Senso eno Michi*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1963), p. 21. Tajima, op. cit., pp. 119–122, 129–130. Seizo Arisue, "Sangoku Domei," in Syun'ichi Kase, et al., *Katari Tsugu Showashi: Gekido no Hanseiki*, Vol. 3 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1976), pp. 64–65.

[67] Österreichsches Staatsarchiv, Neue Politische Archiv, Wien, K84, No. 16/pol (15/2/1934). TNA, FO371/18345, R540/37/3 (25/1/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1541/1287/3 (3/3/1934). DBFP, 2-VI, No. 222. Suvich, op. cit., p. V. Michael Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 209, 212, 233.

a prominent fascist sub-leader, promised support to the plotters of a Spanish reactionary coup in the autumn of 1933.[68]

Anti-communist conspiracies were not the exclusive domain of ardent fascists but were entertained by many diplomats in both countries. Thus, it is important to understand the foreign ministries' ideological focus on anti-communism. The following sections will analyze the new development of anti-communism in the light of its above-mentioned three aspects in order to clarify Japanese and Italian diplomats' justification of their anti-communist policies.

### *2.3.1 Criticizing the League of Nations*

The first aspect of anti-communism in foreign policy was the "red" conspiracy theory which traditional diplomats most frequently used to criticize the League of Nations. After Japan attacked Manchuria in September 1931, it confronted the League with its "pro-China" policy. Italy bore the economic sanctions of the League against the invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935. Both foreign ministries devised measures to blame the League for their maltreatment. One of their important points was that communism influenced the League's intransigent stance.

Since the League of Nations continued to support China in the areas of technology, economy and finance, the Japanese foreign ministry became sensitive to such international "intervention." Undersecretary Shigemitsu criticized Ludwik Rajchman, director of the League's Health Section, who was regarded as a "communist agent." Shigemitsu was so persistent in accusing Rajchman not only of working, most effectively, as an adviser to the Chinese government but also of forging a bridgehead to the attainment of communist objectives.[69] Despite Rajchman's link with Soviet personalities, there is no decisive proof of his membership in the communist party. Rajchman certainly thought that Japan should be excluded from the reconstruction of China. British and French diplomats tried to distance themselves from Rajchman for the purpose

[68] Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 193–199, 202–206. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna e primi passi in diplomazia*, a cura di Ruggiero Moscati (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1972), pp. 265–266, 291–292, 302–324. John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 45, 48, 50–53.

[69] Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 94. TNA, FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (21/5/1934).

of persuading Japan of their sincerity in mutual cooperation. Even the League's secretariat attempted to assuage Japanese suspicions of international control over China.[70] Nevertheless, Shigemitsu detested the League, which "had become a quasi propaganda organ of the left."[71]

On the other hand, Sugimura in Geneva, who made every effort to find a solution to the Manchurian crisis, provided a more objective analysis. He considered the League's technical support to China, notwithstanding its financial difficulty, as a matter of course. The fact that the League's executive members, including Rajchman, had, at one point, decided to let China appeal to the League brought up the question of maintaining the authority of the League. Sugimura argued that the support had an anti-Japanese character from the beginning. He opposed any plan that would place China under international control.[72] In addition, the pseudo-parliamentary system of the League led Sugimura to become skeptical about equality between the great and small powers. He clearly stated that little mercy should be shown to the socialists of small countries in the League, who attempted to create a proletariat dictatorship leading the world to social anarchy.[73]

Facing economic sanctions in October 1935, Mussolini declared that the League's sanctions were in reality a "bolshevist plot" that would lead Europe into conflict. He ordered all the diplomatic missions abroad to disseminate propaganda criticizing the bolshevization of the League. The most effective propagandist was the Italian ambassador to Britain, Dino Grandi. He successfully instilled a sense of impending crisis among the British royal family and conservatives, contending that the League was spreading Soviet influence in the West. Grandi, in fact, knew that Anglo-Soviet collaboration to support the League had fallen through. The Soviet Union was concerned about the future of the League's collective security system and international solidarity because of the Japanese attack against it. In consequence, they strove to reinforce "the two

[70] Manabu Hamaguchi, "'Tairiku' niokeru Raihiman to Mone," *Gaiko Shiryo Kampo*, Vol. 12 (1998), 90, 92. Thorne, op. cit., p. 135. TNA, FO371/18097, F2696/107/10 (8/5/1934). TNA, FO371/18098, F3011/107/10 (17/5/1934).

[71] Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 131–132.

[72] ASMAE, AP, Cina, B4, Telesp. 71 (13/10/1931). Sugimura's dislike of Rajchman can be seen in the following document. JFMA, B. 1. 0. 0. X8. Vol. 2, No. 368, "Showa Kunenmatsu niokeru Oshu Kokusai Josei" (31/12/1934).

[73] Sugimura, op. cit., pp. 411, 422.

internationals, the League and Comintern" as well as to approach Britain once again.[74]

In November 1935, Renato Bova Scoppa, assistant secretary general and Italian delegate to the League, proposed to Mussolini that Italy should withdraw from the League. In Bova Scoppa's opinion, Britain and France would reach a compromise over the dispute in order to avoid a fatal blow to the League. Concurrently, he signed a joint memorandum with Guariglia and other traditional diplomats to improve Anglo-Italian relations even after Suvich's dismissal as undersecretary. Bova Scoppa's pragmatic attitude to the League was similar to that of Sugimura, vice secretary general of the League and also a traditional diplomat.[75] In September 1936, Bova Scoppa reported that the Soviet Union was appealing to small countries to help prevent Italy from invalidating Ethiopia's membership in the League, after Italy's conquest of Ethiopia. He pointed out that the League, moreover, had rapidly turned leftist for fear of the Soviet initiative in the Spanish Civil War. Bova Scoppa cautioned his home government about the resurgence of Russia as a new leader on the world stage in place of Britain and France, which had lost their authority in the League.[76]

By comparison with Japan, both Grandi and Bova Scoppa perceived the situation more calmly and realistically even though they were confronted with more serious difficulties than Japan. As far as the comments of traditional diplomats were concerned, Japan's accusation against the "red" League devolved into an ideological confrontation. Hence, Japan immediately withdrew from the League in March 1933, but Italy, despite the sanctions and harsh anti-League campaign by fascists, did not withdraw until December 1937. As the League of Nations became a serious hurdle in their return to international society, both Japan and Italy at first denounced it in the context of anti-communism, and then tried to get rid of the international system altogether.

[74] Renato Mori, *Mussolini e la conquista dell'Etiopia* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1978), pp. 189–190. Ferretti, op. cit., pp. 71–72.

[75] ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B29, F1, 1289/1184 (7/11/1935). Ambassador to Germany Bernardo Attolico also warned the foreign ministry that it should be interpreted as a weakness or sign of accepting the sanctions unless Italy broke relations with the League or withdrew from it. Ibid., 4167/1676 (12/11/1935).

[76] *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, 8-V (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1994), nn. 94, 100.

### 2.3.2 *Justifying Military Intervention*

The second aspect of Japan and Italy's anti-communist rhetoric—creating enemies in neighboring countries to justify military intervention—was controversial even among the diplomats in their own ministries. Moreover, invoking anti-communism as a pretext for Japanese and Italian intervention in China and Spain, respectively, was not sufficient to persuade another Axis partner: Nazi Germany. German Foreign Minister Konstantin Freiherr von Neurath was critical of Italy for signing a secret treaty with Spain in November 1936 because it preempted Germany by gaining a strategic advantage. As in the Ethiopian War, the German foreign ministry regarded the Spanish Civil War as a tool to separate Italy from the Anglo-French coalition and divert Italy's attention from Austria.[77]

Neurath also did not recognize Japan's claim that it invaded China for the sake of anti-communism, based on the spirit of the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact of November 1936. From the viewpoint of the German foreign ministry, Japanese action would bring about a result contrary to their purpose of preventing the spread of communism in China. Instead, it would weaken Chinese political consolidation and put that nation into the hands of the Soviet Union.[78] Moreover, there were diplomats in Japan and Italy who blamed their governments for military intervention.

Hirota's "three principles" for negotiating with China in October 1935 included the condition that China should cooperate with Japan in its fight against communism. On January 21, 1937, Foreign Minister Arita spoke before the House of Representatives, criticizing the "pro-communist policy of the Chinese Nationalist government." He explained that the reason for Japan's invasion of China on July 7, 1937, was because the Blue Shirts, Communist Party and other anti-Japanese groups imputed their failure to Japan.[79] While Japan's policy vis-à-vis

[77] ASMAE, Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti, Ufficio di Coordinamento (hereafter FGCLUC), F37-45, B9, G44, F1, Appunto per il Ministro (28/11/1936). ADAP, D-III, Nr. 142. Coverdale, op. cit., p. 405. ADAP, D-III, Nrn. 142, 157.

[78] ADAP, D-I, Nrn. 471–473.

[79] "Dai 70-kai Teikoku Gikai niokeru Arita Gaimudaijin Enzetsu," (21/1/1937) donated from the Japanese Foreign Ministry to the University of Tokyo Faculty of Law. Shigeharu Matsumoto, *Shanghai Jidai: Janarisuto no Kaiso*, Vol. 3 (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 1975), p. 128.

China was premised on "anti-communist cooperation," Japan made inroads into China on the pretext of struggling against communism. In fact, the Chinese government continually asked the Japanese in vain for concrete proposals on cooperation. Ideologically, the Kuomintang could afford to join the anti-communist front but was afraid of antagonizing the Soviet Union, whose support was essential for the Chinese Nationalist government.[80] On December 3, 1936, China at last asked Germany to issue a statement that the Chinese government had already made every effort to suppress communism within its borders.[81]

In May 1937, Itaro Ishii became director of East Asian affairs under Foreign Minister Naotake Sato. Ishii had graduated from a language school in Shanghai and worked for the South Manchuria Railway Company. His atypical background allowed Ishii to understand the Chinese viewpoint. Immediately after Japan opened hostilities in July 1937, he presented a petition to Foreign Minister Hirota against the mobilization of troops in order to curtail expansion of the war in China. Yet, in the cabinet meeting of July 11, 1937, Hirota readily gave his consent to send three divisions. In his diary, Ishii repeatedly deplored that it was "a calamity for Japan" to install such "an opportunistic and vacillating person" as foreign minister.[82] Ishii tried to restrain the dispatched divisions from declaring an "unwise statement of holy war against communism." As a consequence, he censured the government for destroying any chance of Japanese–Chinese "anti-communist cooperation" by launching its all-out war, which in turn brought about the Soviet-Chinese Non-Aggression Pact of August 21.[83]

After reading the script of Prime Minister Konoe's speech to the Diet, Ishii was deeply grieved by the situation. On August 31, 1937, he wrote in his diary: "Konoe proclaimed that he would punish and discipline China. In order to stop the anti-Japanese activities he would

[80]Toshikazu Inoue, *Kiki nonakano Kyocho Gaiko: Nicchu Senso niitaru Taigaiseisaku no Keisei to Tenkai* (Tokyo: Yamawaka Shuppansha, 1994), pp. 221, 275–276, 322–323. Matsumoto, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 183–184. Itaro Ishii, *Gaikokan no Issho* (hereafter Ishii, *Gaikokan*) (Tokyo: Chuko Bunko, 1986), p. 310. Nomura, op. cit., pp. 217–219.

[81]ADAP, C-VI, Nr. 75.

[82]Ishii, *Gaikokan*, p. 300. *Ishii Itaro Nikki* (hereafter *Ishii Nikki*), ed. Takashi Ito and Liu Jie (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993), pp. 167–168, 182.

[83]Ibid., pp. 185, 187.

beat them up to the end … What a disgusting wartime prime minister!"[84] In September, he discovered, in a Chinese communist manifesto, that Japanese military pressure, contrary to Japanese expectations of "anti-communist cooperation," had spurred China to communism. Ishii also hinted at the problem of the Japanese puppet government in North China, which he felt could turn into a second Spain. His analyses were, basically, on the mark, pointing out that the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact had originally ruptured Soviet-Japanese relations and aggravated Japan's relations with Britain and the United States.[85]

Similarly, Italy launched an anti-communist campaign before its military intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Wavering foreign policies without any fixed principle were embodied in abstract slogans such as "communism against European-Christian civilization," "Mediterranean Bolshevism against Latin sisters" and "anti-communist crusade." Nevertheless, when Italy unilaterally sent its troops to Spain at short notice in December 1936, even Nationalist Spain reacted negatively. In addition, since Italian fascist "volunteers" often treated their Spanish military comrades as "Ethiopians," the Italian forces became so isolated that they suffered a crushing defeat in Guadalajara in March 1937 against the international brigade of Garibaldi, which consisted of Italian leftist volunteers, aiding the Spanish Popular Front government.[86]

The ambiguity in the Italian anti-communist view of the Spanish Civil War was revealed in the appointment of the first ambassador to Nationalist Spain. In January 1937, Foreign Minister Ciano nominated the former ambassador to Brazil, Roberto Cantalupo, as ambassador to Nationalist Spain. Just as Suvich had, Cantalupo entered the fascist government from the Nationalist Party and in 1924 became undersecretary for the colonies, claiming the right of expansionism abroad. Ciano told Cantalupo that he was avoiding appointing a fanatic fascist as ambassador to Nationalist Spain. Ciano emphasized that he was only concerned about the bolshevization of Spain and was eager to protect Western civilization. According to Cantalupo, he accepted the nomination because

[84] Ibid., p. 188. Not only Ishii but also his predecessor, Morito Morishima, held in common severe criticism of Prime Minister Konoe and Foreign Minister Hirota. Morito Morishima, *Imbo Ansatsu Gunto: Ichi-Gaikokan no Kaiso* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1950), pp. 133–135.

[85] *Ishii Nikki*, pp. 198, 203, 212, 215.

[86] Ishida, *Chichukai*, pp. 102–106, 125–127, 132, 138–141, 168.

Ciano also acknowledged himself to be pro-British. In February 1937, Cantalupo left for Spain on the mission of helping Francisco Franco form a liberal and Catholic government for international cooperation. On his arrival, Cantalupo witnessed traditional royalists shouting repeatedly, "Viva Christ, King!"[87]

In March 1937, Cantalupo lodged a protest against the massive executions carried out under the Nationalist occupation. He requested that political trials should cease until the end of the civil war. At the same time, Cantalupo reported to Italy that the dispatched Italian soldiers were coldly greeted with indifference by the Spanish people. Moreover, he explained that most were "red" and only a part at the top was "white" in Spain. Both the Italian army and foreign ministry considered his report defeatist and accused him of becoming bolshevized. Cantalupo stayed in Spain for two months and was summoned home on March 31. In spite of the criticism and Ciano's objection, Cantalupo presented another report to Mussolini on April 5, asking Italy to reduce its military intervention in Spain and strive for a political solution because the war in Spain was dragging on. However, after the defeat of Guadalajara, Mussolini and Ciano firmly believed that the Italian soldiers should not retreat from Spain until they were victorious over the Soviets.[88]

While Japan and Italy attempted to use anti-communism as an excuse for continuing their military intervention, they became bogged down with long-drawn-out wars. In order to save face, both countries continued to deepen their commitment, based on domestic logic rather than international cooperation for anti-communism. Marginal diplomats, such as Ishii and Cantalupo, correctly disclosed the ideological falsification of a self-propagated chain reaction. Yet they could not influence the decision makers to change their foreign policies.

On the other hand, many diplomats, unlike Ishii and Cantalupo, accelerated ideological confrontation relating to the armed intervention. Yakichiro Suma was stationed in China from 1932 to 1937 and regarded himself a China specialist. He took every precaution against "red" Rajchman's connection with the anti-Japanese faction in the Chinese government.[89] Since Suma's manner was sometimes more intimidating

[87] Roberto Cantalupo, *Fu la Spagna* (Milano: Mondadori, 1948), pp. 62–63, 72–77, 98.

[88] Ibid., pp. 244–257. Coverdale, op. cit., pp. 271–273.

[89] TNA, FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (21/5/1934).

than the Japanese military, he was detested by the Chinese diplomatic sources.[90]

A paradoxical example might be the case of Bernardo Attolico, the ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1935 and to Germany from 1935 to 1940. He succeeded in concluding the Soviet-Italian Non-Aggression Pact in September 1933. Furthermore, Attolico was reckoned as an "anti-fascist" and actually hindered the Axis once from concluding the Tripartite Pact. Nevertheless, with all his self-confidence gained from being a Soviet specialist, in 1935 Attolico emphasized that it was intolerable to let Spain establish a communist republic. He did not hesitate to advocate dispatching troops to the Spanish Civil War and declared that Italy should support the Nationalists until Franco achieved victory.[91]

With the exception of non-conformist field observers such as Ishii and Cantalupo, vested interests in anti-communism restrained most diplomats from raising objections against imprudent military ventures.

### *2.3.3 Aligning Against Communism*

The third aspect of Japan and Italy's anti-communist foreign policy was concerned with a new alliance against bolshevism, which took contradictory approaches to the issue.

It is ironic that immediately after the Japanese foreign ministry decided to conclude the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact, it negotiated with Germany in the manner of "a vague engagement without limiting the matter."[92] In order to avoid a war against the Soviet Union, Foreign Minister Arita even contended that Soviet-Japanese

[90]Toshihiko Shimada and Masao Inaba, ed., *Gendaishi Shiryo*, Vol. 8: *Nicchu Senso*, No. 1 (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1964), pp. 404–418. Ishii, *Gaikokan*, pp. 238–240, 334. Matsumoto, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 248–249. TNA, FO371/18097, F2378/107/10 (26/4/1934). TNA, FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (21/5/1934). Even though Suma's activities were tied up with the military, he was too independent to be considered as a mere local branch of the military. Masataka Matsuura, *Zaikai no Seijikeizaishi: Inoue Junnosuke, Go Seinosuke, Ikeda Shigeaki no Jidai* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2002), pp. 183, 187. Liu Jie, "'Chugoku-tsu' Gaikokan to Gaimusho no Chugoku Seisaku: 1935–1937," in *Nicchu Senso no Shoso*, ed. Gunjishi Gakkai (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1997), pp. 92–107.

[91]ACS, SPDCR, *Carteggio Riservato*, 364/R, B62, F. Elenchi degli ufficiali, funzionari ed agenti antifascisti divisi per Ministeri. TNA, FO371/20589, W18449/9549/41 (18/12/1936). Cantalupo, op. cit., p. 83.

[92]Boyd, op. cit., pp. 39–40.

relations would not be injured since the pact took its stand only against the Communist International, to which the Soviet Union officially claimed to have no connection.[93] At the same time, Arita explained to the British ambassador to Tokyo, Sir Robert Clive, that Japan had no intention of entering the fascist bloc because the Japanese "disliked fascism."[94] Moreover, he instructed the Japanese ambassador to London, Shigeru Yoshida, to enter into negotiations for a similar anti-Comintern agreement with Britain.[95] However, by November 16, 1936, Yoshida had already met British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and denied any possibility of a German-Japanese agreement adding that "in any event it could only have to do with communism, which His Majesty's Government themselves did not favour." Notwithstanding, Eden plainly refuted Yoshida by asserting that "it is quite true that we do not like communism as a form of government, but as the Ambassador would be aware, the basis of our foreign policy is to seek to promote friendly relations between nations, whatever their forms of government. We would never join in a crusade in favour of any ideology."[96]

The same attempt was made toward China. In October 1936, amidst the German-Japanese negotiations, the Japanese foreign ministry proposed an anti-Comintern pact between Japan, Germany and China. Nevertheless, Chang Kai-Shek refused the idea of anti-communist cooperation in view of the fact that it would constrain China to abandon the diplomatic option of Soviet support as well as cause internal turmoil in his government. Moreover, Soviet admission to the League of Nations in September 1936 increased Chang Kai-Shek's hope of Anglo-Soviet cooperation to deter the most serious danger: Japan. Therefore, despite its optimistic expectations of new anti-communist cooperation, Japan reverted to the same state of isolation as it had during the time of the Manchurian crisis, which had resulted in another intrusion into China.[97]

While Japanese diplomats adopted a self-deceiving mentality, Italian decision makers intentionally headed straight down the contradictory road to aggression. Since the traditional diplomats were excluded from

[93] Ibid., pp. 44–45, 55. Arita, *Bakahachi*, pp. 77–78, 81.

[94] TNA, FO371/20286, F7448/303/23 (2/12/1936).

[95] Shigenori Togo, "Jidai no Ichimen," in *Gaisho Togo Shigenori*, Vol. I, ed., Togo Shigenori Kinenkai (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1985), pp. 109–110. Boyd, op. cit., p. 55.

[96] DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 5.

[97] Inoue, op. cit., pp. 274–276, 281–282. n. 18.

the decision-making process after June 1936, the only strategy left for the Italian actors was to follow an anti-communist policy that had various ramifications. The anti-communist crusade in Spain had a double meaning in terms of bringing about a new order. On one hand, the ambassador to Britain, Dino Grandi, in the context of "pure anti-Bolshevistic meaning," told British Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Robert Vansittart in October 1936 that the British government should be pleased with Italy's occupation of Majorca for emancipating that island from communist dominance. On the other hand, in November 1936, Foreign Minister Ciano pledged Italian support not only against bolshevism in Spain but also against the French Popular Front in the Italo-Spanish secret treaty, which called for mutual assistance, possibly targeting Britain as well. Even the German foreign ministry complained to Ciano about its exclusive claims to the concessions Italy had won strategically.[98]

Mussolini himself concealed the details of the plan to aid Nationalist Spain, even from Nazi Germany, Italy's most important anti-communist partner. Whereas he refused to pursue further *rapprochement* vis-à-vis Germany, by propelling negotiations toward the Anglo-Italian Gentlemen's Agreement in January 1937, he continually advocated that Italy had been fighting against communism in the Mediterranean.[99] Since the Italians also had a double-faced policy toward Britain, Mussolini and Ciano repeatedly mentioned war against Britain in closed-door talks throughout 1937.[100]

Consequently, the conclusion of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6, 1937, had more of an anti-British character than anti-communist one, from the Italian viewpoint.[101] The new quest for anti-communist cooperation sought to include Brazil, Poland and

[98] ASMAE, FGCLUC, F37-45, B9, G44, F1, Appunto per il Ministro (28/11/1936). ADAP, D-III, Nr. 142. Coverdale, op. cit., pp. 153–156, 405.

[99] Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2: *Lo Stato totalitario 1936–1940* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), p. 389. ASMAE, FGCLUC, F37-45, B9, G44, F1, Palazzo Venezia (14/1/1937). Paul Schmidt, *Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1949), S. 346. O. O., XXVIII, pp. 69–70, 105–106; XXIX, pp. 241–242.

[100] De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2, pp. 426, 428–429. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 53, 64, 67.

[101] Ibid., pp. 52–53.

especially, Spain, which was expected to be incorporated into the Axis as a satellite country. Nevertheless, because of his suspicion over Franco, Ciano himself gave lower priority to Nationalist Spain. In fact, Franco agreed to join the pact but preferred to keep it secret till the end of the civil war.[102]

Despite the fact that Japan had preceded Italy in forming a new bilateral cooperation with Germany against communism, the offer of a pseudo-alliance could not be extended to Britain and China immediately. On the contrary, in the name of anti-communism, Italy aimed at overthrowing the Western hegemony, and each European Axis partner tried to forestall the other in gaining the advantage.

In sum, anti-communism seemed, at first, to offer an ideological commonality between Japan and Italy. It enabled them to label the enemy "red" and provided the grounds for their aggressive foreign policies and military interventions. As anti-communism became widespread, even among pro-Western Japanese and Italian diplomats, it became difficult to stem the tide of furious expansionism, which in the end demolished their relationship with their traditional partner, Britain.

In terms of foreign policy, if fascism were defined as an oppressive system greedy for armed expansion, there would be no doubt that Japan and Italy in the 1930s were reorganized on a fascist footing. Ideologically, both nations recognized that Japan had never established a government along the lines of Italian fascism. Diplomats, in particular, attempted to avoid the formation of an ideological alliance between the two states. Yet Axis foreign policies were made not only by fanatical ultra-nationalists and fascists but also by realistic diplomats.

Racism, on the contrary, obstructed a better relationship between ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy due to its antagonism to rival races. Most diplomats were not immune to racial prejudice and justified aggressive expansionism by referring to the idea of racial hierarchy.

Despite these bones of ideological contention, both foreign ministries shared an anti-communist policy in common, incurring their further international isolation and reinforcing the Axis anew. In the course of anti-communist cooperation, they multiplied their enemies in the League of Nations, and eventually, among all the Western powers.

[102] Ibid., p. 55. Galeazzo Ciano (verbalizzati da), *L'Europa verso la catastrofe* (Verona: Mondodori, 1948), p. 223. Coverdale, op. cit., pp. 324–325.

In addition to the discussion on the Japanese and Italian ideological background, the next four chapters address the foreign policy decision-making processes of Japan and Italy by focusing on five foreign ministry actors: ministers, undersecretaries, ambassadors to Britain, traditional diplomats and new political actors in each country.

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CHAPTER 3

# Coordinators: The Two Prime and Foreign Ministers, Koki Hirota and Benito Mussolini

This chapter focuses on two major actors who were both foreign ministers and prime ministers, Koki Hirota and Benito Mussolini, during the period of their ministries between 1934 and 1936. It is interesting to note that both Hirota and Mussolini rose from obscurity to become the head of government. Hirota, whose father was a mason, climbed up the ladder of bureaucracy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Mussolini was born to a blacksmith and a schoolmistress and became a revolutionary bohemian, greedy for power. Both played the role of prime minister as well. Mussolini led fascist Italy more purposefully than Hirota, whom ultra-nationalists pulled around to adopt their point of view. This chapter is concerned with their individual ways of coordinating various actors. Their skill of coordination had been acquired through their rise to power and was displayed in foreign policy decision-making processes.

Following Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933, the Japanese hard-liners struck an increasingly negative and hostile attitude toward international conferences. Moreover, as a result of the growth of internal discord between the army, navy and foreign ministry, Japanese foreign policy was largely restricted. The easiest solution was to reject the complex process of multilateral negotiation in favor of the simpler one of direct bargaining with the dominant powers or weakened neighboring countries. In particular, antagonism toward the League of Nations engendered a deep repugnance for multilateral negotiations within the Japanese

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_3

government, and this was reflected in Japan's uncompromising approach to the London Naval Conference from 1934 to 1936.

In contrast to the massive domestic political constraints in Japan, the Italian government demonstrated a more strategic orientation in the naval conference. Mussolini's Machiavellian measures differed from Japan's more abstract demands for prestige and its early declaration of abrogation. Thus, even though the League of Nations imposed economic sanctions against the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, Mussolini chose to reserve his diplomatic cards for use in other diplomatic games by threatening to withdraw from the League, until 1937.

In terms of the foreign policy decision-making process, Hirota's style of management was to comply, with an air of magnanimity, with any internal requests to oppose international cooperation. Consequently, Hirota tended to enumerate all the divergent demands of the hard-liners even though they could cause friction with other states. Added to this, he was able to forge a bond between rivalrous factions by creating negative perceptions of reputed public enemies such as the League of Nations and international communism. Hirota also occasionally exercised personal influence simply by retracting official statements of government policy in order to gloss over the discrepancies between internal and external rhetoric.

Hirota was a passive coordinator, whereas Mussolini was an active one. On those occasions when Mussolini displayed an indecisive attitude, he assigned differing roles to diplomats who then tended to pursue differing goals. Mussolini's strategy was to leave open as many options as possible. By not clarifying which specific option to implement, Mussolini was thus able to control individual diplomats in order to meet the demands of new sets of negotiations. The diplomats themselves had little comprehension of the nature of their function within the overall context of the decision-making process.

With the intention of illustrating the characteristics of the foreign policies of Japan and Italy, this chapter approaches its subject from three perspectives: public utterances, basic attitudes and decision-making processes. First, it will analyze the reciprocal effects between discourse and policy by scrutinizing the public utterances of both ministers. Second, it will clarify the differences and similarities between Japan and Italy by comparing the basic attitudes of both countries toward common areas of concern, such as naval disarmament and the League of Nations. Third, it will examine the decision-making processes of the ultra-nationalist and

fascist regimes by bringing into relief the distinctive peculiarities of the two coordinators.

## 3.1 Features of Public Utterances

The first perspective concerns how official statements influenced foreign policy and were altered depending on circumstances. The discourses on foreign policy in connection with expansionism and conciliation involved the public utterances of the two foreign ministers, Hirota and Mussolini. Both were considered to indulge in double-talk to cloak their aggressive intentions. While Hirota temporarily patched up internal quarrels and external appearances, Mussolini intentionally put a varnish on provocative speeches.

When Hirota first became foreign minister in September 1933, after working as ambassador to the Soviet Union for two years, he was regarded as immune from internal military influence. Moreover, Makoto Saito's national government, which consisted of old liberal politicians, needed young energy for the new direction of foreign policy. On taking office as foreign minister, Hirota replaced the *Shodo Gaiko* (scorched earth diplomacy) promulgated in the speeches of his predecessor, Yasuya Uchida, with *Wakyo Gaiko* (conciliatory diplomacy). Hirota publicly declared his aim of promoting closer relations with the United States, China, the Soviet Union and Britain.[1] Hirota, self-confident as a Soviet specialist, especially laid stress on easing Russo-Japanese tensions in his proposal of October 21, 1933, which the army tried to revise.[2] Nevertheless, when Hirota addressed the Imperial Diet on January 23,

[1] *The Japan Advertiser*, 18/9/1933. Toshihiko Shimada, "Designs on North China, 1933–1937," in *The China Quagmire: Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent 1933–1941*, ed. Japmes William Morley, trans. James B. Crowley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 76–77. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), GFM33/4811, M336/M014454-014457 (19/1/1934). Toshikazu Inoue, *Kiki no-nakano Kyocho Gaiko: Nicchu Senso niitaru Taigaiseisaku no Keisei to Tenkai* (Tokyo: Yamawaka Shuppansha, 1994), p. 178. Shigeru Honjo, *Emperor Hirohito and His Chief Aide-de-Camp: The Honjo Diary, 1933–36*, trans. Mikiso Hane (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982), p. 186. Tetsuya Sakai, *Taisho Democracy Taisei no Hokai: Naisei to Gaiko* (hereafter Sakai, *Taisho Democracy*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992), pp. 28, 41.

[2] Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo (hereafter JFMA), A. 1. 0. 0. 6-3, Gosho Kaigi Kettei no Gaiko Hoshin (21/10/1933).

1934, he also emphasized Japan's "serious responsibilities for the maintenance of peace in East Asia." Moreover in reference to Manchukuo, he even expressed the view that Japan had to show "a firm resolve" until the Chinese government, "realizing the mistakes of persisting in their anti-Japanese attitude," rectified its policy.[3]

The Amau Statement of April 17, 1934, perceived as the Japanese Monroe Doctrine, was an attempt to exclude foreign influences from China. It caused serious concern abroad, and many foreign newspapers commented on it as a breach of the Nine Power Treaty, claiming that Hirota's previous soft-line advocacy was false. Although Hirota and his staff repeatedly explained that it was an unofficial statement, the same content could be seen in several telegrams sent from Hirota to Japanese diplomats residing in China. In addition, a telegram to the Japanese minister to China, sent on April 13, even agreed to the application of more aggressive measures. However, Hirota tried to resolve the "misunderstanding," particularly in his conversations with the British and American ambassadors.[4]

In spite of the hasty "correction," Japanese Ambassador to the United States Hiroshi Saito proclaimed, "[Since the Manchurian crisis] it has become evident to the Japanese people that Western nations know nothing about the Chinese mentality … Consequently Japan must act and decide alone what is good for China."[5] British newspapers carried the headline "Hands Off China" and criticized Hirota's standpoint—namely, the Japanese denunciation of Chinese arrogance and emphasis on Japan's responsibility to stabilize East Asia.[6] The South West Political Council of the Chinese Nationalist government appealed to the League of Nations

[3] Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Giappone, B6, F1, Telesp. No. 54/38 (24/1/1934).

[4] *Nihon Gaiko Nempyo narabini Shuyo Bunsho*, Vol. II (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1966), pp. 284–287. TNA, FO371/18098, F3479/107/10 (30/5/1934). Shigeaki Uno, "Hirota Koki no Tai-Ka Seisaku to Sho Kaiseki," *Kokusai Seiji*, 56 (1976), 35. The British knew, through interception, what was written in the telegraph of April 13, 1934. TNA, HW12/178, No. 56489. Hirota Koki Denki Kankokai, ed., *Hirota Koki* (hereafter *Hirota*) (1966; rpt. Fukuoka: Ashi Shobo, 1992), pp. 119–122.

[5] *Washington Sunday Star*, 22/4/1934.

[6] *Daily Herald*, 30/5/1934. TNA, FO371/18098, F3350/107/10 (24/5/1934).

and signatories of the Nine Power Treaty that Japan's claim to have a special status in the Far East had never been recognized by China.[7]

From Hirota's viewpoint, he only had the intention of warning the Chinese government directly and of opposing the League of Nation's financial support, planned by Jean Monnet. As a consequence, he reprimanded the director of the Information Board, Eiji Amau, for improperly disclosing parts of the official instructions sent to offices in China.[8] Hirota was finally relieved when both the British and American governments understood his "real" intention. Although foreign countries became wary of the substance of his "real" intention, a friendly atmosphere and superficial "good feeling" of the major powers were the main concerns of Hirota.[9] In fact, the British Foreign Office made contradictory remarks about his stance. On the one hand, they reckoned Hirota was "genuinely pacifist,"[10] owing to his assertion, during his ministry, that "Japan would not be involved in war so long as I remain in office."[11] On the other hand, Hirota was presumed to be "personally ambitious" and was credited with saying that "Japan should rule China."[12]

Hirota's denials of official utterances could be seen on other occasions. On July 17, 1935, he denied and modified assertions expressed by the Japanese ambassador to Italy, Yotaro Sugimura. Sugimura, who had been appointed as ambassador to improve Italo–Japanese relations, repeatedly told the Italian government in 1934 that the Japanese government had no political interests in Ethiopia. However, ultra-nationalist groups in Japan, one of which had a connection with Hirota, appealed for solidarity with another colored empire that faced danger from the Italian appetite for colonial expansionism. The Japanese newspapers also complained that the Japanese government did not provide sufficient support to the Ethiopians. For fear of antagonizing public opinion, Hirota

[7] TNA, FO371/18098, F3360/107/10 (28/4/1934).

[8] *Hirota*, p. 398. Hirota criticized that foreign financial aid to China was used for military purposes. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik* (hereafter ADAP), C-II (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), Nr. 408.

[9] *Hirota*, pp. 122–123. Kumao Harada, *Saionji-ko to Seikyoku*, Vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1951), p. 230.

[10] TNA, FO371/21039, F3758/233/23 (4/6/1937).

[11] TNA, FO371/21039, F3262/233/23 (3/6/1937).

[12] TNA, FO371/21039, F3763/233/23 (4/6/1937).

suddenly withdrew the ambassador's previous statement. The change of the Japanese official position caused a serious anti-Japanese racial campaign in Italy.[13]

Hirota was more concerned about the way Japanese foreign policy was perceived than about its actual content. One reason why Hirota wavered so often came from the isolated position of the Japanese government. Externally, his anxiety had been created by Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, and Hirota was sensitive to the criticism from abroad, as seen in reactions to the Amau Statement. Internally, because the post-party cabinets had serious problems in obtaining public support for their foreign policies, Hirota was easily influenced by populist agitation, as seen in the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. His apprehension about isolation thus reflected his fluctuating public statements.

In contrast, Mussolini did not fear being misunderstood. Rather, he utilized inconsistency in his utterances in order to keep his hands free for decision making. Mussolini's speeches on foreign policy frequently exhibited a double-faced character: they were aggressive and conciliatory. Under the new watchword of *discipline*, vis-à-vis *liberty*, he tried to establish internal and external order after his seizure of power. Differentiating fascism from communism, Mussolini emphasized that fascism was not an article of export, whereas the "patriotic" activities of the *Fasci all' estero* (Fasci Abroad) created political friction in the host countries. On October 27, 1930, he gave a speech announcing that fascist Italy was faced with domestic and foreign threats, but would not take the initiative in starting a war. Yet the British Foreign Office plainly did not have much confidence in his word.[14]

More discrepancies between what he said and what he did appeared in the 1930s. For example, on March 18, 1934, Mussolini spoke of the Italian aim to expand into Asia and Africa, emphasizing the direction to

[13]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B7, F5, Colloquio con l'ambasciatore del Giappone (28/11/1934). *Corriere della Sera*, 23/7/1935. JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/I1-2, Vol. 1, Telegr. No. 86 (23/7/1935). *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* (hereafter FRUS), 1935-I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 613. TNA, FO371/19120, J3192/1/1 (26/7/1935). Valdo Ferretti, *Il Giappone e la politica estera italiana 1935–41* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1983), pp. 42–44.

[14]TNA, FO371/8884, C6000/91/22 (29/3/1923); FO371/10784, C8736/1/22 (25/6/1925). Emilio Gentile, "La politica estera del partito fascista. Ideologia e organizzazione dei Fasci italiani all'esetro (1920–1930)," *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. XXVI, No. 6 (1995), 930–939. TNA, FO371/14415, C8028/55/22 (28/10/1930).

the east and to the south. Contradictorily, in the same speech, he denied having any desire for territorial conquest and advocated cooperation with the African people. In substance, he sent many soldiers and war materials to East Africa in April. Since this speech was given immediately after the Rome Protocols between Italy, Austria and Hungary, the aggressive content of the speech, recognizing the Hungarian claim to a modification of its border and admitting to provoking Yugoslavia, damaged the effect of the protocols. Mussolini's promise to protect Austrian independence was thus diminished in value by his refusal to cooperate with the Little Entente and France in the Danubian area.[15]

On May 18 Mussolini criticized the League of Nations and showed little respect for pacifist sentiments, and the next day, in spite of Italian military unpreparedness even for the war against Ethiopia, he declared it better to live for one day as a lion than to live for a hundred years as a sheep. Nonetheless, while Mussolini promoted the war in Africa, he emphasized peace in Europe. In particular, Mussolini declared himself the protector of Austrian independence against the German threat. He demanded that Germany should keep its "hands off Austria" and even mobilized the Italian army to counter the assassination of Austrian Prime Minister Engelbert Dollfuß in the Nazi plot of July 1934. His action in maintaining the peace gave rise to the idea, in Hungary, of nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize.[16]

On October 8, 1934, while advocating Austrian independence, Mussolini refuted the contention that fascist Italy would impose a protectorate over Austria. On the one hand, he persisted in improving relations between the great powers including Germany. On the other hand,

[15]Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* (hereafter O. O.), a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, Vol. XXVI (Firenze: La Fenice, 1959), p. 192. Gaetano Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (London: Gollancz, 1953), pp. 152–156. Giorgio Rochat, *Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d'Etiopia* (Milano: Angeli, 1971), pp. 26–40. TNA, FO371/18436, R1686/1608/22 (19/3/1934). ASMAE, AP, Austria, B27, F3, Telesp. N. 1656/Stampa 4 (19/4/1934).

[16]O. O., XXVI, pp. 225, 230–231. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, Segretaria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato, B71, F Dollfuß, SF1. Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rüdiger Prince Starhemberg* (London-New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1942), pp. 90–94, 105–109. Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 169. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1: *Gli anni del consenso 1929–1936* (Torino: Einaudi, 1974), p. 554.

he declared his aim of militarizing the whole of Italy.[17] Mussolini's inconsistency even appeared in the same speech.

Since Mussolini's speeches frequently upset foreign relations, the traditional diplomats tried to bring him up to date on the latest situation abroad. To make matters worse, his son-in-law, Count Galeazzo Ciano, began a violent anti-British campaign to demonstrate his power as undersecretary and later as minister of press and propaganda during the period from 1935 to 1936. Diplomats continually suffered from the tension caused by Mussolini's fanatical propaganda and arbitrary opportunism.[18]

Both Mussolini and the Italian diplomats sometimes confused speeches intended for internal consumption with those intended for external audiences, with the result that they underestimated the impact of Mussolini's belligerent statements. Mussolini's speech of December 18, 1935, blamed other European countries for the unjust and outraged British public opinion against the Hoare-Laval Plan, but it was not at first taken seriously by diplomats.[19] As Mussolini usually did not deny or modify his extreme statements, the ideological slogans of the warrior state had the effect of restricting his diplomatic options during the Ethiopian War. However, Mussolini believed that he could keep his diplomatic cards open by making use of aggressive speeches while he avoided a clear decision on the matter. The more diplomatic cards Mussolini thought he had won, the more gains for Italy he expected.

After the conquest of Ethiopia, Mussolini continued to pursue contradictory courses simultaneously by giving equivocal speeches of provocation and cooperation. In his speech of November 1, 1936, he negated disarmament and collective security and underlined the Rome-Berlin Axis. Nevertheless, he attempted to forge a compromise with Britain in the Mediterranean that was said to positively affect life for the Italians but also support the British Empire. Although many scholars later considered this speech an Italian proclamation of pro-German policy, at that time, the British government considered it an indication of Anglo-Italian

[17] TNA, FO371/18436, R5545/1608/22 (8/10/1934).

[18] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter DBFP), 2-XIV (London: HMSO, 1976), Nos. 391, 406. Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1979), p. 63. George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian–Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 1–4, 22.

[19] O. O., XXVII, p. 203. Salvemini, op. cit., pp. 575–576, 578–580. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, p. 721. ADAP, C-IV, Nr. 469.

détente that might induce Italy to sign the London Naval Treaty. In fact, Mussolini soon ordered the conclusion of a simple gentlemen's agreement with Britain, carefully evading issues on Ethiopia and the League of Nations.[20]

In spite of the difference between Hirota's continual backtracking of his public utterances and Mussolini's intentional contradictions in his speeches, the discourses of both leaders are characterized by dual meaning. Adolf Hitler, on the other hand, usually made his position quite clear in his speeches, even though it often turned out to be a complete lie later on—for example, highlighting peace, when he said, "Germany is prepared to agree to any solemn pact of non-aggression because she does not think of attacking but only of acquiring security."[21]

Hirota and Mussolini patched up their aggressiveness with conciliatory words, since both countries were forced to count on tacit permission from the West for their expansionist foreign policies. Besides, neither country assumed that it could easily accomplish the complete conquest of China or Ethiopia, while Nazi Germany had no doubts about advancing its objectives of expansionism.

## 3.2 The Basic Attitude Toward Naval Disarmament and the League of Nations

Turning to the second aspect of the present analysis, the basic attitudes to foreign policy, two commonalities shared by Japan and Italy in the 1930s can be identified through the London Naval Conference in

[20] O. O. XXVIII, pp. 69–71, 77–78. TNA, FO371/20424, R6469/3928/22 (2/11/1936). Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962), pp. 425–426. While the first two Western scholars stressed that the speech accelerated the course of the Axis alliance, the latter two Italian scholars attached greater importance to its effect upon the improvement of Italo-British relations. Charles F. Delzell, ed., *The Mediterranean Fascism 1919–1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 201–202. Robert Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933–1940* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 99. Paola Brundu Olla, *L'equilibrio difficile: Gran Bretagna, Italia e Francia nel Mediterraneo, 1930–1937* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1980), pp. 148–150, 156, 164. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2: *Lo Stato totalitario 1936–1940* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), pp. 353–356.

[21] Hitler's famous *Friedensrede* (Speech longing for peace) was given in the Reichstag on May 17, 1933. Norman H. Baynes, trans. and eds., *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler, April 1922–August 1939*, Vol. II (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 1041, 1056.

1935–1936 and the League of Nations. Since these two subjects have not been scrutinized in the context of the Axis by the existing historiography, the comparison between Japan and Italy should become more clear-cut as well. Both countries provoked a serious confrontation with the post-war international system, which maintained world peace. Japan discarded such connections without difficulty. Italy, on the other hand, tried to retain as many diplomatic options as possible.

### *3.2.1 The Japanese Complacent Repudiation of Naval Treaties*

In Japan, the years from 1935 to 1936 were perceived as the years of crisis following the Manchurian Incident and withdrawal from the League of Nations, for both the Washington Treaty and the London Naval Treaty of 1930 were repudiated after 1936. In 1934, both the army and navy published pamphlets that agitated for a military build-up to protect against a possible global arms race. The Japanese government, therefore, from May 1934, faced internal pressure from the military parallel to the external pressures of the informal preliminary naval negotiations.[22]

In the Japanese navy, from 1932 onward, the faction opposing the naval treaty system gradually dominated the negotiations on disarmament policies. This anti-treaty group insisted on parity in naval armaments with the United States and Britain, whose supremacy had been confirmed by the quantitative ratios of limitation in both the Washington Treaty of 1922 and the London Naval Treaty of 1930. The group regarded these treaties as obsolete and asserted that the existing ratio system did not provide Japan with security. Moreover, they contended, the cabinet was unable to interfere with the prerogative of supreme command.[23]

The anti-treaty group, in order to gain acceptance of their proposal to remove the restrictions on Japanese naval armaments, put pressure on the cabinet by threatening to vacate the position of navy minister. A cabinet was finally formed on July 8, 1934, after the proposal was accepted by the moderate admiral Keisuke Okada, who had been responsible for the London Naval Conference in 1930 and who later became a target of assassination in the February 26 Incident. On September 7, 1934,

[22] Tatsuo Kobayashi, "Kaigun Gunshuku Joyaku (1921–1936)," in *Taiheiyo Senso eno Michi*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun-sha, 1963), pp. 155–156.

[23] Ibid. TNA, CAB29/148, N. C. M. (35) 11 (31/5/1934).

the cabinet decided to annul the Washington Treaty before the formal preliminary negotiations started in London. The next day, Foreign Minister Hirota admitted that the counterproposal suggested by the navy—namely, the common upper limit—meant the treaty would be abrogated. It was deemed too dangerous for the British Empire to accept the counterproposal, as the common upper limit would allow Japan to expand its naval force to rival that of the strongest naval power. Yet, in reality, the Japanese budget could not accommodate the expansion of the force to the maximum.[24]

Thus, from the beginning of the formal preliminary negotiations in October 1934, the Japanese government demanded the right to have Japan's prestige respected. Still, it was unclear to the British delegation how Japan's prestige could be recognized. For fear of destroying Anglo-Japanese relations completely, the Japanese suggested the possibility of a non-aggression pact between Britain, the United States and Japan, in June 1934. Hirota hoped that this would serve as a safety valve for maintaining their cooperative policy after the abrogation of the naval treaty, whereas British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon expected the non-aggression pact to limit the escalation of Japanese naval armament.[25]

The Japanese navy opposed the British intention to limit their plan to enlarge, while the Japanese army strongly resisted the British claim for the extension of the guarantee of non-aggression to China. In addition to the internal opposition, Hirota also began to fear that the American government would suspect an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*, which could alienate the United States in Asia. Thus, despite his initial approach to the British, he hesitated to present a concrete proposal for the pact, and the negotiations reached a deadlock in November 1934. The British government also believed that the curtailed dialogue could give Japan time to prepare aggressive policies. At the same time, they feared that the failure of the conference could drive Japan to act more belligerently. At last, in December 1934, the Japanese foreign

[24]Sakai, *Taisho Democracy*, p. 103. Chihiro Hosoya, *Ryo-taisen-kan no Nihon Gaiko* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), pp. 124–125. Harada, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 71. TNA, CAB29/147, N. C. M. (35) 7th Mtg. (29/10/1934). TNA, CAB29/149, N. C. (J.) 2nd Mtg. (26/10/1934).

[25]TNA, CAB29/147, N. C. M. (35) 6th Mtg. (16/10/1934). TNA, CAB29/148, N. C. M. (35) 17 (27/6/1934). Inoue, op. cit., pp. 156–162.

ministry officially announced the termination of its participation in the Washington Treaty of Naval Limitation.[26]

After their withdrawal from the League of Nations, the Japanese displayed an increasingly negative and hostile attitude toward international conferences. There were fewer psychological barriers to opting out of conferences from which no rapid improvements could be expected.[27] As the internal discord among the Japanese navy, army and foreign ministry reduced the foreign policy options, the easy solution was to refuse to take part in the complex process of multilateral negotiations, which differed from simple bilateral bargaining. The Japanese foreign ministry opposed German involvement in the naval conference even though Germany itself did not wish to participate in it and signed the Anglo-German Naval Agreement separately in June 1935. The German foreign ministry recognized that Japan was fighting in vain for *Gleichheit* (quantitative parity) with Britain and the United States while Germany was fighting for *Gleichberechtigung* (equality of status).[28]

Hirota himself clearly stated that Japan was ready to leave the League in September 1932 when he was ambassador to Moscow. He underestimated its seriousness and commented that nothing would happen in the case of withdrawal.[29] Disdain for the League reflected Japan's attitude not only to international conferences but to negotiations on an equal footing in general. In May 1934, the British government perceived Japanese psychology to be such that an offer would make them suspect British cunning or despise British weakness.[30] In fact, Japan's decision to withdraw from the naval conference was regretted more seriously than

[26]Harada, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 100. Ann Trotter, "Tentative Steps for an Anglo-Japanese Rapprochement in 1934," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1974), 77–79. FRUS, 1934-I, pp. 358–359. TNA, CAB29/147, N. C. M. (35) 9th Mtg (27/11/1934). DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 304. Delaying negotiation and ultimately quitting were typical of Hirota's handling of diplomatic talks. In December 1932, the Japanese government also suddenly put aside a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, whose proposal was initiated by Hirota during his ambassadorship to Moscow. Politisches Archiv, Auswärtigen Amt (hereafter PAAA), R31231, Nr. A/3383 (15/12/1932).

[27]TNA, GFM33/3064, B. Nr. G7 (27/6/1934).

[28]TNA, GFM33/3064, B. Nr. G130 (21/6/1935); S. K. 267/34 (21/6/1934).

[29]ASMAE, AP, Cina, B10, Telesp. 229228 (27/9/1932).

[30]TNA, CAB29/148, 8. Anglo-Japanese Relations and the Question of Naval Parity (28/5/1934).

that of Italy, which also refused to sign the treaty, in the final stage, and yet continued to consult with other powers.[31]

The same tendency can be seen when Japan declined to participate in the November 1937 Brussels conference, at which the League proposed maintaining the Nine Power Treaty and resolving the Sino-Japanese conflict. However, the Japanese insisted on bilateral negotiations with China, which exposed the weaker China to harsh attacks. Japanese public opinion also considered the conference a contemptible maneuver of the League, whose proposals were regarded as a plot to control the situation.[32]

The more aggressive the Japanese army and navy became, the worse such negativism became, thus adversely affecting the international situation surrounding Japan. Since the Washington Treaty consisted of the Five Power Treaty, a naval ratios treaty that was aimed at limiting the arms race, and the Nine Power Treaty, which championed the territorial integrity of China, the Japanese navy's total refusal to accept the naval treaties and the Japanese army's continual encroachment upon Chinese territory demolished the Washington Treaty system. The foreign ministry under Hirota tried to align the military to its foreign policy of traditional imperialism by cooperating with the major powers. Nonetheless, the autonomy of the military was powerful, and the diplomats, too, were not keen on granting any concrete concessions to the interested powers.[33]

### *3.2.2 Italian Ambiguous Diplomacy Toward the League*

In contrast to the huge internal restrictions on policy in Japan, the attitude of the Italian government toward the naval conference and Mussolini's adroit diplomacy showed a clearer strategic orientation than Japan's abstract demand for prestige and its early declaration of abrogation. In the preliminary negotiations, in defiance of Britain, the Italian delegates insisted on the construction of heavy battleships equal to the French Dunkerque class. Although it went without saying that the naval conference was more significant for Japan than for Italy, the Italians

[31] ASMAE, Carte Dino Grandi (hereafter CDG), B42, F104, SF1, L. N. C. (35) 2nd Meeting (25/3/1936).

[32] Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War: A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937–1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 28–30. *Hirota*, pp. 470–471. See Chapter 7 regarding the Brussels conference.

[33] Hosoya, op. cit., p. 135. Harada, op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 290. Inoue, op. cit., pp. 288–290.

claimed equal rights with France in a concrete form, demanding the construction of battleships of the same size as the French ones.[34]

The above-mentioned Japanese proposition—a common upper limit to naval expansion—turned to French advantage, for Italy could not meet the costs of constructing a navy based on a common upper limit. Still, the Italian navy supported the Japanese proposal in order to claim theoretical parity with the other powers. Italy also supported German participation in the naval conference as a way of countering France.[35] Yet Italy's position changed according to the European situation, especially after the Italo-French agreement in January 1935 and the Ethiopian War. On the one hand, Mussolini began to think that the claim for naval parity with France could be accomplished through the construction of a coalition with France against Germany. On the other hand, he even accepted the Japanese withdrawal from the conference in January 1936, because Italy could take advantage of Japan's military menace against British interests in Asia by bargaining for concessions in the Mediterranean.[36]

During the long negotiations in the latter half of 1935, Italy faced serious international repercussions as a result of its aggression against Ethiopia in October. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Italy was the first country to submit to economic sanctions imposed by the League of Nations, the Italian delegation in London was instructed not to withdraw from the naval conference. They remained in the negotiations to preserve diplomatic channels with the Western powers. Italy, at least, made cooperative gestures, even though it ultimately refused to sign the treaty for "technical reasons" in March 1936.[37] At the final plenary meeting of the naval conference on March 25, 1936, the ambassador to Britain and Italian chief delegate, Dino Grandi, stated that the Italian government found itself "compelled to maintain their freedom in

[34]TNA, GFM33/3064, s. n. (10/6/1934); Mar. Nr. 407 (27/7/1934). TNA, CAB29/149, N. C. (I.) 1st Mtg. (30/7/1934). Salvatore Minardi, *Il disarmo navale italiano (1919–1936): Un confronto politico-diplomatico per il potere marittimo* (Roma: Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, 1999), pp. 300–303.

[35]Ferretti, op. cit., pp. 84–85. TNA, GFM33/3001, Anl. zu S. K. 60/34. Minardi, op. cit., pp. 299–304.

[36]Ibid., pp. 323–324, 329–337, 368. Ferretti, op. cit., pp. 85, 94, 96.

[37]Minardi, op. cit., pp. 370–383. TNA, GFM33/3065, Mar. No. 218 (27/2/1936); Mar. No. 223 (28/2/1936).

the field of naval construction." He added, "In the Mediterranean Italy wants peace and security for herself and for all."[38]

Although the Italian invasion broke up the collective security system based on the League of Nations, Italy remained a member of the League until December 1937. In November 1935, Mussolini opposed withdrawal from the League even though this was favored by fascist hard-liners in the Fascist Grand Council. He explained that it would be more humiliating to ask later for Italy's return to the League because the Western powers would propose the solution within the framework of the League. Mussolini saved the League card for the next diplomatic game by threatening the possibility of withdrawal. Moreover, he feared the complete isolation of Italy in the event of Germany returning to the League. In fact, Mussolini stated, in a newspaper interview immediately after the conquest of Ethiopia in May 1936, that Italy would remain in the League. He added that the League should continue to exist but needed reform.[39]

During the period of high tension with Ethiopia in 1935, even Undersecretary Fulvio Suvich was in two minds about withdrawal, so he vacillated between showing a free hand in pulling out from the League and keeping the relationship with the Western powers on the basis of the League.[40] Other diplomats even tried to use Mussolini's flexible attitude toward the League to legitimate Italian aggression in Ethiopia. In June 1935, the chief delegate to the League, Pompeo Aloisi, proposed the expulsion of Ethiopia from the League on the ground that Ethiopia was in disorder and lacked the ability to govern. Mussolini also instructed

[38]ASMAE, CDG, B42, F104, SF1, L. N. C. (35) 2nd Meeting (25/3/1936).

[39]DBFP, 2-XV, No. 266. Manfred Funke, *Sanktionen und Kanonen. Hitler, Mussolini und der internationale Abessinienkonflikt 1934–36* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1970), S. 124. ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B32, F2, SFB, Telegr. 9709 (17/12/1935). Luigi Villari, *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1956), p. 159. In December 1933, after Nazi Germany withdrew from the League in October, Italian fascists anticipated Mussolini's decisive action. Although Mussolini complained of "too much parliament" and "too many words" at Geneva, he persisted in the reform of the League. TNA, FO371/17395, W14156/13308/98 (12/12/1933).

[40]ASMAE, Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti (hereafter FGCL), F9-15, B14, Appunto del Sottoseg. Suvich per il Capo del Governo (9/8/1935, sic? June 1935); Ibid., B15, Appunto del Sottoseg. Suvich per il Capo del Governo (20/12/1935). DBFP, 2-XIV, No. 373. Fulvio Suvich, *Memorie, 1932–1936,* a cura di Gianfranco Bianchi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 277. ADAP, C-IV, Nr. 592.

him not to reject negotiation and to defend the Italian actions. In September 1935, Aloisi presented a long report to the League produced by Raffaele Guariglia, which denounced Ethiopia for its aggressiveness, barbarity and backwardness.[41]

Nevertheless, the Italian diplomats failed either to expel Ethiopia from the League on the ground of its "uncivilized nature" or to persuade the Western powers to concede to Italian expansionism in Africa. Mussolini could mobilize diplomats to justify the Ethiopian War, and even collaborated with the League's Secretary General Joseph Avenol, to make allowances to Italy. Nonetheless, the ties with the League and the Western countries could not be used as effective diplomatic cards, owing to the fact that international public opinion was set against the Italian aggression.[42]

Hirota and Mussolini at first glance looked as if they acted in opposite ways. However, they shared significant commonalities. Both countries were once affiliated with the League of Nations, as important members, and with other post-World War I treaty systems, yet they reacted against them in the 1930s as dissatisfied victors with a marked inferiority complex. Their logic on naval negotiations was also similar in that they claimed parity with Western powers: Japan with the United States and Britain, and Italy with France.[43] Moreover, both foreign ministries assisted in effecting aggressive policies but shied away from total confrontation with the Western powers.

On the other hand, because Germany had been, basically, excluded from the post-war security treaty systems, it claimed complete equality of status before demanding quantitative parity as Japan and Italy had. Since the German government had nothing to lose in the existing framework of limitation, Joachim von Ribbentrop, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Britain, pushed for British acceptance of Hitler's "historic decision," fixing the German Navy at 35% of the British Royal Navy, in June 1935. The British swallowed the offer

[41] Francis P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 641–642. Baer, op. cit., p. 311. DBFP, 2-XIV, No. 330, Note 5. *League of Nations Official Journal*, Nov. 1935, 1355–1583.

[42] DBFP, 2-XIV, No. 537. *Survey of International Affairs* (hereafter SIA), 1935-II (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 148–149, 180–181. Eden, op. cit., p. 259. Walters, op. cit., pp. 633–635, 638–639. Baer, op. cit., pp. 132, 233–234.

[43] DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 118.

rather than negotiate for compromise and quickly acceded to an Anglo-German Naval Agreement.[44] Hitler succeeded in securing equal rights to naval rearmament without committing himself to any international conferences or multilateral treaty systems. At the moment of Japanese and Italian isolation in 1936, German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath, who objected to the enlargement of the Axis, clearly stated that Germany would not return to the League even if its colonies were restored.[45] He was antipathetic to the League from the beginning and proposed that the League should be reformed only to deal with nonpolitical specialized issues such as opium, slavery, treatment of whites, economic statistics and conferences on public hygiene.[46] British Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Sir Robert Vansittart commented that he intended to "reform" the League, downgrading it into a mere stage of debate without substance by discarding Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.[47]

Foreign Minister Neurath was often described as a rival of Ribbentrop and as a symbol of reasonable diplomacy. Nevertheless, he was highly interested in the connection between fascism and Nazism during his ambassadorship to Italy in the 1920s. Neurath took a positive attitude toward the demolition of the Versailles system and supported a firm line of rearmament and conscription by threatening the disarmament conference with the bluff of withdrawal. Neurath gave his assent to Ribbentrop's insistence upon conscription even though military leaders

[44]TNA, GFM33/3064, Serial 7790/Part VII, s. k. 267/34 (21/6/1934); Nr. 648 (19/6/1935). DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 304. TNA, CAB29/150, N. C. M. (35) 50 (5/6/1935). From the British point of view, the memorandum by the Foreign Office and Admiralty states that "this principle of parity for which the Japanese are contending is of the same nature as that on which Italy bases her claim to parity with France …" DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 118.

[45]PAAA, R29511, RM 162 (29/2/1936). Neurath even accused Ribbentrop of suggesting Germany's return to the League. TNA, FO371/17771, C4198/4181/18 (24/6/1934). However, Ribbentrop himself stated in an interview, "Nothing is to be gained by Germany's return to the League until equality has been not merely promised but gained." Douglas Glen, *Von Ribbentrop Is Still Dangerous* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1941), p. 101.

[46]ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F1, Telegr. P. 12951 (24/8/1937). ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F4, Telegr. 8330 R (11/12/1937). *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, 8-VII (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1998), D. 610.

[47]Robert Dell, "Vansittart, Europe's Arbiter," *The Nation*, 24 July 1937.

withheld their consent. Neurath surmised that German rearmament could accelerate the revision of the Versailles Treaty.[48] Most German diplomats shared Hitler's negative perception that the League was a complement to the Versailles Treaty. Equally, they counted a strong military as indispensable to a great power. From such a consensus, by his exertion of military power, Hitler only seemed to break up the old system a bit more thoroughly than the diplomats had intended.[49]

In contrast, Japan insisted on keeping its Pacific mandated islands even after its withdrawal from the League. As a matter of fact, Japan continued to involve itself in the economic organs of the League. In March 1936, Mussolini secretly supported the Anglo-French denouncement of the German occupation of the Rhineland in order to prevent Germany from returning to the League and receiving concessions because of the sanctions against Italy.[50] Unlike Germany, both Japan and Italy were not tough enough to step aside, totally, from the post-war treaty systems. Hirota and Mussolini had to play their games somewhere in the gray zone between access to and defiance of international cooperation.

## 3.3 The Coordination Mechanism in Decision-Making Processes

The third aspect of this analysis centers on the coordination mechanism of foreign policy in ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy. In terms of decision-making processes, whereas Hirota could not control the internal

[48] John L. Heineman, *Hitler's First Foreign Minister: Constantin Freiherr von Neurath, Diplomat and Statesman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 86–96.

[49] This explanation reminds us of Taylor's famous thesis in its view of Hitler as a "realist," yet my point has the opposite meaning that most German diplomats bore close resemblance to Hitler in their revisionism. A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, with a preface for American readers, and a new introduction (New York: Simon & Schuster, c1961, 1996). Of course, in terms of racism, the most peculiar Nazi ideology, it is difficult to identify traditional diplomats with Nazi politicians. Heineman, op. cit., pp. 80–82. Gregor Schöllgen, *Ulrich Von Hassell 1881–1944: Ein Konservativer in der Opposition* (München: Beck, 1990), S. 69. Nonetheless, so far as anti-League ideology is concerned, many diplomats linked up with Hitler. German diplomats often were more "ideological" than Hilter was "realist."

[50] DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 304. ADAP, C-V, Nr. 48. Pompeo Aloisi, *Journal* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 357–358. Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, a cura di Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), pp. 402–403.

cliques that violently split on foreign policy issues, Mussolini reigned supreme over his subordinates, setting a favorable course by vacillating between controversial alternatives. In order to explain this contrast between sectionalism in Japan and Mussolini's activism, it is necessary to scrutinize how Hirota and Mussolini diplomatically managed the two important conflicts: Japan's aggressive actions toward China and Italy's Ethiopian War, and why the foreign ministries could not prevent further military ventures in the succeeding years.

### *3.3.1 Hirota's Passive Attitude of Unlimited Magnanimity*

In Japan, even in the period of crisis, the army and navy were affected with serious factional disputes. However, as a foreign minister, Hirota managed to hold back the radical diplomats called "reformists," who could not strive to direct policy as conspicuously as the military. Although the reformist group wanted to "militarize" the foreign ministry, most of their proposals were never realized.[51] Hirota was a balanced coordinator in easing contesting factions, especially the military, to give priority to internal "tranquility" rather than to restrain aggressive expansionism. He also tried to adopt both a cooperative policy toward Britain and an expansive policy in China, which represented the two main viewpoints of the ministry. Hirota coordinated internal "tranquility" on a personal basis rather than on a policy basis. For example, negotiating with China in 1935, the army severely reprimanded him for playing a trick on the war minister in order to carry out "Hirota diplomacy" over the military's head.[52]

As a consequence, Hirota sometimes confused personal relationships with definitive policy. In 1933, he asked Prince Fumimaro Konoe, president of the House of Peers, to visit American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to realize a Japanese-American joint declaration that

[51] Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895–1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. 171–175.

[52] Hiroaki Shiozaki, *Nichieibei Senso no Kiro* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1984), pp. 252–258. Hirota was considered to "enjoy the confidence" of the military. TNA, FO371/21044, F8675/8675/23 (30/8/1937). Sumio Hatano, "Heisei Kaikaku eno Ugoki to Nihon no Tai-Chu Seisaku," (hereafter "Heisei Kaikaku"), in *Chugoku no Heisei Kaikaku to Kokusai Kankei*, ed. Yutaka Nozawa (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), p. 271.

recognized a division of the spheres of influence in the Pacific. Hirota thought it was possible to achieve this by direct personal contact with American politicians, even though Secretary of State Cordell Hull had stated that no country possessed the right to dominate its neighboring countries.[53]

In 1934 Hirota sought to conclude a non-aggression pact with Britain on condition that the position of Japan in East Asia would not be compromised. He mentioned the plan in July. Nevertheless, no definite proposal was given to the British government. Shigeru Yoshida, sent by Hirota to Britain, was expected to be a special messenger, but he brought nothing substantial. The futile negotiations ended in November because Hirota's plan for *rapprochement* did not guarantee that Japan would stop demolishing the Washington Treaty system.[54] Hirota seemed to believe that his "good intentions" and personal relationships were sufficient to improve international relations, unaccompanied by a substantial change of policies.

Hirota declared in the Diet on January 25, 1935, that there would be no war as long as he was foreign minister. The army blamed him for "irresponsible remarks" and for "traditional pacifism without any qualification." On May 17, his *rapprochement* with China bore fruit when he raised the legation to the status of an embassy. Yet, the Chinese government did not highly value his symbolic diplomacy owing to the fact that the Japanese army continued to advance into northern China with the tacit consent of the Japanese foreign ministry. While the consul general in Nanking, Yakichiro Suma, and other diplomats bragged of their success even after World War II, they broadly displayed animosity against foreign aid to China without giving China any other choices.[55]

[53] Daiki Sairenji, "Minzoku Jiketsu Shugi to Nihon no Ajia niokeru Chii: Manshu Jihen Zengo no Shigemitsu Mamoru no Tai-Chugoku Seisaku Koso wo Chushin ni," *Hogaku Seijigaku Ronkyu*, Vol. 42 (1999), 200. Cf. JFMA, A. 1. 0. 0. 6-3, Gosho Kaigi Kettei no Gaiko Hoshin (21/10/1933). On the contrary, the Japanese navy minister wanted to ask Konoe not to discuss the naval conference, because he had no desire to reach an agreement. Harada, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 306–307. Thus, factionalism in Japan upset diplomatic negotiations through unofficial channels during this period. Yet, Konoe himself also had the same tendency to confuse personal relationships with foreign relations.

[54] JFMA, B. 10. 4. 0. 2-5-1. Inoue, op. cit., pp. 161, 171–172. DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 67. Hatano, "Heisei Kaikaku," p. 274. Trotter, op. cit., 75–79. Hosoya, op. cit., p. 135.

[55] Inoue, op. cit., pp. 188–189. Uno, op. cit., 38–39. Yakichiro Suma, *Gaiko Hiroku* (Tokyo: Shoko Zaimu Kenkyukai, 1951), pp. 7–9, 27–30. *Hirota*, pp. 149–151.

Hirota's initiatives on détente were circumscribed by the bounds set by the military. He complained to young diplomats about his weak position: "What I do in foreign policy today is only managing how to get along with the army."[56] Hirota intended to centralize diplomacy under the unified control of the foreign ministry. Nonetheless, the army did not withdraw its influence from the direct negotiations with the Chinese authorities in the field, and Hirota himself was complicit with the army-sponsored movement for "the autonomy of the five Northern Provinces" in China in September 1933. In the end he gave up attempts to negotiate a settlement on North China affairs because, according to his explanation, it was up to the discretion of the *Kanto Gun* (Japanese Kwantung Army) dominating the disputed area to conclude a "cease-fire agreement."[57] Moreover, Hirota's cabinet could only counterbalance military aggression with moderate rhetoric in the absence of clear alternatives. The key words of the foreign ministry retrogressed from "respecting the independence of China" to "cooperating among Japan, Manchukuo and China," which meant the recognition of Manchukuo as a matter of course.[58] Therefore, the actual development of conflict was dominated by the military and progressed to a general war with China in July 1937.

Hirota proposed "three principles" for negotiating with China on October 7, 1935: making China put a stop to anti-Japanese activities; recognizing Manchukuo as an independent state; and cooperating with Japanese anti-communist operations. In order to evade friction with the military and keep a free hand in China, Hirota kept the statement extremely vague, except for the second point. In particular, there was room for various interpretations of what *anti-Japanese* and *anti-communist* meant. Since his mode of mediation in the cabinet was to dilute aggressive opinions with a conciliatory attitude, the outcome tended to be ambiguous. Thus foreign policies were employed more for internal consumption than for improvement of the international situation. Hirota's public utterances on policy related to China were criticized

[56] JFMA, B. 1. 0. 0. J/X 2-6, Nichidoku Bokyo Kyotei Kankei Ikken/Bokyo Kyotei wo Chushin toshita Nichidoku Kankei Zadankai Kiroku (4/4/1949), 0017.

[57] JFMA, Matsumoto Kiroku, A. 1. 0. 0. 21-27, No. 464 (4/6/1935).

[58] Gaimusho, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 295. Katsumi Usui, *Nicchu Gaiko-shi Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1999), pp. 171, 176.

as a transparent lie not only by the Chinese press but also by Japanese diplomats.[59]

Hirota, as foreign minister, tried to keep a balance with the military in the cabinet without success, but he devoted himself more to taming than countering the military during his premiership between March 1936 and May 1937. Hirota only functioned as a passive coordinator in a cabinet without real power to halt the military. Removing the domestic obstruction to the Japanese military, the February 26 Incident in 1936 also dealt a mortal blow to the internal limits on the military budget. After the incident, which saw the killing of Finance Minister Korekiyo Takahashi, who had strongly objected to unlimited army-navy spending, Hirota was appointed to the premiership as a successor to the national government and, powerlessly, formed his administration in March 1936. Hirota reintroduced the suicidal rule that either the army or the navy could determine the fate of the cabinet by vacating its ministerial post. He also allowed the military to increase its budget by 50% of its expenditure in recognition of the new imperial policy on preparations for war in both the North and the South.[60] Thus, from the British point of view, Hirota was considered compliant with the military's demands.[61]

In August 1936, Hirota included both southward expansionism supported by the navy against Britain, and northward expansionism supported by the army against the Soviet Union as the basis of Japanese imperial foreign policy as expounded in the cabinet decision, through which he arrived at a consensus for negotiating the anti-Comintern pact with Germany. The combination of these two new expansionist programs in parallel to the perpetual encroachment on China seemed to him to be a form of internal compromise. From the external point of view, it was a clear demonstration of planned aggression, which

[59] *Hirota*, pp. 158–160. *Ishii Itaro Nikki*, ed. Takashi Ito and Liu Jie (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993), p. 15.

[60] Sakai, *Taisho Democracy*, p. 129. Shigemitsu harshly criticized the impotence of Hirota's Cabinet. Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Showa no Doran*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1952), pp. 104–108. Even books sympathetic to Hirota admit the failure of his cabinet's policy. *Hirota*, pp. 191–192, 196–198. Ryuji Hattori, *Hirota Koki: "Higeki no Saisho" no Jitsuzo* (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 2008), pp. 125–139.

[61] DBFP, 2-XX, No. 486.

established Hirota's guilt at the Tokyo International Tribunal after the war.[62]

In addition, Hirota accepted the content of the Anti-Commintern Pact with Nazi Germany in November 1936. Its negotiation had been pursued directly between the Japanese army and Ribbentrop, ignoring their respective foreign ministries. Although Hirota had, essentially, agreed to conclude the pact against communism, his attitude was irresolute. He groped for the possibility of including China in the pact, whereas the Chinese government approached the Soviet Union in opposition to Japan.[63]

Hirota had maintained his position with "great skill" for two years. By the time Hirota returned to the post of foreign minister in June 1937, after four months' absence from cabinet, he had become so used to taking a passive attitude to avoid direct confrontation, especially with the army, that he only complained about Japan's aggressive foreign policies indirectly through the navy minister, Mitsumasa Yonai, another master of moderate coordination. Because of his moderate but weak attitude to his domestic nemeses, Hirota was reckoned as incompetent, even in political circles. Hirota let aggressive expansionism take its course without applying any effective measures to deal with the Sino-Japanese conflict.[64]

It was Hirota's style of management to show an air of magnanimity granting concessions to almost all the opposition's internal requests. He attempted to satisfy each factional clique through his personal knack of swallowing contradictions such as expansionism northward and southward, always with little focus on the serious consequences of his policy. The foreign ministry could be united in favor of superficial consensus, and the cabinet did not fall apart by softening antagonism over foreign policy direction in the short term. As a result, Hirota failed to oppose the divergent requests for aggression which caused friction with other countries.[65] He also made use of negative ideologies, such as anti-League and anti-communism, for the sake of domestic consolidation and, occasionally, he could only exercise his influence by retracting official views so as to gloss over the variances between internal and external rhetoric.

[62] Usui, op. cit., p. 196. *Hirota*, pp. 512–513.

[63] Inoue, op. cit., pp. 272–275. ADAP, C-IV, Nrn. 452, 479.

[64] TNA, FO371/21039, F3262/233/23 (3/6/1937). *Hirota*, pp. 320, 324. Usui, op. cit., pp. 181–182.

[65] Uno, op. cit., 24, 30.

Hirota's passive attitude to hard-liners' aggressive plans resulted in uncompromising statements aimed at the outside world. Hirota's way of managing crises by internal conciliation and external negativism was internally regarded as an appropriate prescription for fractional division but contributed to Japan's international isolation. Even though Hirota continually emphasized the necessity of centralizing diplomacy under the foreign ministry, he could not take the initiative to make that happen.[66]

### *3.3.2 Mussolini's Active Judgment of Phased Strategy*

While Hirota pursued passive tactics to achieve temporary domestic consensus, Mussolini was active in coordinating a phased strategy. Showing an indecisive attitude, as Hirota did, Mussolini assigned different roles to diplomats who sought differing goals. No doubt the diplomats also shared the thought of earning a place in the sun by the acquisition of new colonial territory in Ethiopia, but they were afraid of waging war against Britain. Mussolini's strategy, on the other hand, was to keep open as many options as possible without clarifying which one he intended to ultimately pursue. in order to meet the demands of a series of new negotiations. The diplomats themselves knew little about their role in the overall mechanism of decision making.[67]

In addition, as Hirota did, Mussolini tended to think that direct channels to key persons could easily break a deadlock in the same way that he himself was often influenced by personal contacts. He was criticized by many diplomats for his distrust of the foreign ministry and for his arbitrary decisions, and he tended to be irresolute, waiting to see what others achieved rather than immediately and decisively solving any given problem, especially during the Italo-Ethiopian conflict.[68]

[66] *Hirota*, p. 107. Usui, op. cit., p. 177.

[67] Ken Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats in the Ethiopian War: The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Fascist Italy," (hereafter Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats") *Hogaku Zasshi* of Osaka City University, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1996), 1003. In their memoirs, the diplomats repeated that they did not have a clear idea of how and when a systematic policy toward Ethiopia was decided. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922–1946* (hereafter Guariglia, *Ricordi*) (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), pp. 220–225. Grandi, op. cit., p. 337. Suvich, op. cit., pp. 283–284. Aloisi, op. cit., pp. 200–201.

[68] See the criticism against Mussolini in the following memoirs. Aloisi, op. cit., pp. 224, 348–349. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 248, 269. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 272–276, 375–376. Suvich, op. cit., pp. 6–7, 9, 16, 18–20.

Traditional diplomats made their important entry upon the stage of the Ethiopian conflict after the Wal Wal Incident of December 1934, a military collision on the contested border between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. They were searching for colonial concessions in order to not disturb the existing framework of European politics. Despite their differing motivations, as explained below, they were professional and experienced enough to obtain some common ground for negotiations since they all desired a peaceful settlement with Britain and France. Mussolini, however, avoided making definitive decisions rather than engaging himself in negotiations as foreign minister. In the first stage of the negotiations, he let diplomats act freely without indicating a specific goal.

Pompeo Aloisi, who represented the mainstream of the foreign ministry, was the *capo di gabinetto* (head of cabinet) of the foreign ministry and head of the Italian delegation to the League of Nations. He bent over backward to defend Italy's colonial ambitions before the League because he strongly believed that Italy should have the advantage of continuing its membership. Aloisi slowed down the procedure of conciliation and arbitration, and Aloisi's delaying tactics were partly supported by Joseph Avenol, the secretary general of the League. As an expert on the League, Aloisi was so confident and crafty that he planned the expulsion of Ethiopia from the League of Nations[69] on the grounds that it was a "bad neighbour" and an "unworthy member." The same type of logic was used by Japanese delegates at Geneva during the Manchurian crisis, denouncing China for not constituting an organized state as required in the framework of the League Covenant. It might not be a coincidence that Aloisi had previously been ambassador to Japan.[70]

Although Aloisi was reluctant to cooperate with Mussolini's military maneuver, he gained time to prepare for aggression. Moreover, he acted as a capable career diplomat on behalf of Mussolini at the Paris meeting of August 1935, the first and last formal meeting of Britain, France, and Italy that directly placed the Ethiopian issue on the agenda. Aloisi refused to give any promise of a peaceful settlement but offered no

[69] Alan Cassels, compiled and ed., *Italian Foreign Policy 1918–1945: A Guide to Research and Research Materials* (Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1981), p. 15. Aloisi, op. cit., pp. 278, 283–284. DBFP, 2-XIV, Nos. 144, 278, 295.

[70] Ibid., No. 330. Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931–1933* (London: Hamilton, 1972), p. 330.

alternative for negotiation.[71] Thus, he followed Mussolini's instruction to act "as a combatant rather than as a diplomat, as a fascist rather than a negotiator."[72]

Raffaele Guariglia, the chief of the Department for Ethiopian Affairs, was deemed to have an indefatigable and forcible personality. He was obsessed with Ethiopia and rejected other colonial choices, such as Angola and the Cameroons. With the aim of pursuing his goal, Guariglia arranged informal talks on the Italo-Ethiopian dispute for Suvich in the Stresa Conference and prepared a two-volume memorandum for Aloisi, accusing Ethiopia of barbarism. At the same time, he dreamed of a glorious military victory against Ethiopia, since he was acknowledged as an Africanist whose passion for an Italian colonial empire was as definitive as those of fascists.[73] Nevertheless, as the risk of a conflict with Britain grew, Guariglia urged Mussolini in September 1935 to accept the Committee of Five proposals, which substantially assured Italy's political control over Ethiopia. He switched positions so frequently between hard-liner and soft-liner that Mussolini, who used fascists as intimidators and more moderate diplomats as negotiators, had less contact with him. Accordingly, Guariglia wrote many inconsistent memoranda in vain.[74]

Traditional diplomats continued negotiations with the Western powers on the supposition that, when the time came, Mussolini would choose an appropriate option before the outbreak of war in October 1935. However, Mussolini refused to accept any of the proposals, for he thought at the time that he could obtain more than the negotiated compromises. Yet the diplomats were almost unanimously against the categorical rejection of the Committee of Five proposals in September 1935, since it might bring about a war against Britain. Nevertheless, even though Mussolini was also wary of antagonizing Britain, he shifted from

[71]Walters, op. cit., pp. 634–635. SIA, 1935-II, p. 173. Eden, op. cit., p. 251. Aloisi, op. cit., p. 255.

[72]Ibid., p. 294.

[73]TNA, FO371/14421, C1536/1536/22 (21/2/1930). Robertson, op. cit., p. 14. DBFP, 2-XIV, No. 225. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 226–227, 259–261. Id. *Ambasciata in Spagna*, p. XII. Baer, op. cit., pp. 21–22.

[74]ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B8, F3, Appunti (5, 12/6/1935, and 24/10/1935). Rosaria Quartararo, *Roma tra Londra e Berlino: La politica estera fascista dal 1930 al 1940* (Roma: Bonacci, 1980), pp. 134, 199. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 266–268.

the stage of imperialist bargaining to the stage on which he could glorify fascist Italy through a general war against Ethiopia.[75]

The second stage of negotiations started because, having invaded Ethiopia, Mussolini began to seek more favorable rewards by speaking of peace. After the failure of negotiations among the Great Powers, within the League of Nations or separately with Britain, Mussolini did not hesitate to utilize special personal contacts rather than rely on his diplomats. He launched informal missions and directed negotiations with Britain more closely from October 1935.

Mussolini sent General Ezio Garibaldi, who was a descendant of the Risorgimento hero and a friend of British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare, to Britain first in October and again in November 1935. Mussolini, without giving notice to the ambassador to Britain, Grandi, authorized Garibaldi to inform the British leaders of his intention to cease hostilities.[76] According to Garibaldi, Mussolini even mentioned that he "had been misled" by Grandi into engaging in war; therefore, he confidentially submitted the Italian proposal through an informal channel.[77] The British Foreign Office preferred the formal channels to an unofficial intermediary, despite the fact that they also considered fascist ex-Foreign Minister Grandi unreliable. Grandi, for his part, blamed the Garibaldi mission for hampering his activities and asked Mussolini to recall him. After Garibaldi's informal conversations with Hoare and Vansittart, in November, Mussolini himself suddenly denied the mission's existence, aggravating the British impression of disorder in fascist Italy's foreign policy.[78]

In the second stage of the negotiations, Mussolini himself took the initiative not only through unofficial intermediaries but also directly through his personal contacts in diplomatic channels. From October to November 1935, he frequently had interviews with his favorite British ambassador in Rome, Sir Eric Drummond, on Mediterranean

[75] Baer, op. cit., pp. 344–347. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 264–269. Aloisi, op. cit., pp. 307–308. Eden, op. cit., p. 265.

[76] Quartararo, op. cit., p. 174. ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B32, F2, SFB, Telegr. P. 2549/C (5/12/1935). Renato Mori, *Mussolini e la conquista dell'Etiopia* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1978), pp. 176–178.

[77] DBFP, 2-XV, No. 258.

[78] TNA, FO371/19164, J8423/1/1 Minutes (26/11/1935). ASMAE, CDG, B39, F93, SF1, Ins. 1, 28/10/1935. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, p. 289.

demobilization, which aimed at a settlement of Anglo-Italian relations. Earlier, Undersecretary Suvich had usually negotiated with Drummond. However, during the second stage of negotiations, Foreign Minister Mussolini himself took the place of Suvich.[79] After these two initiatives ended in impasse, Mussolini again gained fresh hope from the formal channels through Ambassador to Britain Grandi. While Mussolini favored the use of direct contacts instead of his diplomats, he also had no scruples about discarding his unofficial intermediaries.

The result of a series of informal conversations, the Hoare-Laval Plan, was transmitted to Rome on December 11, 1935. The Italian demand for larger territory in Ethiopia was not met, and the content was less complimentary to Italy than the proposals of Garibaldi and the Committee of Five. The plan, which gave "small territorial cessions and a large area of exclusive economic influence" to Italy,[80] was based on a British draft and drew little from the Italian proposals. The traditional diplomats' reaction to the plan was far from enthusiastic.[81] The diplomats opposed the plan because it was worse than the previous proposals that Mussolini had intransigently rejected. In addition, they deplored the fact that Mussolini had secretly consulted Laval by telephone for a sympathetic interpretation of the plan, bypassing the existing formal channels. It was ironic that the Fascist Grand Council was about to accept the Hoare-Laval Plan on December 18, in spite of the negative attitudes in the foreign ministry. However, receiving the news of Hoare's resignation, Mussolini put off the decision.[82]

After both the Italian foreign ministry and Mussolini failed to reach a diplomatic settlement, the conflict entered its third stage in which they aimed at the conquest of Ethiopia through military enterprise. The traditional diplomats, divided and ruled by Mussolini, finally were able to unite but only to oppose unanimously the last chance of negotiation.

[79]ASMAE, FGCL, F9-15, B6, Colloquio Mussolini con Drummond (18, 29/10/1935; 5, 12/11/1935). Suvich, op. cit., p. 19.

[80]DBFP, 2-XV, No. 314.

[81]ASMAE, AP, Etiopia Fondo di Guerra, B32, F2, SFB, Telegr. P. 2549/C Segreto (5/12/1935). Mori, op. cit., pp. 176–178. Aloisi, op. cit., pp. 327–329. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, p. 292. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 719–720.

[82]ASMAE, FGCL, F9-15, B15, Appunto del Sottosegretario per il Capo del Governo (14/12/1935). De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 721–722. Hughes, op. cit., p. 140.

Mussolini reorganized the foreign ministry after the military victory in May 1936, purging capable diplomats such as Suvich, Aloisi and Guariglia. Instead, Ciano was appointed as the new foreign minister and created the second wave of fascistizing the foreign ministry. The first wave had taken place during the period Grandi served as undersecretary and later, minister, from 1925 to 1932, but the second wave completely changed the traditional apparatus to a mere instrument of Ciano. In order to demonstrate his personal control over foreign policy, Ciano moved closer to Nazi Germany. As a consequence, there emerged a dual coordinator—namely, Mussolini and Ciano—with less experienced staff. Since Mussolini was no longer the active sole coordinator of foreign policy, the delicate mechanism composed of diversified traditional diplomats could no longer function.[83]

According to the recollections of diplomats after World War II, Mussolini was considered to be an isolated dictator who capriciously decided foreign policies, based on emotion. As the traditional diplomats tried to evade any responsibility for the war, they insisted that Mussolini had exercised despotic power alone. Nonetheless, Mussolini was able to initiate his military venture against Ethiopia with the full cooperation of the foreign ministry.[84] Threatening the Western powers in his own speeches and with fascist propaganda, Mussolini manipulated the negotiations of traditional diplomats opportunistically. Compared to Hirota's passivity, Mussolini actively decided foreign policy according to his own judgment. Yet, at least, expansionism in Ethiopia was supported by general consent among most of the Italian elite.[85] Consequently, Mussolini made the best use of aggressive statements, and diplomats followed his decisions. Achieving military success, Mussolini became inflated with conceit about his coordinating skill and too self-confident to limit his external ambitions.

[83] Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats," 994. Felix Gilbert, "Ciano and His Ambassadors," in *The Diplomats*, eds. Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 517. Ciano's "pro-German" tendency should not be overemphasized, since his aim was to dominate senior fascist sub-leaders rather than to establish real Axis cooperation. Ken Ishida, *Chichukai Shin-Roma Teikoku eno Michi: Fashisuto Itaria no Taigaiseisaku 1935–39* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), pp. 111, 188, 203.

[84] Walters, op. cit., pp. 634–635. SIA, 1935-II, p. 173. Eden, op. cit., p. 251. Aloisi, op. cit., p. 255. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 226–227, 259–261. Esmonde M. Robertson, *Mussolini as Empire-Builder. Europe and Africa, 1932–36* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 14.

[85] De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 626–627.

Both Hirota and Mussolini had a "good" command of their foreign ministries, avoiding divisions, because ideological confrontation occurred outside the ministry rather than inside. Moreover, in Japan and Italy no party organizations, such as the *Außenpolitische Amt der NSDAP* (Foreign Political Department of the Nazi Party) of Alfred Rosenberg and the *Ribbentrop Büro* (Ribbentrop Office) in Nazi Germany, competed with the foreign ministry. Although the military in Japan and the Ministry of Press and Propaganda in Italy disrupted foreign policy decision-making, it could not completely overthrow the state apparatus, as had been tried by the Nazi organizations, which had been encouraged by the Nazi Party's pretense of a revolutionary attitude to the established bureaucracy.[86]

The Japanese and Italian foreign ministers, accordingly, kept a minimum of consensus in their regimes through their different modes of coordination: passive concessions to the military by Hirota and the mechanism of divided roles created by Mussolini. In contrast to them, German Foreign Minister Neurath repeatedly contested the irregular activities of various Nazi organizations.[87] Nevertheless, at the price of conflict management and internal consolidation, Hirota and Mussolini ceased to exploit their coordination skills as aggressive expansionism developed.

From 1934 to 1936, Japan and Italy underwent a significant transition to the beginning of the end for both regimes. During this period, Hirota and Mussolini were not such powerful masters of circumstance as Hitler, whose speeches often clearly influenced international politics. Their indecisive discourses in the gray zone of bilateral negotiations, and their roles as coordinators utilizing diplomats characterized the decision-making processes of ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy. They showed a distinct contrast to Nazi Germany, whose clearly-defined ideological orientation creating resolute foreign policies gave rise among

[86] Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, NS 8/37, 22/5/1933; 24/1/1934. *The Times*, 12/8/1936. PAAA, R29510, RM 991 (19/12/1935).

[87] Especially in the fields to which Hitler did not pay much attention, such as the Far East, Rosenberg and Ribbentrop were so active behind the scenes that Neurath tried to rid diplomacy of such unofficial activities. Cf. ADAP, C-II, Nrn. 312, 493; C-III, Nrn. 24, 478; C-IV, Nrn. 452, 479. Hans-Günther Seraphim, ed., *Das politische Tagebuch Alfred Rosenbergs aus den Jahren 1934/35 und 1939/40* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1956), S. 30, 39. Glen, op. cit., p. 92.

Nazi supporters to skepticism vis-à-vis the bureaucratic style of decision making.[88] As seen in Chapter 7, while the Axis powers contested each other externally regarding their interests in East Asia, Nazi Germany, in particular, faced a serious internal power struggle between its foreign ministry and Ribbentrop.

The Japanese and Italian foreign ministries resigned themselves to their common fate of losing their influence on foreign policy. Contrary to their post-war memoirs maintaining that they opposed the ultra-nationalists and fascists, traditional diplomats were easily manipulated or claimed they were exploited by their capable ministers in the prosecution of aggressive foreign policies. They only tried to restrict the levels of aggression within the norms accepted among the imperialist powers at that time. However, the two foreign ministries could no longer curtail the Japanese military's domination, on the one hand, and an overconfident Mussolini and ambitious Ciano, on the other. Indeed, Hirota and Mussolini started new military campaigns as a consequence of Japanese and Italian expansionism in China and Ethiopia, respectively.

[88] Mildred S. Wertheimer, "The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich," *Foreign Policy Report*, Vol. X, No. 2 (1934), 14, 24. Aristotle A. Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 83.

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CHAPTER 4

# Planners: The Two Undersecretaries, Mamoru Shigemitsu and Fulvio Suvich

This chapter discusses the two undersecretaries, Mamoru Shigemitsu and Fulvio Suvich, who can be regarded as the planners of foreign policy in their respective countries. Their official status was that of undersecretary for foreign affairs, and they played important roles, sometimes substituting for foreign ministers. Koki Hirota attempted to take the initiative in improving Russo–Japanese relations as a consequence of his career in the Soviet Union, while Benito Mussolini was keener to create fascist expansionism, especially in Ethiopia. Yet, with the exception of those specific fields Hirota and Mussolini were more coordinators than planners who designed foreign policies more systematically, so they needed scenario writers for their foreign ministries.

Both Shigemitsu and Suvich were realists in protecting their respective national interests. They were said to be rational policy makers who tried to execute their plans toughly and sincere spokespersons whom foreign diplomats could understand. In fact, their attitudes were far from being aggressive ultra-nationalist or fanatic fascist. Hirota was keen on economic diplomacy and attempted to improve the degraded China-Japanese trade in which Shigemitsu became particularly engaged. Mussolini had less financial and economic knowledge and interest, leaving Suvich largely to his own devices. Hirota and Mussolini sometimes gave their subordinates more discretion on East Asian and Central

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_4

European issues, respectively.[1] Nevertheless, Shigemitsu and Suvich failed to keep the peace in both areas because their original plans did not accommodate the international situation in which neighboring countries and Britain should have played greater roles.

While Shigemitsu sought to revise the unequal treaties with China on a bilateral footing, during the Manchurian crisis he refused foreign intervention, wanting the foreign ministry to retain the upper hand over the conflict. Shigemitsu also made a resolute attempt to exclude the influence of the League of Nations and Western powers from East Asian affairs, and to expel the anti-Japanese movement "influenced by communism" from China. His insistence on keeping China within the Japanese sphere of influence became an overriding principle of Japan's foreign policy in the 1930s.[2]

Suvich, by contrast, consciously utilized the League as a tool for the control of Central Europe. Suvich took advantage of his position as chairperson of the League's Financial Committee until 1932, intervening in the Austrian financial crisis for the purpose of restructuring that state's budget and transforming the Austrian government into a more authoritarian government favorable to Italy. While, today, Suvich is considered a moderate because he favored containing Nazi Germany in Central Europe, he nevertheless endeavored to establish a fascist regime in Austria through the suppression of socialists, which ironically resulted in strengthening the position of the Nazis. When Mussolini and the fascist militants were preoccupied with the conquest of Ethiopia, Suvich was not opposed to the invasion unless it threatened to provoke a war with Britain.[3]

Why and how did Shigemitsu and Suvich finally reach an impasse in spite of their clear and consistent foreign policies? This chapter compares their policies with another realistic policy—that of Britain—represented by Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the chief economic adviser to the British government. The realist attitudes of Shigemitsu and Suvich are also comparable with another capable undersecretary for foreign affairs in Britain, Sir Robert Vansittart, who even proposed to sacrifice Ethiopia

[1] Yasuhiko Morishima, *Showa no Doran to Morishima Goro no Shogai* (Fukuoka: Ashi Shobo, 1985), p. 74. *Ishii Itaro Nikki* (hereafter *Ishii Nikki*), ed. Takashi Ito and Liu Jie (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993), pp. 18–20. Fulvio Suvich, *Memorie, 1932–1936*, a cura di Gianfranco Bianchi (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984), pp. 5–6, 12.

[2] Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Showa no Doran*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1952), pp. 30–35, 43–44, 85–92.

[3] Suvich, op. cit., pp. 264–284.

in order to prevent Italy from allying with Nazi Germany. Yet, Vansittart continually expressed doubts about Chancellor of the Exchequer Neville Chamberlain's idea of approaching Japan. Leith-Ross was Chamberlain's right-hand aide and dealt with both Austrian and Chinese problems. Hence, this chapter selects Leith-Ross as a point of contact from which to analyze regional hegemony in Central Europe and East Asia, with the aim of comparing Anglo-Italian and Anglo–Japanese relations.

In addition, this chapter will discuss similarities between Shigemitsu and Suvich, regarding their quest for regional hegemony in China and Central Europe, respectively, their cynical attitude to democracy, and their acceptance of aggressive measures which was caused by the failure to compromise with other great powers.

## 4.1 Financial Problems as a Tool of Foreign Policy

Mamoru Shigemitsu was undersecretary for foreign affairs from May 1933 to April 1936 after a long career in China of more than five years. During his service in China, he had been involved in tariff problems from 1925, and had negotiated with the Chinese finance minister, T. V. Soong (Soong Tse-ven), who was later attacked as an anti-Japanese leader. Shigemitsu supported concessions to Soong and Chiang Kai-shek. Shigemitsu finally concluded an agreement with the Nationalist Government in May 1930. In April 1932, he was seriously injured by a bomb thrown by a Korean independence activist. However, he insisted on signing the armistice treaty for the Shanghai Incident in his hospital bedroom while waiting for his right leg to be amputated on May 5. Respected as a China specialist, Shigemitsu was allowed to exercise his own discretion, especially on East Asian affairs.[4] When he was appointed undersecretary for foreign affairs in May 1933, he endeavored to effect a division of labor between the foreign ministry, which he wanted to see regain its control over diplomacy, and the army, which exercised jurisdiction over the military zone in China.[5]

[4]Tomoki Takeda, *Shigemitsu Mamoru to Sengo Seiji* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2002), pp. 76–77, 87, 90. Ian Nish, "Shigemitsu and the Shanghai Crisis, 1932," in *Shigemitsu Studies*, ed. Ian Nish (London: STICERD, 1990), pp. 85, 92–93.

[5]The spelling of Chinese names will follow those used in Western documents of the 1930s. Katsumi Usui, *Nicchu Gaiko-shi Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1999), p. 126.

Fulvio Suvich, on the other hand, was undersecretary for foreign affairs from July 1932 to June 1936, after having a career as undersecretary for finance between November 1926 and August 1928. He was an Italian nationalist who had lived in Trieste under the rule of the Hapsburgs, and had fought in the Italian Army during World War I. After the war, he became undersecretary of the Nationalist Parliamentary Group in 1922. Suvich also worked as an international finance specialist. He had been chairperson of the Financial Committee of the League of Nations for two years just before being appointed as undersecretary for foreign affairs. During the period when Suvich chaired the committee, he handled the financial crisis in Austria caused by the crash of the Credit-Anstalt in May 1931, which was said to control 75% of Austrian industries. Since the committee imposed stringent controls over Austria's budgetary expenditure, which culminated in cutting its social welfare and even suppressing socialists, the idea of external interference in Austrian affairs later influenced Suvich's policy on Central Europe.[6] Suvich was in a position to see Mussolini almost every day and was considered by diplomats as an influential key person, inspiring "much of Mussolini's distrust and dislike of German policy."[7] Despite the fact that all the other undersecretaries in the government were replaced because of Mussolini's frequent *cambio della guardia* (change of guard), Suvich alone remained in his post for four years.

Shigemitsu tried to tame Chinese nationalism, arguing for the abolition of extraterritorial rights on condition that the Chinese accept Japanese special interests in Manchuria. Yet, after the Manchurian Incident of September 1931, he took a firm stance against both the League and China. He proposed early withdrawal from the League, and yet he also opposed the Japanese army's spread of conflict.[8] In 1932, Shigemitsu wrote a report justifying Japanese actions due to the persistent Chinese infringement of Japanese interests and its anti-Japanese movement.[9] The contents of the report resembled Raffaele Guariglia's report to the League in 1935, reproaching Ethiopia for its backwardness.

[6]Suvich, op. cit., p. 4. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO371/20418, R1724/458/22 (21/3/1936). TNA, FO371/15151, C5237/61/3 (7/7/1931).

[7]TNA, FO371/20418, R1724/458/22 (21/3/1936).

[8]Tetsuya Sakai, "'Eibei Kyocho' to 'Nicchu Teikei'," in *Nempo Kindai Nihon Kenkyu*, No. 11: *Kyocho Seisaku no Genkai* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1989), pp. 64, 79, 81.

[9]Ryuji Hattori, "Shigemitsu Chuka Koshi Hokokusho," *Gunji Shigaku*, Vol. 37, Nos. 2–3 (2001), 247–258.

Whereas Italian diplomats tried to legitimatize their invasion within the logic of the League, Shigemitsu more openly criticized the League, saying that Japan would create a regional order separate from the universal order of international society.[10]

Moreover, after the withdrawal from the League, he stressed more strongly that Japan must play the leading role in East Asia and prevent the combination of Chinese nationalism with the internationalism of Western countries and the League of Nations. Shigemitsu pretended to take a middle position on the independence of Manchukuo, between Japan's total annexation of Manchuria and the Chinese demand for reversion.[11] However, he mistakenly assumed that all foreigners would understand his respect for Chinese nationalism despite the paternalistic character of Japanese regional hegemony.

In 1931, Suvich clearly confirmed the utility of the League, whose Financial Committee successfully meddled in the internal affairs of Austria. The reconstruction plan proposed by the committee forced the Austrian government to cut the salary of public employees and expenditure on pensions and unemployment relief. The gradual transformation of the Austrian regime from democracy to authoritarianism was forcibly encouraged under the tutelage of the League's Financial Committee, especially after the formation of a suppressive government led by Prime Minister Engelbert Dollfuß.[12] On the other hand, Suvich opposed the League's political influence in Austria and was indifferent to the principles of the League. He distrusted public opinion and was not in favor of equal rights for small powers. It was unacceptable to Suvich that such small powers as the Little Entente interfered in important issues among the great powers.[13]

[10]Tetsuya Sakai, *Taisho Democracy Taisei no Hokai: Naisei to Gaiko* (hereafter Sakai, *Taisho Democracy*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992), p. 52. Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo (hereafter JFMA), A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 3.

[11]Daiki Sairenji, "Minzoku Jiketsu Shugi to Nihon no Ajia niokeru Chii: Manshu Jihen Zengo no Shigemitsu Mamoru no Tai-Chugoku Seisaku Koso wo Chushin ni," *Hogaku Seijigaku Ronkyu*, Vol. 42 (1999), 185–210, 189.

[12]TNA, FO371/15153, C7258/61/3 (23/9/1931); C7395/61/3 (25/9/1931). TNA, FO371/15888, C1255/68/3 (8/2/1932).

[13]Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Carte Suvich, B33, F 1932, SF Relazione Sessione del Comitato Finanziario, Relazione di Suvich (3-21/3/1932). Pompeo Aloisi, the Italian chief delegate to the League, also felt it "intolerable that so many small Powers exercised an influence equal to that of the Great Powers." TNA, FO371/17395, W13673/13308/98 (21/11/1933).

Nevertheless, the Italian contribution to loans to Austria was less than that of the despised small country, Czechoslovakia. In spite of Suvich's pretension to be an economic specialist, financial resources in Italy were limited for use as a tool in any diplomatic offensive.[14] Therefore, Suvich cherished the hope of putting Central Europe under Italian patronage by mobilizing the League's Financial Committee as well as resources outside the country. Suvich was able to profit from the French protest against the *Anschluß* (the annexation of Austria by Germany) of 1931, which hindered the Austro-German customs union, but the emergence of Nazi Germany overshadowed his plan after 1933.[15]

By comparison with ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy, the British Empire constantly responded to requests for financial support all over the world during the interwar period. As a point of reference in comparing Shigemitsu and Suvich, Frederick Leith-Ross, in March 1932, was appointed chief economic adviser to the prime minister and chancellor of the exchequer vis-à-vis financial relations with foreign countries. He became the British representative at the Finance Board of the Reparations Commission from 1920 to 1925, the Hague Conference in 1929–1930, and the World Economic Conference in 1933. Leith-Ross also acted as undersecretary of the Economic Committee of the League of Nations. He not only exercised considerable influence over the government but also, after his long career in reparations and debts, tightened the reins of bargaining as a tough negotiator.[16]

The British Treasury and Leith-Ross were reluctant to provide loans to the gold-standard countries, including those in Central Europe, despite the collapse of the Austrian Credit-Anstalt, which triggered an international financial panic. Since they thought that a Danubian confederation or bloc would not settle the difficulties, because of the similar

[14]Whereas the 1923 loan to Austria was guaranteed in the following proportions: France, Britain and Czechoslovakia 23% each, Italy 19%, Spain 4%, etc., the planned issues in 1932 were: Britain 42%, the United States 25%, Czechoslovakia 10%, France 7%, Italy 6%, Spain 4%, etc. TNA, T188/45, Letter from Leith-Ross to Selby (6/5/1932). *Il processo Roatta* (Roma: Donatello De Luigi, 1945), p. 18.

[15]*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter DBFP), 2-II (London: HMSO, 1947), No. 59. TNA, FO371/15151, C4450/61/3 (24/6/1931).

[16]Stephen Lyon Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise: British China Policy 1933–1937* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), p. 103. TNA, T188, Index. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, *Money Talks: Fifty Years of International Finance* (London: Hutchinson, 1968), pp. 145–146, 224.

economic structures in the area, they preferred to discuss the matter with the four great powers in March 1932.[17]

In May 1932, the British government still believed that a regional solution would simply profit Czechoslovakia even though Britain was not satisfied with the French or Italian plans. Leith-Ross actually planned an original outline of conditions for Austrian loans, which strongly demanded strict control by the League advisor and severe financial reform in Austria.[18] In order to clean up Austria's finances, some British reports highly praised Austrian Prime Minister Dollfuß, who suspended the Austrian parliament by emergency decree and became a pseudo-dictator in June 1933.[19]

In contrast to Japan and Italy, the British Foreign Office wanted Austria to appeal to the League against violent Nazi agitation for *Anschluß*, although the League had failed to resolve the situation caused by the Manchurian Incident. Britain was not eager to become directly embroiled in Austrian political matters, just as it had not intervened between Japan and China.[20] Britain declined to make further loans to Austria in 1932, insisting that its government and taxpayers would not approve them. Later, in 1933, the British government refused to take any political action to support Austrian independence. It maintained that the British Parliament and public opinion would denounce such a commitment.[21]

[17]TNA, T188/46, Guaranteed Loans for Central Europe (n. n., n. d.). TNA, T188/60 S.D. Waley to Leith-Ross (1/3/1932).

[18]TNA, T188/45, Letter from Leith-Ross to Selby (6/5/1932); Program for Mixed Committee (27/5/1932). The British tranche of loans was conditioned to repay the debt for British credit. Notwithstanding the fact that Austria was forced to lower trade barriers, Britain itself imposed heavy tariffs. Ibid., Letter from Leith-Ross to Selby (6/5/1932); Letter from Niemeyer to Hopkins (28/5/1932).

[19]TNA, T188/60, Letter to Fergusson (22/6/1933). TNA, FO371/16641, C5433/2092/3 (13/6/1933).

[20]Ibid., C5257/2092/3 (12/6/1933). This did not mean the British Foreign Office had a good understanding with Japan. The Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Sir Robert Vansittart, commented on Japan as "a wholly unfit member of the League," having a "fine natural savagery." TNA, FO371/17073, F74/33/10 (23/12/1932), Minute by Vansittart (1/1/1933).

[21]TNA, T188/45, Letter from Leith-Ross to the Chancellor of Exchequer (30/3/1932). TNA, T188/60, C. P. 280 (32) (August 1932). TNA, FO371/16641, C4748/2092/3 (25/5/1933); C5257/2092/3 (12/6/1933).

## 4.2 The Search for Regional Hegemony

### *4.2.1 Shigemitsu's Plan to Tame Chinese Nationalism*

Japan was incapable of directly influencing financial and economic situations, as was Italy, and Japan lacked the resources to do so. Since the Japanese government had to manage the Manchurian development, there was no room even to participate in a project of cooperative loans to China. Nevertheless, Shigemitsu harshly blamed T. V. Soong for his attempt to invite foreign loans in 1933, which Shigemitsu felt was an act of insubordination since Japan alone, in his opinion, was responsible for maintaining peace and order in East Asia. [22]

In late 1933, the Japanese foreign ministry obstructed the American Cotton-Wheat Loan by prohibiting Japanese companies from buying the raw cotton offered by the loan. On the other hand, it consistently declined to raise new loans unless China repaid the debts on former loans. Shigemitsu spurned negotiating with Soong, now regarded as head of the anti-Japanese clique, even though the Japanese minister (later ambassador) to China, Akira Ariyoshi, pointed out that an anti-Soong campaign in Japan was harmful. Shigemitsu had, at one point, chosen Soong as his counterpart for negotiation, because Shigemitsu shunned the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Cheng-t'ing, who had promoted the revolutionary diplomacy backed by Chinese public opinion in 1930–1931.[23] Now Shigemitsu took more notice of Wang Ching-wei, who later became a "pro-Japanese" prime minister. Hirota and Shigemitsu obstinately took a hard line for fear that the success of the American loan would revitalize the anti-Japanese faction in the Chinese government.[24]

[22] Hideo Kobayashi, "Heisei Kaikaku womeguru Nihon to Chugoku," in *Chugoku no Heisei Kaikaku to Kokusai Kankei*, ed. Yutaka Nozawa (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), pp. 239, 246. Kazuhiko Tomizuka, "1933, 4nen niokeru Shigemitsu Gaimu Jikan no Tai-Chugoku Gaiko Rosen: 'Amau Seimei' no Kosatsu wo Chushin ni," *Gaiko Shiryo Kampo*, Vol. 13 (1999), 67.

[23] Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 47. Ryuji Hattori, *Higashi-Ajia Kokusai Kankyo no Hendo to Nihon Gaiko* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2001), pp. 265–267.

[24] Toshio Iyotani, "Amerika no Tai-Ka Membaku Shakkan to Nihon," in *Ryo-Taisen Kanki no Ajia to Nihon*, ed. Kazuichiro Ono and Susumu Yoshinobu (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1979), pp. 101, 110–111. Taichiro Mitani, "Kokusai Kin'yu Shihon to Ajia no Senso," in *Nempo Kindai Nihon Kenkyu*, No. 2: *Kindai Nihon to Ajia* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1980), p. 149. Masataka Matsuura, "Saiko Nicchu Senso Zenya: Chugoku Heisei Kaikaku to Kodama Hochudan wo Megutte,"(hereafter "Kodama") *Kokusaiseiji*,

The Japanese were hostile not only to the American loan but also to the financial and technical support from the League requested by Soong. In June 1933, Jean Monnet, in his individual capacity, organized the China Development Finance Cooperation to invite joint foreign and Chinese investments. In the next month, Ludwig Rajchman, director of the League's health section, was appointed as a technical agent to establish a solid economic structure in China. He was so detested by the Japanese government that Shigemitsu criticized him by name as a communist agent. Japan immediately rebuffed the plans and threatened to stop paying their share of League expenses.[25]

Since the Japanese boycott of raw cotton resulted in reducing the American loan by 40% of the original plan, the expenditure for reforming the Chinese economy was markedly decreased, thus thwarting Rajchman's plans. Monnet distanced himself from Rajchman on purpose in order to maneuver Japan into an international scheme. Minister to China Ariyoshi proposed to support Monnet's plan, but Shigemitsu clearly dismissed it and censured Ariyoshi. Japan's strong opposition finally deprived the China Development Finance Corporation of a chance to invite foreign banks to contribute to a joint investment. Shigemitsu's consistently hard line toward China appeared effective in forcing Soong into resignation.[26]

The prototype of the Amau Statement was a telegram to Minister Ariyoshi in China on April 13, 1934, that was drafted under the guidance of Shigemitsu and opposed Monnet's attempt to raise foreign

No. 122 (1999), 137. Tomizuka, op. cit., 67. Usui, op. cit., p. 128. JFMA, E. 1. 6. 0. X. 9.

[25] Shimada, op. cit., pp. 83–85. Manabu Hamaguchi, "'Tairiku' niokeru Raihiman to Mone," *Gaiko Shiryo Kampo*, Vol. 12 (1998), 89. Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 94. Rajchman was also hated as a Polish Jew by the German minister (later ambassador) to China, Oskar P. Trautmann. Politisches Archiv, Auswärtigen Amt (hereafter PAAA), R31231, Abschrift s. n. (24/8/1933). The elimination of Rajchman was considered desirable due to his "anti-German" activities. PAAA, R85843, Fa 578 (Mai 1934).

[26] Hamaguchi, op. cit., pp. 92–92. JFMA, B. 9. 7. 0. 8. TNA, FO371/18098, F3011/107/10 (17/5/1934). Takeda, op. cit., p. 101. Noriyuki Ishijima, "Chugoku no Taigai Kankei to Keizaikensetsu," in Nozawa, op. cit., pp. 30–31, 35. The Chinese government intended to sell 80% of the American raw cotton to Japanese factories in China. Yet, because of the Japanese boycott, the American government was asked to cancel thirty million dollars of the loan. Ibid., p. 33.

loans. The principle of Shigemitsu's plan was "to defeat all foreign activities in China, whether conducted collectively or individually."[27] From Shigemitsu's perspective, by eliminating international control over China and purging unfavorable leaders from the Chinese government, the "pro-Japanese" leaders would be able to suppress the anti-Japanese movement by themselves.[28]

Japan's persistent demand for the regulation of anti-Japanese activities followed from its desire for total control over China, which would have allowed it to monopolize its sphere of influence in East Asia without opposition. As his pressure tactics seemed successful in spite of Japan's further diplomatic isolation, Shigemitsu probably began to consider Chinese nationalism even manageable. He believed the one-party dominance of the *Kuomintang* (Nationalist Party), coordinated by "pro-Japanese" leaders such as Executive Yuan President (the equivalent of prime minister) Wang Ching-wei, could lead to collaboration with Japan.[29]

Despising the pre-war Japanese party system, Shigemitsu seemed to view public opinion simply as a tool for justifying policy or as a manipulatable expedient.[30] He defended his tough attitude by pointing out the change in public opinion after the Manchurian Incident.[31] In August 1933, when T. V. Soong returned from a world tour negotiating with Western politicians for financial and economic support, military and public opinion in Japan attacked Soong as an "anti-Japanese" leader who tried to introduce "foreign intervention." He was unable to land at the ports of Yokohama and Kobe. Moreover, the Japanese foreign ministry insisted that Shigemitsu did not wish to meet him.[32] It was the same logic that made Foreign Minister Yasuya Uchida, whose policy had,

[27] JFMA, A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 3, Telegr. No. 109 (13/4/1934). The quotation is from an English translation of the telegram in Shimada, op. cit., p. 82.

[28] Shin'ichi Kamimura, *Nihon Gaiko-shi*, Vol. 19: *Nikka Jihen* (Tokyo: Kajima Kenkyu-jo Shuppankai, 1971), pp. 84–88.

[29] Minister (later ambassador) to China Ariyoshi warned that a person such as Wang Ching-wei, who had no connection with the Chekian financial combine, could not bar the attempts to raise foreign loans, which would favor the pro-Euro-American clique. Matsuura, "Kodama," 137.

[30] Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 12–14, 32–33.

[31] Saireiji, op. cit., 189.

[32] Tomizuka, op. cit., 67.

once, been renounced by Hirota, mobilize public opposition against the League.[33]

Another Japanese condemnation against China and the League was based on the argument that both were contaminated by communist influence. Indeed, even after World War II, Shigemitsu insisted that anti-communism buttressed the legitimacy of his plan.[34] Nevertheless, the influence of the Chinese Communist Party was extended as a result of the Japanese demands on the Chinese government to suppress and manipulate Chinese public opinion. Chinese popular resentment of the pro-Japanese policy of their government was visibly displayed at an extraordinary reception to welcome back Soong in August 1933 at the Shanghai port, an event which overflowed with people. The stricter government control over the press and free speech became, the more radicalized the anti-Japanese movement became.[35]

### *4.2.2 Suvich's Plan for Pro-fascist Austria*

While Shigemitsu continued to design the Japanese policy of supremacy over East Asia, Suvich, ultimately, drafted the Italian plan for Central Europe. Suvich restored the initiative of the foreign ministry so that diplomats would have opportunities to act independently regarding the Austrian problem, even without Mussolini's permission. Whereas Pompeo Aloisi, the head of the Italian delegation to the League of Nations, concluded that the League would not help to defend Austria, Suvich objected to a joint communiqué with Britain to support Austria in favor of a customs union between Italy and Austria.[36]

[33]Tomoko Masuda, "Saito Makoto Kyokokuicchi Naikakuron," in *Shirizu Nihon Kingendaisi*, Vol. 3: *Gendai Shakai no Tenkei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), p. 256. In December 1935, Shigemitsu refused the abolition of unequal treaties with China on the grounds that abolition would severely harm the "internal atmosphere" in Japan. Toshikazu Inoue, *Kiki nonakano Kyocho Gaiko: Nicchu Senso niitaru Taigaiseisaku no Keisei to Tenkai* (Tokyo: Yamawaka Shuppansha, 1994), p. 290.

[34]Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 44, 50, 90, 94, 132.

[35]Ishijima, op. cit., pp. 29, 39, 44.

[36]TNA, FO371/18345, R782/37/3 (7/2/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1398/1287/3 (19/2/1934).

Yet, in addition to financial shortages, the Italian quest for a policy of autarky, including the *battaglia del grano* (battle for grain), encroached upon the options offered by the foreign trade policy. The Austrian government also secretly requested preferential tariffs from other countries including the Little Entente, France and Germany.[37] In order to increase Italy's choices, Suvich entered into negotiations centered on the Four Power Pact, from March to July 1933. The idea of consulting major powers on important matters, including the post-war treaty revision of Britain, France, Italy and Germany, captivated Suvich, who found it preferable to conferring with the fifty-three member countries of the League of Nations.[38]

Since Suvich was more pragmatic than Germanophobe, he tried to collaborate with the other major powers in accordance with Mussolini's desire to promote fascism in Germany and Europe.[39] Although he made friendly approaches to Berlin, Nazi offensive policies against Austria and European cooperation ruined the unratified Four Power Pact in October 1933. The World Economic Conference in London, held from June to July 1933, was another chance for Italy to extend its economic field of activity, but it, too, ended in failure because of American opposition.[40]

It was not only the external situation that caused the deadlock. Fascist Italy itself derailed the attempts of Danubian collaboration with

[37] Ibid., R1541/1287/3 (3/3/1934). ASMAE, Carte Suvich, B33, F 1933, SF Relazioni commerciali Austria-Ungheria, Appunto relativo al trattamento preferenziale alle merci austriache (6/12/1932).

[38] Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1: *Gli anni del consenso 1929–1936* (Torino: Einaudi, 1974), pp. 455–457.

[39] Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* (hereafter O. O.), a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, Vol. XXV (Firenze: La Fenice, 1958), pp. 148, 200. Suvich was sometimes simply classified as anti-German, a priori. MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 137. R.J.B. Bosworth, *Mussolini* (London: Arnold, 2002), p. 271.

[40] TNA, FO371/16641, C5520/2092/3 (16/3/1933). MacGregor Knox, "Expansionist Zeal, Fighting Power, and Staying Power in the Italian and German Dictatorships," in *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Comparisons and Contrasts*, ed. Richard Bessel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 119–123. Suvich, op. cit., p. 182. Suvich attended the World Economic Conference and, according to Ambassador to Britain Dino Grandi, enjoyed being held in high regard there. Paolo Nello, *Dino Grandi: La formazione di un leader fascista* (Bologna: Mulino, 1987), p. 229.

the Little Entente. At the same time, Suvich was on his guard against the resurgence of Austria-Hungary, opposing any proposal of Hapsburg restoration in his report on the Danubian project in September 1933.[41] Despite the fact that Mussolini had been considered the champion of the reunion of Austria and Hungary, Suvich intentionally omitted the issue from his plan to solve Central European affairs.[42]

Moreover, Suvich refused to support Austria in appealing to the League against Nazi activities, because the League's modus operandi would delay matters and reinforce the Little Entente's influence in Central Europe. He even complained that Dollfuß had recourse to the League and simultaneously organized a meeting with an Austrian Nazi leader.[43] In the same way that Shigemitsu could not tolerate interference from the League and foreign countries, Suvich wanted to complete his plan of regional domination independently of other political actors.

Furthermore, Suvich was no less anti-socialist than anti-Nazi or anti-Hapsburg, and ventured to take drastic measures. He advised Austrian Prime Minister Dollfuß to suppress the socialist municipality of Vienna. Suvich also emphasized to British diplomats that Dollfuß must move more to the right and should not be discouraged by pressure from outside Austria. In Suvich's view, the annihilation of the Austrian Social Democratic Party and the installation of a fascist regime would strengthen Dollfuß's position and contribute to maintaining Austrian independence. The high-ranking diplomat Baron Aloisi, *capo di gabinetto* (head of the cabinet) of the foreign ministry, contributed to the development of this idea before Mussolini gave it his approval.[44]

It is ironic that Adolf Hitler advocated restoring the Austrian Constitution and calling for a new election in December 1933 because

[41] ASMAE, Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Austria, B27, F3, Necessità di un progetto italiano per la ricostruzione dell'Europa danubiana (Settembre 1933).

[42] Ibid., Telesp. N. 2332/359 (23/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18350, R1538/37/3 (8/3/1934). Tomaso De Vergottini, "Fulvio Suvich e la difesa dell'indipendenza austriaca," in *Le fonti diplomatiche in età moderna e contemporanea: Atti del Convegno internazionale Lucca, 20–25 gennaio 1989* (Roma: Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivistici, 1995), p. 410.

[43] TNA, FO371/18345, R693/37/3 (29/1/1934). Rosaria Quartararo, *Roma tra Londra e Berlino: La politica estera fascista dal 1930 al 1940* (Roma: Bonacci, 1980), p. 75.

[44] Österreichsches Staatsarchiv, Neue Politische Archiv, Wien, K84, No. 16/pol (1934/2/15). DBFP, 2-VI, Nos. 205, 222. TNA, FO371/18345, R782/37/3 (7/2/1934); FO371/18363, R1541/1287/3 (3/3/1934).

the Austrian Nazis had extended their power.[45] In January 1934, Suvich, on the other hand, justified Dollfuß's reactionary policies, quoting the comment of the League of Nations' high commissioner, Rost van Tonningen, that the socialist administration of Vienna was the cause of Austrian weakness.[46] On January 20, the socialist bulletin *Arbeiter Zeitung* was rebanned on the grounds that it had insulted Suvich. On February 12, 1934, the Austrian government, supported by the *Heimwehr* (Home Guard: a right-wing paramilitary group), violently attacked the Austrian Social Democrats. After the mass arrest of socialists, Suvich was fully convinced that undue leniency would be as bad as ferocious treatment. Dollfuß guaranteed fair treatment of the laboring class and clemency for prisoners in order to regain Western support. Suvich was not as concerned about international public opinion.[47]

Suvich asserted that a corporative state would be the best form of government for a country such as Austria, in which the parliamentary system had failed to take root. Even in his memoirs, after World War II, he persisted in his opinion that socialism and democracy paved the way for Hitler's success.[48] Nevertheless, in suppressing socialists, Suvich regretted that there was no Nazi *putsch*, because this would have provide fascist Italy with a reason to send troops to expel the Nazis from Austria. In order to avoid any criticism of Italian unilateral action, he mentioned the possibility of meeting the League's request for collective military action. Thus, Suvich's view of the League was just a means to an end, always obscure and undecided.[49] Permanent Undersecretary of the British Foreign Office Vansittart also regarded the League as a tool that could be easily abandoned, so he supported Dollfuß's appeal to the League Council for pressure against Germany only for the purpose of checking Nazi intrusion in Austria without any British commitment.[50]

[45] *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik* (hereafter ADAP), C-II (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), Nr. 126.

[46] TNA, FO371/18345, R629/37/3 (25/1/1934).

[47] Ibid., R560/37/3 (23/1/1934); FO371/18350, R1468/37/3 (5/3/1934); R1601/37/3 (14/3/1934); R1615/37/3 (10/3/1934).

[48] Ibid. Suvich, op. cit., p. 274.

[49] TNA, FO371/18350, R1435/37/3 (2/3/1934). ADAP, C-II, Nr. 225.

[50] TNA, FO371/16641, C5257/2092/3 (12/6/1933). Robert Dell, "Vansittart, Europe's Arbiter," *Nation*, 24 July 1937.

Although both Japan and Italy profoundly interfered in the governance of neighboring countries, a huge difference in Austrian affairs was that the direct menace came not from fascist Italy but Nazi Germany. As a consequence of Suvich's advice on crushing the socialists and strengthening the *Heimwehr*, Prime Minister Dollfuß lost sympathy from abroad and missed the opportunity to appeal to the League.[51] Since Suvich disagreed about reviving the Austrian parliamentary system and cooperating with the Austrian Social Democrats through threat to cancel Italy's practical assistance, Dollfuß had to introduce a new fascist constitution, abolishing all the parties and imposing upon teachers the need to declare their religious beliefs, which satisfied Mussolini and the Vatican. As many former socialist supporters converted to the Nazi camp, dislike and mistrust of fascist Italy gradually spread in Austria.[52]

As seen above, Shigemitsu and Suvich had many characteristics in common. Both of them were consistent in their quest for regional hegemony in East Asia and Central Europe, respectively, by establishing cooperative regimes in Manchuria and Austria. They carefully chose their targets of attack, the Japanese by attacking intraregional anti-Japanese activities, and the Italians by attacking the League of Nations, and the Austrian Social Democratic Party, which they perceived as communist oriented. For Suvich, it was also important to criticize Nazi Germany, for which the great powers had less sympathy, even from the imperialistic viewpoint of international politics. Shigemitsu and Suvich pursued a policy of excluding Western influence as well. Yet they were careful not to openly attack Britain and France directly—for example, indirectly assaulting pro-Western cliques in China or the Little Entente.

In the short term, both of these capable planners succeeded in patronizing "pro-Japanese" and "pro-Italian" leaders in China and Austria to induce them to take favorable courses. Besides using regional leaders to eliminate their enemies, they executed more aggressive tactics,

[51]TNA, FO371/18350, R1538/37/3 (8/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1541/1287/3 (3/3/1934). The *Heimwehr* had at one point been reported to be bankrupt and split by feuds, but now, it became a major protector of Dollfuß and the independence of Austria. TNA, FO371/15888, C4469/68/3 (30/5/1932); FO371/18350, R1629/37/3 (10/3/1934). De Vergottini, op. cit., p. 410.

[52]ASMAE, Carte Suvich, B42, F 1934, SF Austria varie, Lettera da dott. Riccardo Luzzatto a Suvich (7/8/1934). TNA, FO371/18350, R1615/37/3 (10/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18352, R3436/37/3 (14/6/1934); R3603/37/3 (26/6/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1539/1287/3 (27/2/1934).

the Japanese through their military, and the Italians, through their fascists. The upshot of this approach was that Shigemitsu and Suvich could enjoy their reputations as moderates and realists, while they ignored or manipulated public opinion. However, at variance with their confidence in their ability to manage diplomatic and financial issues, their clever maneuvers caused the serious erosion of the relationship with other countries.

## 4.3 Axis Interference and British Non-commitment Policy

### *4.3.1 Partial Success in 1934 and the Exit of Shigemitsu*

The British Foreign Office avoided intervention in East Asia and Central Europe, using the excuse of a lack of public support. T. V. Soong's request for British aid was rejected in June 1933. On the one hand, the British government attempted to restrain their press from reporting the Austrian terror against socialists in February 1934. On the other hand, they started formulate economic policies to appease Nazi Germany.[53]

After the conclusion of the Anglo-German Commercial Agreement in April 1933, German payments negotiations took place in 1934 under Leith-Ross's control. Due to the serious trade deficit and unemployment problems in Britain, he coerced Germany to buy labor-intensive products such as coal and herrings. In the end, Leith-Ross managed to conclude the German Payments Agreement in November 1934, whose basic structure worked satisfactorily until the outbreak of World War II.[54]

Demanding the payments from Nazi Germany, Leith-Ross became more self-assured about the possibility of solving the international financial and economic problems caused by the newly emerging Axis powers. Whereas he remedied the deteriorating situation of the trade balance between the British Empire and Germany, a fundamental

[53]DBFP, 2-VI, No. 222. Endicott, op. cit., pp. 35–37. TNA, FO371/18350, R1468/37/3 (5/3/1934).

[54]Kazuto Yamamoto, *Sengo Sekai Boeki Chitsujo no Keisei: Ei-bei no Kyocho to Kakuchiku* (Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 1999), pp. 35–44. Leith-Ross, op. cit., pp. 187–191. TNA, T188/81, Minutes of First Meeting (19/9/1934); Minutes of Seventh Meeting (24/9/1934). The British report itself admitted: "He did not mention this as a threat, but as an obvious logical conclusion." Ibid., Fifth Conference (24/9/1934).

currency reform in China was required to improve the British position in East Asia, where exports to China were also outstripped by Japan and, recently, Germany.[55] Unlike Shigemitsu and Suvich, Leith-Ross did not plan to establish regional dominance in East Asia or Central Europe but endeavored to arrange favorable terms for the British finance and commercial sectors, which guaranteed the hegemony of sterling in those areas.

Just as Leith-Ross had been pressured during the German payments negotiations in September 1934 by the English and Scottish Herring Catchers Associations regarding the immediate necessity of exports, the British government was besieged with demands from the parliamentary Lancashire lobby to restrict Japanese economic expansion.[56] When, in late 1934, China approached Britain for a loan to overcome its financial-economic crisis, which had originated in the American silver-buying policy, the British government had to consider its important commercial interests as well as the predominant interest of Japan, which was "exceedingly jealous of European intervention."[57]

Moreover, since China took pride in refusing foreign control of finances, which the small bankrupt European states were forced to accept, Leith-Ross could not simply impose stringent conditions, as in the case of Austria.[58] The League of Nations was also warned against foreign interference in China, as alluded to in the Amau Statement of April 17, 1934, which had been formulated under the strong influence of Shigemitsu's plan.[59] Japan, in parallel with the British trade restrictions, introduced a law permitting the government to declare a boycott and impose a retaliatory tariff without the approval of the parliament in April 1934.[60]

[55]TNA, FO371/20275, F2840/2840/10 (14/4/1936).

[56]TNA, T188/81, Minutes of the Fourth Meeting (21/9/1934). Antony Best, "Economic Appeasement or Economic Nationalism? A Political Perspective on the British Empire, Japan, and the Rise of Intra-Asian Trade, 1933–37," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2002), 80–84.

[57]Leith-Ross, op. cit., p.195.

[58]TNA, FO371/15485, F304/304/10 (10/1/1931).

[59]DBFP, 2-XX, No. 106.

[60]Osamu Ishii, *Sekai Kyoko to Nihon no 'Keizai Gaiko'* (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1995), p. 21.

In September 1934, the mission of the Federation of British Industry reached Japan on its way to a private visit to Manchuria. At the welcoming dinner party on September 28, Foreign Minister Hirota again mentioned to the British ambassador, Sir Robert Clive, the idea of an Anglo-Japanese non-aggression pact. The mission recognized Japan as the dominating force in East Asia and recommended a political understanding with Japan so as to acquire commercial advantages.[61] In spite of the imposition of Japan's oil monopoly in Manchuria in November 1934, the basic proposals of the Leith-Ross mission of 1935 were influenced by Japan's argument, which the Foreign Office and the press criticized.[62]

Shigemitsu's reports in October 1934 did not guarantee British interests in China. Rather, he clarified his plan to expel Western imperial powers from China and destroy Chinese maritime customs, whose revenues secured China's foreign loans. The original plan of Leith-Ross, on the contrary, requested China to maintain its customs administration under the British inspector-general, with adequate powers including the right to recruit foreign personnel. Leith-Ross intended to control the reform of the central bank by means of a British adviser and to not base the Chinese budget and currency system on the yen or gold standard, which could have led to the same type of international tutorage arranged for Austria. Although Shigemitsu's plan assumed the withdrawal of foreign troops, dissolution of concessions and abolition of extraterritorial rights, his anti-Western imperialism practiced deception on both Britain and China because Japan soon became the substitute for the West.[63]

In June 1935, Shigemitsu threatened the Chinese government into giving a free hand to pro-Japanese forces in the Chahar region, while the military plotted to set up a puppet government in North China.[64]

[61] DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 22; 2-XX, Nos. 202, 220.

[62] Ibid. George Sansom, who was acknowledged as the best authority on Japan, also warned the Foreign Office that such a bargain would "furnish them with political advantages in return for unspecified commercial benefits." TNA, FO371/19361, F1116/1116/23 (23/1/1935). Cf. Ian Nish, "G. B. Sansom and His Tokyo Friends," *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 4th series, Vol. 14 (1999), 88. DBFP, 2-XX, No. 216. *The Times*, 6/3/1935.

[63] Chihiro Hosoya, *Ryo-taisen-kan no Nihon Gaiko* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), p. 130. Sakai, *Taisho Democracy*, p. 58. JFMA, A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 3, "Tai-Shi Seisaku nikansuru Shigemitsu Jikan Kojutsu." TNA, FO371/19243, F5195/6/10 (9/8/1935).

[64] Usui, op. cit., p.156. JFMA, A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 4.

There is a close similarity between Shigemitsu's logic and fascist Italy's "anti-imperialistic" activities in the Arab world, on which Galeazzo Ciano was keener than Suvich had been.[65] Facing the deteriorating situation in China in January 1936, the British Foreign Office still had no intention of giving China anything more than their "moral sympathy," for fear of levying sanctions on Japan as the League had applied to Italy.[66] After having derailed the American Cotton-Wheat Loan and the League's support in 1934, Shigemitsu was probably too confident of his ability to participate in the joint loan proposed by Jean Monnet in 1935. The British proposed joint British-Japanese assistance instead of international financial assistance to China and decided to send the highest-ranking economic adviser in the treasury department, Leith-Ross, to East Asia in June 1935.[67]

When Leith-Ross first talked with Foreign Minister Hirota on September 10, 1935, he proposed Chinese recognition of Manchukuo in return for adequate compensation. Leith-Ross suggested that Britain and Japan offer a loan of ten million pounds to Manchukuo, and that this sum would then be paid to China as an indemnity for the loss of that area. According to his plan, the new Central Bank of China, under British supervision, would adopt a currency system linked to sterling. However, Hirota did not take up the contention that China was facing a financial crisis and flatly refused the British proposal. Shigemitsu, as well, asserted that the problem of Manchukuo should be solved between Japan and China, not with the interference of a third country. Since both Hirota and Shigemitsu also considered a loan to China useless, they were non-committal and skeptical. Although Shigemitsu asked Leith-Ross to return to Japan after his investigations in China, Leith-Ross openly expressed his disappointment at the last meeting on September 17.[68]

[65] Renzo De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'oriente: Arabi, ebrei e indiani nella poliica di Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), pp. 7–40.

[66] TNA, FO371/20241, F312/96/10 (16/1/1936).

[67] TNA, FO371/20275, F3111/3111/10 (21/4/1936). Endicott, op. cit., pp. 100–101. Yoichi Kibata, "Risu-Rosu Shisetsudan to Ei-Chu Kankei," in Nozawa, op. cit., pp. 207–208.

[68] *Nihon Gaiko Nempyo narabini Shuyo Bunsho*, Vol. II (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1966), pp. 244–245. Endicott, op. cit., pp. 107–108. TNA, FO371/19243, F5164/6/10 (8/8/1935). TNA, FO371/19244, F6003/6/10 (18/9/1935). Leith-Ross had heard of Shigemitsu's reputation as a militarist, but he found Shigemitsu "on the whole moderate and reasonable as well as very intelligent in his views." Leith-Ross, op. cit., p. 200.

While the Japanese foreign ministry publicly emphasized that China could rely on its own resources to bring about currency reform, without any foreign loans, the fact was that Hirota and Shigemitsu feared a joint loan would bring about international control over Chinese finances, which had actually happened to Austria. In addition, they overestimated the reinstatement of "pro-Japanese" Wang Ching-wei as president of the Executive Yuan in March 1933, and their success in degrading the anti-Japanese clique in 1934. In June 1934, Wang actually reformed customs duties, lowering the tariff on light industrial products, to which Japanese had clung pertinaciously.[69]

However, on September 30, 1935, Wang himself refused to accept Leith-Ross's proposal to recognize Manchukuo, on the grounds that it "might create fresh revolution and disrupt China."[70] In fact, in August 1935, he had to tender his resignation due to strong public pressure and criticism inside the government against his pro-Japanese diplomacy, which had failed to bring about any substantial concessions from Japan. Chiang Kai-shek was also immersed in active preparation for war against Japan, which highly motivated China to abandon the age-old silver standard.[71]

In September 1935, Leith-Ross went ahead with discussions on this delicate political problem with the Chinese leaders but failed to persuade London to approve the loan to China. Even a powerful person such as Leith-Ross could not exercise his own discretion independently of public opinion, as Shigemitsu and Suvich were able to do, irrespective of parliamentary politics. In the meantime, the Chinese government could not wait any longer and proceeded, through its own efforts, to deal with the silver crisis. While Shigemitsu actually believed currency reform in politically unstable China impossible, T. V. Soong, now president of the Central Bank of China, succeeded, initially without a foreign loan, in issuing a paper currency based on the nationalization of all silver reserves in China. Having successfully implemented his policy of self-reliance, Soong returned to the post of finance minister.[72]

[69] Matsuura, "Kodama," 136–137. Leith-Ross, op. cit., p. 204.

[70] TNA, FO371/19244, F6159/6/10 (30/9/1935).

[71] Ishijima, op. cit., pp. 40, 46–49. Leith-Ross, op. cit., p. 225.

[72] Endicott, op. cit., pp. 21, 116. Leith-Ross, op. cit., pp. 204–205, 222, 224–225.

In November 1935, Shigemitsu protested the Chinese-British collaboration that excluded Japan, calling it a typical example of the Chinese policy "to bring a barbarian [Britain] into play against another barbarian [Japan]."[73] Even though the Japanese government obstinately opposed the request that Japanese banks hand over their silver reserves to the Chinese government in exchange for the new paper currency, the escalation of Japanese obstruction could not affect the development. The attempted assassination of Wang Ching-wei in November and the assassination of his right-hand "pro-Japanese" undersecretary for foreign affairs, Tang Yu-jen, in December, dismantled the major premise of Japanese diplomacy. It was too late when Hirota officially reinvited Leith-Ross in February 1936.[74]

When Leith-Ross revisited Japan in June 1936, Shigemitsu had already been replaced as undersecretary by Kensuke Horinouchi, whom the British ambassador to Japan, Sir Robert Clive, ridiculed as a "village idiot" compared with the capable Shigemitsu.[75] From the British viewpoint, neither the newly appointed foreign minister, Hachiro Arita, nor Undersecretary Kensuke Horinouchi were well informed by their predecessors. So, presumably, Shigemitsu had not hesitated to act on his own authority.[76] Yet, Shigemitsu's idea of regional hegemony filtered into the Japanese government, whose cabinet members did not pledge cooperation with Leith-Ross. The Japanese side was, basically, opposed not only to international control of Chinese finances but also to British loans to China. Many of them conjectured that once British demands were accepted, British financial-economic hegemony could ruin Japan's supremacy over East Asia.[77]

Recognizing the special relationship between China and Japan in terms of their anti-communist policy, Leith-Ross maintained that Japan

[73] Sumio Hatano, "Risu-Rosu no Kyokuto Homon to Nihon: Chugoku Heisei Kaikaku womegutte," *Kokusai Seiji*, No. 58 (1977), 92–93.

[74] Ibid., 97–98. Endicott, op. cit., pp. 114–117. Matsuura, "Kodama," 138. TNA, T188/108, No. 51 (13/11/1935).

[75] DBFP, 2-XX, No. 486.

[76] Ann Trotter, *Britain and East Asia 1933–1937* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 181.

[77] Inoue, op. cit., pp. 284–286. JFMA, A. 2. 1. 0. C6, "Baba Okura Daijin no 'Leith-Ross' Sekken Kaidan Yoryo" (10/6/1936); No. 68 (5/2/1936); "Nichi-Ei Kyoryoku niyoru Tai-Shi Keizai Enjo ni kansuru Ken" (9/4/1936).

should grant a concession to China by supporting currency reform: "If you want to be loved by a girl, you sometimes have to kiss her."[78] Nevertheless, the Japanese foreign ministry continued insisting on Japan's unique position in China as a life-and-death matter and reiterated its general desire for Anglo-Japanese friendship. In addition, Undersecretary Horinouchi even tried to delete a reference to the problem of smuggling in North China from Leith-Ross's statement, though Shigemitsu had once admitted it to be "a scandal."[79] Thus, Leith-Ross's plan for financial-economic cooperation in East Asia for the purpose of preserving the Chinese Open Door policy and the British free trade empire ended in an impasse. At the same time, Shigemitsu's plan for regional dominance in cooperation with "pro-Japanese" forces in China was gradually overwhelmed by Japanese military expansionism.

### *4.3.2 Suvich's Stalemate Over the Crises of Austria and Ethiopia*

While Shigemitsu failed to accomplish his plan in 1935 by overestimating his own success in 1934, Suvich was also facing the same type of problem immediately after the triumph over the Austrian Social Democrats in February 1934. The Austrian government cancelled the anti-Hapsburg laws that forbade the return of the imperial family to Austria and confiscated their properties. Now it was rumored that the leaders of the *Heimwehr*, on which Dollfuß mostly depended, conspired to restore the Hapsburg monarchy without a clear recognition of the prime minister. The Hungarian government was so passive and skeptical of such legitimist activities that it loosened its ties to Austria and Italy and began to approach Nazi Germany.[80]

Suvich visited Budapest and tried to persuade the government of the necessity for Italo-Austro-Hungarian cooperation and settlement of the Austrian situation. However, the Hungarian leaders were not disposed to enter into any agreement of an anti-German character and desired

[78] JFMA, A. 2. 1. 0. C6, "Isogai Shosho Leith-Ross Kaidan Yoshi" (8/6/1936).

[79] JFMA, A. 2. 1. 0. C6, "Leith-Ross ni taisuru Oshu Taisaku" (n. d., probably June 1936). *The Japan Advertiser*, 10/6/1936. JFMA, A. 2. 1. 0. C6, "Horinouchi Jikan Leith-Ross Kaidan Yoroku" (15/5/1936).

[80] TNA, FO371/18363, R1580/1287/3 (5/3/1934); R1583/1287/3 (9/3/1934). ADAP, C-II, Nr. 444.

to keep an independent position concerning any future Austro-German conflict.[81] In fact, the British Minister to Hungary was informed that the Hungarian government had sent to Rome the head of its foreign trade department, not the foreign minister, with the aim of only discussing technical matters. Furthermore, the Hungarian regent, Miklós Horthy, denied any political agreement with Italy.[82]

Italy finally succeeded in drawing up a political protocol "on the basis of respect for the independence and rights of each separate state,"[83] but Mussolini had to openly recognize Hungarian revisionism, which was considered to be a sign of aggressive foreign policy. On the other hand, the Italian government was forced to emphasize that it did not have any intention of bringing about a Hapsburg restoration, or of forming a political bloc against a third country.[84] Ironically, one strategic reason why Italy denied the restoration was that it later began to develop an anti-German military plan with Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, which strongly opposed the reestablishment of an Austro-Hungarian Empire.[85]

From an economic perspective, the Rome Protocols of March 17, 1934, also did not facilitate the the encouragement of regional trade. Although the low world price of wheat damaged the Hungarian economy, Mussolini's autarky program and Dollfuß's agrarian policy hindered the improvement of trade relations. The only business proposition offered by Italy was to make Trieste a free port, which would have been advantageous to Suvich's home town. Nonetheless, many economic specialists doubted that Trieste could substitute for Hamburg, from which

[81]The Italian scholar De Vergottini describes Suvich's "success" in preventing Hungary from going into the German camp, while the Hungarian scholar Ránki has emphasized the Hungarian negative attitude to anti-German cooperation. De Vergottini, op. cit., p. 411. György Ránki, "Il patto tripartito di Roma e la politica estera della Germania (1934)," *Studi storici*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1962), 360–362.

[82]TNA, FO371/18363, R1539/1287/3 (27/2/1934).

[83]Ibid., R1663/1287/3 (18/3/1934).

[84]Ránki, op. cit., 363–366. ASMAE, AP, Austria, B27, F3, 9/3/1934. O. O., XXVI, p. 192.

[85]The National Archives of the United States, Washington D C, Collection of Italian Military Records, 1935–1943, Microcopy T-821, Reel 368, Carteggio relativo al Piano 34 e Piano K trattato dall'ufficio della divisione Leonessa, 4-27; Comando del Corpo di Armata Territoriale, etc., 273–401.

canal transportation was available to reach Central Europe.[86] An effective option, commercial pacts with the Little Entente, was hinted at as well as another extreme opinion: an invitation to Germany to join the protocols, but only to throw the blame on the advocates for their non-cooperation. In spite of the positive attitude of Czechoslovakia, Mussolini rebuffed the proposal that Prime Minister Edvard Beneš should visit Rome.[87]

Suvich himself stated that a joint communiqué with Britain and France for maintaining the independence of Austria was not feasible, probably because he thought the Rome Protocols could counterbalance German hegemony without Western support.[88] The Italian government flaunted its success by rolling out the red carpet for the Austrian and Hungarian prime ministers in Rome.[89] Both Britain and France took an affirmative stance to the protocols, as they shut their eyes to the violent suppression of the Austrian socialists.[90]

Mussolini and Suvich now turned to negotiations with Hitler in Venice on June 14 and 15, 1934. Though Hitler assured Suvich on December 13, 1933 that the *Anschluß* was by no means urgent or even desirable,[91] Mussolini was unable to secure Hitler's pledge for a formal renouncement of the *Anschluß*. Suvich told the British ambassador to Rome, Sir Eric Drummond, that Hitler was so moved by the warm reception that tears continually welled in his eyes. Yet in their negotiations, Hitler dominated the conversation, and Mussolini had to patiently listen to him. Hitler began to assert the necessity of either an immediate election or the entry of Nazi members into the Austrian government. However,

[86]ASMAE, AP, Austria, B27, F3, Telegr. A. 1038R (14/3/1934); Osservazioni fatte oralmente dal Sig. Schuller sulla questione del fondo comune (13/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18352, R3606/37/3 (26/6/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1541/1287/3 (3/3/1934); R1663/1287/3 (18/3/1934); R1716/1287/3 (17/3/1934). PAAA, R29471, Abschrift Östreichische Situazionen (März, 1934).

[87]ASMAE, AP, Austria, B27, F3, Telegr. 972-11/480 (8/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18363, R1398/1287/3 (19/2/1934); R1593/1287/3 (8/3/1934). DBFP, 2-VI, No. 358.

[88]Ránki pointed out the Italian eagerness for British support. Ránki, op. cit., 368–369. DBFP, 2-VI, No. 565. Yet Suvich was indecisive, in the same way that his attitude toward the League vacillated. TNA, FO371/18363, R1398/1287/3 (19/2/1934).

[89]Ibid., R1716/1287/3 (17/3/1934).

[90]ASMAE, AP, Austria, B27, F3, Telegr. A. 1089R (17/3/1934); Telegr. 972-11/480 (8/3/1934). De Vergottini, op. cit., p. 410.

[91]ADAP, C-II, Nr. 126.

Mussolini refused to champion his idea unless the existing Nazi pressure was removed.[92] While Dollfuß's petition for British economic support only inspired Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon to send university students sightseeing in Austria, a happy result of the meeting with Hitler was expected to be an increase in German tourists to Italy at most.[93]

Nazi Germany applied more pressure on Austria in spite of the strong objections from fascist Italy. Dollfuß sent his pro-German undersecretary for foreign affairs to Berlin in July 1934. Nevertheless, German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath reacted too high-handedly to negotiate for the improvement of Austro–German relations. Neurath plainly announced that the only means of conciliation was to stop the suppression of the Austrian Nazi Party.[94] On July 25, the Nazi *putsch* broke out, and Dollfuß was left to bleed to death after two shots. In spite of the Italian military preparations against Germany, involving the cooperation of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, the three countries placed checks on each other, moving their troops only to the Austrian border.[95]

While Shigemitsu's scenario suffered a setback due to the continual assassination attempts against members of the pro-Japanese clique in China, the murder of Dollfuß dealt a fatal blow against Suvich's design for the protection of Austrian independence. Actually, Suvich made an interesting comment on the Sino-Japanese conflict that Japan had succeeded in China not because of its own strength but because of Chinese weakness and its pro-Japanese faction.[96] Both planners were too reliant on favorite counterparts they did not support sufficiently.

[92] DBFP, 2-VI, No. 462. *I documenti diplomatici italiani* (hereafter DDI), 7-XV (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1994), n. 411. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 494–497.

[93] TNA, FO371/18352, R3494/37/3 Minute by Simon (29/6/1934). DDI, 7-XV, n. 401. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, p. 485.

[94] ASMAE, AP, Austria, B31, F1, Telegr. A/C 2717R (25/7/1934). PAAA, R29509, R.M.825 (16/7/1934).

[95] TNA, FO371/18352, R4156/37/3 (27/7/1934). The National Archives of the United States, Washington, DC, Collection of Italian Military Records, 1935–1943, Microcopy T-821, Reel 368, Carteggio relativo al Piano 34 e Piano K trattato dall'ufficio della divisione Leonessa, 4-27; Comando del Corpo di Armata Territoriale, etc., 273–401. ASMAE, AP, Austria, B31, F1, Telegr.-Posta 4957/1349 (30/7/1934); Telegr. A. N.2714R (26/7/1934).

[96] TNA, FO371/18169, F3590/57/23 (7/6/1934).

Mussolini was extremely critical about the violent purge in Nazi Germany in June and the developments in Austria in July and acted to obstruct German attempts to dominate Central Europe. Nonetheless, in light of the apparent British unwillingness to get involved in continental affairs, Mussolini tried to normalize Italo–German relations between July and October 1934.[97] In Austria, the new chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, a southern Tyrolean and a former prisoner of war of the Italian army, did not have the same sentiment toward fascist Italy as the Viennese Dollfuß. He was said to have accepted the post of minister of justice on the understanding that he would not apply strong measures against Austrian Nazis. One the other hand, he severely punished socialists during his ministry.[98]

In parallel with Austrian affairs, Mussolini clarified his decision to invade Ethiopia at the meetings of the Italian foreign ministry in February and May 1934, and Suvich was one of those in attendance. Suvich and Aloisi set the stage to conclude the Mussolini-Laval accords on protecting Austrian independence and giving Italy "a free hand" in Ethiopia in January 1935, immediately after Mussolini had composed a memorandum on the conquest of Ethiopia, on December 30, 1934. In order to conceal this plan, which was likely to incur British opposition, Mussolini avoided seeing the British diplomats and left the arrangement to Suvich.[99]

Suvich refused to sit at the same League Council table as the Ethiopian representatives because, he alleged, they practiced slavery in their country and therefore should be disqualified from membership of the League.[100] At the same time, creating a united front with Britain

[97] ADAP, C-III, Nr. 127. Quartararo, op. cit., pp. 83–84. Jens Petersen, *Hitler und Mussolini. Die Entstehung der Achse Berlin-Rom 1933–1936* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1973), S. 331.

[98] De Vergottini, op. cit., p. 412. TNA, FO371/18352, R3888/37/3 (14/7/1934).

[99] Giorgio Rochat, *Militari e politici nella preparazione della campagna d'Etiopia* (Milano: Angeli, 1971), pp. 26–40, 101–107. Emilio De Bono, *La preparazione e le prime operazioni* (Roma: Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura, 1937), pp. 8–13. George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 36–38, 41–42, 84. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, p. 644. DBFP, 2-XIV, Nos. 60, 124. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922–1946* (hereafter Guariglia, *Ricordi*) (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), p. 215.

[100] *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935-II (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 137. DBFP, 2-XIV, Nos. 60, 97.

and France against Germany, Suvich organized the Stresa Conference on April 11–14, 1935, in which they denounced Germany's unilateral cancellation of treaties as a threat to "European peace." Since British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald did not want to touch on such a delicate matter as the Ethiopian problem, Mussolini interpreted this silence to be a sign of tacit permission.[101] Despite the fact that Suvich was hated by Nazi Germany and did not decide on the aggressive policy toward Ethiopia by himself, he would not have actively resisted Mussolini unless the Ethiopian venture had hampered his plan for Central Europe.[102]

The British government, on the other hand, connived in Italy's creation of a regional protectorate over Austria and Ethiopia as well as in Japanese dominance of Manchuria, while regaining financial-economic advantages without making a political commitment to Central Europe, East Africa and East Asia. In a remarkably similar fashion to ultra-nationalist Japan, which was both the "protector" against Western imperialism and the aggressor against China, fascist Italy played the separate roles of protector against Germany in Central Europe and aggressor against Ethiopia in East Africa. However, the escalation of expansionism was soon beyond the control of Britain and the planners in both countries. The Japanese military and Italian fascists now took the lead in aggression, with the consequence that Shigemitsu and Suvich gradually lost control over their own country's foreign policy.

Weakening the centripetal force of the planners, the two foreign ministries accordingly began to sow discord among the diplomats. Notwithstanding all the external pressure, it also could be said that a stagnant situation revealed the contradictions in their own decision-making processes.

One of the notorious Japanese diplomats in China, Yakichiro Suma, appointed as consul general at Nanking by Foreign Minister Hirota, was

[101] Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 781–782. Giuseppe Bottai, *Vent' anni e un giorno* (Milano: Garzanti, 1977), pp. 124–125. O. O. XXVII, p. 140. Lord Vansittart, *The Mist Procession: The Autobiography of Lord Vansittart* (London: Hutchinson, 1958), p. 520. Pierre-Étienne Flandin, *Politique française 1919–1940* (Paris: Les Éditions Nouvelles, 1947), pp. 178–179. Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini: Study of a Demagogie* (London: Odhams, 1964), pp. 289–290.

[102] Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, NS 43/385, Zeitungsdienst: Auslandsdienst (25/11/1935).

a typical example.[103] Suma often categorized foreign representatives as well as Chinese politicians into pro- and anti-Japanese groups and turned down any offers from the "anti-Japanese" cliques.[104] Suma's reaction was rather extreme, but his viewpoint on Chinese currency reform proceeded along the same lines as Shigemitsu's, surmising that the Leith-Ross mission was an attempt to control the Chinese monetary system.[105]

Shigemitsu's negotiation style rather resembled that of Ambassador (from May 1935) to China Akira Ariyoshi, whose proposals Shigemitsu frequently rejected, in contrast to Suma's coercive measures. But ironically enough, even the British Foreign Office considered the "expansive" Suma a more useful source of information on Japanese trends than Ariyoshi, who lost influence over the decision-making process. Shigemitsu persisted in taking such a paternalistic approach to China that his policies eventually became indistinguishable from Suma's pro-military course of action.[106] Additionally, Shigemitsu could not have his own way in the financial-economic circle and did not act independently of the military, although he struggled to control foreign policy.[107] The greater the military initiative and the hard-line group of diplomats grew in strength, the fewer the choices available to the Japanese foreign ministry.

In 1935, the growing tensions caused by the Italo-Ethiopian conflict diminished the flexibility of foreign policy and consolidation in the Italian foreign ministry. After the imposition of economic sanctions by the League in October 1935, Mussolini sent Aloisi to Geneva at the beginning of November for informal talks with Britain and France on a general settlement in the Mediterranean. On his way back, Aloisi stopped at Munich to ask Hitler for German support. Nonetheless, Mussolini later repudiated everything, partly because of Suvich's strong objection to a *rapprochement* with Nazi Germany. Suvich also told British

[103] Yakichiro Suma, *Gaiko Hiroku* (Tokyo: Shoko Zaimu Kenkyukai, 1951), pp. 7–9, 27–30. Shigeharu Matsumoto, *Shanhai Jidai: Janarisuto no Kaiso*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuko Shinsho, 1974), pp. 247–249. Liu Jie, "'Chugoku-tsu' Gaikokan to Gaimusho no Chugoku Seisaku: 1935–1937," in *Nicchu Senso no Shoso*, ed. Gunjishi Gakkai (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1997), p. 104. Shigeaki Uno, "Hirota Koki no Tai-Ka Seisaku to Sho Kai- seki," *Kokusai Seiji*, 56 (1976), 38–39.

[104] TNA, FO371/18096, F1339/107/10 (9/3/1934). TNA, FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (1/6/1934).

[105] Suma, op. cit., pp. 76–77.

[106] TNA, FO371/20262, F1218/528/10 (7/1/1936). TNA, FO371/20242, F1600/96/10 (19/3/1936); F2218/96/10 (20/4/1936).

[107] Takeda, op. cit., pp. 108–111.

Ambassador Drummond that Aloisi's journey had been completely useless.[108] Thus, the critical situation and Mussolini's method of coordinating diplomats caused a division even between Suvich and Aloisi, which has not previously come to light during their important careers.

Losing his main objective in Central Europe, Suvich turned to an anti-German policy in Europe and Italian expansionism in Africa. In the end, the foreign ministry unanimously opposed the last chance of a diplomatic solution: the Hoare-Laval Plan, which was formed over the ministry's heads through informal channels. In a memorandum of December 14, 1935, Suvich not only rejected the plan but also asserted that a successful military campaign would determine the Ethiopian issue.[109]

Shigemitsu and Suvich relied on the balance of coordinated actors in the decision-making processes to secure their positions. As a consequence, once the more aggressive actors, ultra-nationalists including the Japanese military and fascists, became active, diplomats were no longer masters of foreign policy planning. Since their diplomatic resources, especially in the financial-economic field, were limited by the weak capabilities of their countries, compared with Britain and Germany, their solutions were easily overwhelmed by more violent measures.

Shigemitsu and Suvich, on the other hand, took advantage of the achievements of the military and fascists, particularly at the stage of expansionism in 1935. While Shigemitsu promoted the destruction of the Chinese maritime customs, utilizing the Japanese occupation of North China, Suvich forced Ethiopia to surrender its sovereignty by threatening war. Their modes of operation were more sophisticated than the unconcealed invasion espoused by the ultra-nationalists and fascists. Nonetheless, Shigemitsu and Suvich were convinced of their respective nations' superiority over the Chinese and Ethiopians, even justifying their expansionism in racial terms.[110]

[108] DBFP, 2-XV, Nos. 175, 187, 278. cf. ASMAE, Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti (hereafter FGCL), F16-27, B16, Appunto di Alberto Theodoli per il Sottosegretario (3/11/1935).

[109] Pompeo Aloisi, *Journal* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 327–329. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, p. 292. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 719–722. ASMAE, FGCL, F9-15, B15, Appunto del Sottosegretario per il Capo del Governo (14/12/1935).

[110] On the racism of Japan and Italy, see also Ken Ishida, "Racisms compared: Fascist Italy and ultra-nationalist Japan," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2002), 380–391.

They promoted their plans for establishing regional hegemony so persistently that the loss of regional collaborators such as Tang and Dollfuß and the British policy of non-commitment facilitated the development of Shigemitsu's course from paternalistic to coercive, and readily turned Suvich's focus from Central Europe to East Africa. The Japanese and Italian Foreign Ministries could no longer prevent the adoption of aggressive foreign policies, given the fact that many diplomats had effectively rendered indirect aid to the military expansionism under the persuasive influence of their capable undersecretary.

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CHAPTER 5

# Negotiators: The Two Ambassadors to Britain, Shigeru Yoshida and Dino Grandi

The two ambassadors to Britain, Shigeru Yoshida and Dino Grandi, were not simply important negotiators making advances to Britain in a crucial period but were also labeled "pro-British moderates" by ultra-nationalists and fascists. They struggled to restore damaged relations with Britain, especially after the aggravation of the situations in East Asia and East Africa in 1935. Since the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy were losing the initiative on foreign policy, Yoshida and Grandi made full use of their diplomatic and political skills in their attempt to improve the difficult situation.

Both Yoshida and Grandi often acted independently to achieve a breakthrough, by virtue of their strong political backgrounds. But they incurred the distrust of the British Foreign Office, which believed they had deceived their own countries and Britain. Although anti-Western hard-liners in Japan and Italy criticized their "weak-kneed" diplomacy, Yoshida and Grandi insisted on bargaining with Britain for imperialistic expansionism and acquisition of the lion's share of regional control. Despite their intermittent engineering, the British government made use of them to appease ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy, on account of its apprehension over the growing power of Nazi Germany in Europe.

How did Yoshida and Grandi negotiate with the British leaders? By comparing German Ambassador Joachim von Ribbentrop, an active Nazi diplomat and later, foreign minister, this chapter also attempts to clarify the reasons for their tenacity in approaching Britain.

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_5

## 5.1 The Degradation of Being Ambassadors in London

### *5.1.1 Emerging Political Diplomats*

Shigeru Yoshida entered the Japanese foreign ministry in 1906 at the age of twenty-eight, as did Koki Hirota, who also was nine years older than Mamoru Shigemitsu. Yoshida was adopted by a wealthy merchant and married the daughter of Count Nobuaki Makino, whose father was the famous Meiji Restoration leader, Marquis Toshimichi Okubo. Because Makino played an important "pro-Anglo–American" role at court in the 1930s, Yoshida was detested as a liberal by ultra-nationalists including the military hard-liners who controlled Japanese political events, especially after 1936. Through the good offices of Makino, Yoshida joined the Japanese delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–1920. While young representatives such as Mamoru Shigemitsu and Hachiro Arita, later foreign minister in Koki Hirota's cabinet, formed a reformist group during the conference, criticizing the passive attitudes of old diplomats, Yoshida did not create a shining impression at the conference nor in the China service for the next six years.[1]

Because of his long-term consular office service in semi-colonized China, Yoshida developed an imperialistic mentality, proposing active policies against Manchuria in 1927. He maintained his strong measures against anti-Japanese movements in China notwithstanding disapproval by the *Kanto Gun* (Japanese Kwantung Army). On one hand, in opposition to Shigemitsu's plans at the time, Yoshida repeatedly proposed joint intervention in China, particularly with Japan's former ally Britain, to oppose Chinese self-reliance and spoke out against the Japanese autarkic bloc. On the other hand, Yoshida did not hesitate to apply, over the heads of his seniors, for the post of undersecretary. Yoshida was somewhat looked down upon by many Japanese diplomats, who believed that he owed his promotion to his family connection with Count Makino. Yoshida became actively involved with aggressive party politicians such as

[1] Shin'ichi Kitaoka, "Yoshida Shigeru niokeru Senzen to Sengo," in *Nempo Kindai Nihon Kenkyu*, No. 16: *Sengo Gaiko no Keisei* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1994), pp. 107–108, 129. Tomoki Takeda, *Shigemitsu Mamoru to Sengo Seiji* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2002), pp. 48–50.

the leader of *Seiyukai*, Prime Minister Giichi Tanaka, and Parliamentary Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Tsutomu Mori.[2]

As ambassador to Italy, after the Manchurian Incident in 1931, Yoshida suggested that Japan appeal to the League for a mandate over Manchuria, for he believed that cooperation with Britain and the United States would solve the problem. He then anticipated the Lytton report would provide a chance for joint control of China by the great powers, in contrast to Shigemitsu's insistence on direct negotiations with China, excluding third countries. Still, Yoshida complained to the Italians that the League brought idealism into the field of practical matters. However, Foreign Minister Yasuya Uchida followed Shigemitsu's line of argument and recognized Manchukuo, which resulted in Japan's withdrawal from the League in 1933. Opposing Uchida, Yoshida refused the offer of the post of ambassador to the United States in September 1932 and spent his life in relative obscurity until 1936.[3]

Dino Grandi, seventeen years younger than Yoshida, became minister for foreign affairs at the age of thirty-four in 1929. It was typical of Italian fascist sub-leaders, who often joined the fascist movement as young men immediately after World War I, to be promoted quickly. Grandi became a symbol for the fascistization of foreign ministry after his arrival in the post of undersecretary for foreign affairs in 1923, owing to the fact that there were few leading fascists who had a fine sensibility for international affairs. He enlarged the consular service with a variety of duties and abolished the excessive use of titles such as "Excellency" in order to open the ministry to the general public. Yet, later, many fascists attacked Grandi for his "moderate foreign policies."[4]

[2]Taichiro Mitani, "Kokusai Kin'yu Shihon to Ajia no Senso," in *Nempo Kindai Nihon Kenkyu*, No. 2: *Kindai Nihon to Ajia* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1980), pp. 148–152. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO371/21040, F1472/414/23 (5/3/1937). Mori was another business-oriented expansionist and had spent ten years in Shanghai as a member of the Mitsui firm. TNA, FO371/15520, F1405/1405/23 (12/3/1931).

[3]Tetsuya Sakai, *Taisho Democracy Taisei no Hokai: Naisei to Gaiko* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992), pp. 80–84. Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Cina, B10, Telesp. 210935R (9/4/1932). Shigeru Yoshida, *Kaiso Junen*, Vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1958), p. 103.

[4]Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1: *Gli anni del consenso 1929–1936* (Torino: Einaudi, 1974), p. 368. Cf. Ennio Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e la politica estera italiana (1919–1933)* (Padova: CEDAM, 1960), p. 251. Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism*

Grandi's private papers express his pride at the visit of the British foreign secretary, Arthur Henderson, in March 1931, as one of his greatest accomplishments because it was not merely the first official visit of a British foreign secretary after the unification of Italy but also epitomized Benito Mussolini's reconciliation with a Labour minister who was the head of the Second International and supported the policy of disarmament.[5] As a result, Italy was able to achieve naval parity with France, and Grandi sang his own praises by describing "his" victory as an "authentic, major, and extraordinary success."[6] Despite his accomplishment, fanatical fascists began to denounce Grandi for his approval of pacifism, disarmament and the League of Nations. Mussolini employed criticism to drive a wedge between his potential rivals, Grandi and Air Minister Italo Balbo, on the issue of air disarmament in 1932. Making use of hardliners who blamed Grandi for falling into the abyss of internationalism, Mussolini removed Grandi from his post in July 1932, as well as another rival, Balbo, in November 1933.[7]

Although Grandi was eliminated as a moderate, his policies broadly supported Mussolini's aggressive schemes against Ethiopia and Albania. Since Grandi thought that fascism had, originally, denied its dogmatism, he believed that diplomacy also should be independent of ideology and based on realistic flexibility. In contrast to the concrete plans of Undersecretary Fulvio Suvich, Grandi was so opportunistic that he could accept any expansionism so long as the situation permitted it. Therefore, he dared to approach the Soviet Union in 1930 and to invite Henderson, while mobilizing the military against Albania in 1931.[8]

*in Italy 1919–1929*, 2nd ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 426. TNA, FO371/12196, C3376/80/22 (6/4/1927).

[5]ASMAE, Carte Dino Grandi (hereafter CDG), B20, F90, SF29, 1/3/1931.

[6]ASMAE, CDG, B21, F90, SF30, 19/3/1931.

[7]Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, a cura di Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), pp. 203–205, 258–259. Claudio G. Segrè, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 277–279. Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* (hereafter O. O.), a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, XXXIV (Firenze: La Fenice, 1959), p. 401. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922–1946* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), pp. 176–177.

[8]ASMAE, CDG, B19, F90, SF25, December 1930; B19, F90, SF26, 1/1/1931; B19, F90, SF26, Situazione etiopica dopo l'incoronazione del Negus (December 1930); B20, F90, SF28, 28/1/1931; B23, F90, SF34, 5/6/1931.

Nevertheless, he admitted that Mussolini should be consulted on all the important issues. When Grandi was forced to resign in July 1932, he ironically confessed that his worst adversary was not a fascist but a career diplomat, whom he purged and supplanted with the fascistization of the ministry in 1927.[9]

Ribbentrop, two years older than Grandi, was named as ambassador to Britain in August 1936. He was a former champagne trader and joined the Nazi party in 1932. By reason of his late conversion, Ribbentrop tried to show his devotion and even imitate the strange emotional storms of Adolf Hitler, who occasionally visited his house in Berlin. Ribbentrop was more of an opportunist without any principles than an overzealous advocate of biological racism, as was his rival, Alfred Rosenberg, the head of the *Außenpolitische Amt der NSDAP* (Foreign Political Department of the Nazi Party).[10] However, Ribbentrop assimilated the Nazi program enough to lecture the British people on their defective belief in "absurd freedom," which was tolerant of communism.[11]

Because of Hitler's preference for personal envoys rather than bureaucratic diplomats, Ribbentrop was appointed as the special commissioner for questions of disarmament in April 1934. He was sent to many countries in order to create informal channels between Hitler and important politicians such as Sir Anthony Eden and Pierre Laval. The British and French governments were perplexed at Hitler's disregard for the proper diplomatic channels, preferring to go over the head of German Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath. They also were deeply disappointed that Ribbentrop only repeated the same claim for equality of sovereignty rights among major powers.[12]

Ribbentrop, however, succeeded in concluding the Anglo–German Naval Agreement on June 18, 1935. Although it was the first German

[9] TNA, FO371/14440, C9363/141/92 (18/12/1930); FO371/12195, C888/80/22 (27/1/1927); FO371/15987, C6752/6225/22 (27/7/1932).

[10] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 537. Douglas Glen, *Von Ribbentrop is Still Dangerous* (London: Rich & Cowan, 1941), pp. 110–111.

[11] *Manchester Guardian*, 17/12/1936.

[12] *News Chronicle*, 24/4/1934; *Daily Herald*, 12/11/1934; *Daily Express*, 3/12/1934. Michael Bloch, *Ribbentrop* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1992), pp. 54–58. Kershaw, op. cit., p. 756.

formal mission since Germany's trade mission in 1924, the negotiations started with Ribbentrop's bare-faced demand for British formal approval of Hitler's proposal to raise German naval tonnage to 35% of British naval tonnage.[13] Ribbentrop declared that the 35:100 ratio was "no point for bargaining" but "a great historic sacrifice" offered by Hitler.[14] The British government yielded to his aggressive peddling and even "greatly appreciated" Hitler's ostensible recognition of British naval supremacy.[15] Ribbentrop announced another triumph that a new pragmatic policy for peace had begun with this agreement, which was founded on the fact of practical friendship replacing the theory of collective security.[16]

Both Yoshida and Grandi were too flexible as negotiators to simply follow instructions from their governments. They were practical politicians, seeking to have a strong influence on foreign policies, in contrast to the faithful bureaucrats Shigemitsu and Suvich. Yoshida was an independent dealer who favored utilitarian bargaining, unlike Shigemitsu, who created and followed a specific plan. Grandi was more ambitious to attempt his comeback on the stage of the power center and more fascist than Suvich, who stuck to his duty and principles. Ribbentrop, on the other hand, was a high-pressure salesman thrusting the Führer's arbitrary manufactures forward. His dependence on Hitler to keep his position secure made Ribbentrop a more obstinate negotiating partner than Yoshida and Grandi.

### *5.1.2 The Double-Dealing of the Anglophiles*

When Yoshida was sent to Europe for a tour of inspection in October 1934, the Japanese ambassador to Britain at that time, Tsuneo Matsudaira, told British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon that Yoshida was a special messenger who would deliver some definite proposal of a political character, such as the non-aggression pact that Hirota had

[13] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter DBFP), 2-XIII (London: HMSO, 1973), No. 290.

[14] DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 289. Cf. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik* (hereafter ADAP), C-IV (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), Nr. 253, n. 2.

[15] Ibid., No. 318.

[16] Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde (hereafter BA), NS 43/362, Eigentum des Deutschen Nachrichtenbüros, Nr. 172 (23/6/1935).

once suggested. The British government awaited Yoshida's arrival on November 11 with keen anticipation, in part because of Matsudaira's strong connection with the "pro-Anglo–American" clique in Japan, which included Makino and Yoshida. Contrary to expectations, Yoshida brought nothing more than a courtesy message. Yet, he contacted the permanent undersecretary of Treasury, Sir Warren Fisher, through a foreign financial advisor to Manchukuo, and subsequently, adviser to the Japanese embassy in London. It was the first time that Yoshida had used informal channels to bypass the British Foreign Office and has been described in the historiography as the origin of the Leith-Ross mission.[17]

Yoshida retired from office in November 1935 but became a counselor for Hirota in March 1936. Yoshida failed to become foreign minister in Hirota's cabinet due to the opposition of the army, which regarded him as a liberal. Hirota therefore asked him to accept the post of ambassador to London, and according to Yoshida's own explanation to British diplomats, he accepted on condition that the Japanese foreign ministry would leave negotiations to his discretion. Nevertheless, Yoshida had already been disadvantaged in Britain by all the rumors against him, and this was reinforced by his difficulty with the English language.[18] He was deemed to be "working entirely off his own bat" and to have a very small influence on his country.[19]

The more serious reason for the deterioration of Anglo–Japanese relations was Yoshida's firm stance against China, which he had pursued since the 1920s during his China service career as consul-general in Mukden. When he first met officially with British Undersecretary Sir Robert Vansittart in June 1936, Vansittart pointed out the problem

[17]TNA, CAB29/149, Japan No. 672 (30/10/1934). DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 67. Chihiro Hosoya, "Gaikokan Yoshida Shigeru no Yume to Zasetsu," *Chuo Koron*. Vol. 92, No. 8 (1977), 249–250. Sumio Hatano, "Heisei Kaikaku eno Ugoki to Nihon no Tai-Chu Seisaku," in *Chugoku no Heisei Kaikaku to Kokusai Kankei*, ed. Yutaka Nozawa (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), pp. 273–274. Stephen Lyon Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise: British China Policy 1933–1937* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), p. 74.

[18]Hirota Koki Denki Kankokai, ed., *Hirota Koki* (hereafter *Hirota*) (1966; rpt. Fukuoka: Ashi Shobo, 1992), pp. 180–182. TNA, FO371/15520, F1405/1405/23 (12/3/1931); FO371/20277, F4808/3390/10 (7/8/1936); FO371/20287, F7427/553/23 (23/11/1936). Endicott, op. cit., p. 146.

[19]TNA, FO371/21040, F1472/414/23 (5/3/1937).

of smuggling in North China as Sir Frederick Leith-Ross had done in Japan. Yoshida answered plainly that the issue was under consideration. He later reported how the British Parliament evaluated Leith-Ross's second visit to Japan, saying the Japanese government had offered him a very cordial reception and had frankly discussed all the policies on North China, even though the actual situation left little room for optimism. The relationship between Japan and Britain reached an impasse with such complacent remarks and Yoshida's negative attitude to the Chinese problem, for which he made no concrete suggestions.[20]

Grandi was in a similar situation. Having lost his post as foreign minister, he came to Britain in 1932, where he was considered insufficiently experienced in economic questions and mastery of the English language.[21] His days of misfortune lasted until the Italo-Ethiopian crisis of 1935, which enabled him to grab the political limelight again. Despite his reputation as an Anglophile, in August 1935, he wrote a long report to Mussolini, criticizing "the British offensive policy" and even emphasizing "the historical-revolutionary conflict" between fascist Italy and Britain.[22] Grandi indeed pretended to be more fascist than the other diplomats. Nonetheless, facing the danger of an embargo on oil in November 1935, he contradictorily flattered the British by urging Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare to not be too adamant, thus committing the same mistake as Mussolini.[23]

After the conquest of Ethiopia in May 1936, Mussolini demoted competent diplomats, including Suvich, Aloisi and Raffaele Guariglia. Grandi, too, was a target of the purge, especially by the new foreign minister, Galeazzo Ciano, who was a latecomer fascist, as was Ribbentrop, and who sought to secure his own power base. When Ciano attempted to replace Grandi with Guariglia, the ambassador feigned to accept his proposal in September 1936. Returning to Britain, Grandi immediately organized a British press campaign to oppose his recall and

[20] Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo (hereafter JFMA), A. 2. 1. 0. C6, No. 354 (24/6/1936); No. 366 (30/6/1936). Ann Trotter, *Britain and East Asia 1933–1937* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 189–192.

[21] TNA, T188/45, C3789/58/62 (6/5/1932).

[22] ASMAE, CDG, B39, F93, SF1, Ins. 1, 17/8/1935. See also Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943* (hereafter Ciano, *Diario*), a cura di Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1980), pp. 96, 254.

[23] DBFP, 2-XV, Nos. 264, 279.

conspicuously opposed the Soviet representative, Ivan Maisky, in the Non-Intervention Committee on the Spanish Civil War, where he leaped into diplomatic prominence. Hence, Grandi defended his position in September, and Mussolini approved of his remaining in office. Thanks to having familiarized himself with the fascist power mechanism, Grandi alone was able to survive the storm of reshuffle in the Italian foreign ministry.[24]

Grandi's struggle for foreign policy initiative continued during the negotiation of the Anglo-Italian Gentlemen's Agreement in November 1936. Since Mussolini trusted neither Ciano nor Grandi wholeheartedly, Aloisi persuaded Mussolini to send him, as a representative of traditional diplomacy, on a mission to Britain, as Ezio Garibaldi had been sent there on a mission during the Ethiopian War. Learning from the experience of the Ethiopian War, the British Foreign Office was eager to deal with the less powerful Grandi in London through an official but single channel as it feared Ciano might use the negotiations as material for propaganda in Rome. Although Aloisi's attempt ended in failure, the wish of traditional diplomats to reach an accommodation with Britain was realized by Grandi and Ciano. Ciano, whose position as "vice duce" in the fascist power structure was stronger than Ribbentrop's in the Nazi regime, wanted to perform a great deed in concluding the Gentlemen's Agreement of January 2, 1937, to preserve the status quo in the Mediterranean. It might have been ironic and frustrating for Mussolini, especially after the conquest of Ethiopia, to recognize that status quo was a keyword for Italian foreign policy not only on the Mediterranean but also on Austria in spite of his pro-revisionist advocacy. His uneasiness hampered the diplomatic efforts and Grandi's attempts to avoid a confrontation with Britain.[25]

Ribbentrop, on the contrary, was a Nazi sub-leader on the rise, who became foreign minister in 1938 and fluent in English. In competition with Konstantin von Neurath and Rosenberg, Ribbentrop sought to achieve a "real" understanding with Britain, and yet his main concern

[24] Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 327–328. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 413–414. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, p. 341.

[25] DBFP, 2-XV, No. 258; 2-XVII, Nos. 363, 393, 415. Paola Brundu Olla, *L'equilibrio difficile: Gran Bretagna, Italia e Francia nel Mediterraneo, 1930–1937* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1980), pp. 177–178, 184–185. FO371/20412, R7037/226/22 (27/11/1936); R7085/226/22 (1/12/1936); R7189/226/22 (27/11/1936). Peter Bell, *Chamberlain, Germany and Japan, 1933–4* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 39.

was how to attract Hitler's attention. Ribbentrop, "motivated by his personal contempt for the intellectual," tried to preach Nazi ideology from the start of his new career as ambassador to Britain in 1936. At his first audience with the new king, George VI, in February 1937, to present his credentials, Ribbentrop shouted, "Heil Hitler," and gave the Nazi salute instead of the usual bows. Since he repeated the Nazi salute, clicking his heels together and raising his arm, the British press bitterly criticized him. Ribbentrop did not comprehend the reason for the severe reaction against what he considered to be "an act of special honour."[26]

Due to the rivalry among the *Ribbentrop Büro* (Ribbentrop Office), Rosenberg's *Außenpolitische Amt der NSDAP* (Foreign Political Department of the Nazi Party), Goebbels' Ministry for Propaganda and Neurath's foreign ministry, Ribbentrop gave top priority to playing up to Hitler. For this reason, Ribbentrop stayed in Germany after his appointment in August and delayed presenting his credentials until the end of October 1936. Moreover, even after his arrival, he spent more than a third of his time outside Britain, entangled in the power struggle within the Nazi regime. Even though Yoshida and Grandi had already been relegated to the political sidelines by that time, Ribbentrop's ideological and propagandist activities in Britain were extraordinary.[27]

As a consequence, from the beginning of the Anglo–German naval negotiation in June 1935, Ribbentrop parroted that Hitler's concession to accept a German naval tonnage of 35 percent of the British naval tonnage was "an offer of the highest historical importance" that the British government should agree to at once.[28] He flaunted his selection as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary rather than as a traditional diplomat because he clearly understood Hitler's intention. Hence, he urged the British to adopt a view similar to Hitler's in that the agreement permanently eliminated the danger of naval rivalry between "the two great nations of the same race." In contrast to the efforts of Yoshida

[26] *Daily Telegraph*, 12/3/1937. Cf. *Daily Mail*, 20/3/1936; *News Chronicle*, 11/2/1937. Paul Schwarz, *This Man Ribbentrop: His Life and Times* (New York: Julian Messner, 1943), p. 126. Glen, op. cit., pp. 135, 140, 147.

[27] Ibid., pp. 133–136, 141, 173. *The Times*, 12/8/1936.

[28] DBFP, 2-XIII, No. 305.

and Grandi, Ribbentrop's communiqué gave the impression that he had enforced all the German demands.[29]

In terms of attitudes to the press and public opinion, Yoshida insisted on complete secrecy for his negotiations to reach an agreement. This was partly because of his aristocratic propensity for the dominance of the elite over foreign policy. Grandi was keener on using the press to support his initiatives because of his involvement in the fascist mass movement. Ribbentrop, on the other hand, because he was a newcomer in the Nazi power center, cared only about winning Hitler's esteem, not about his reputation with the British.[30]

## 5.2 Disobedient Imperialists

As seen above, Yoshida and Grandi shared the commonality of being "pro-British" realists and unfulfilled foreign ministers who had been kept out of the mainstream. Since pedigree Yoshida and trueborn fascist Grandi took pride in their former careers, they differed slightly from Ribbentrop, a conniving toady of Hitler but also an ambitious Nazi latecomer. Nevertheless, all of them were faithful to their regimes and clearly supported military expansionism to neighboring countries. Yoshida and Grandi were only disobedient to the hard-line order that opposed imperial compromises, particularly with Britain, and they were more conscious of the British situation than Ribbentrop was. However, due to a mismatch between the objective of aggression and measures to achieve British recognition, their negotiations often exposed analogous contradictions. Scrutiny of the similarities and differences between Yoshida and Grandi is best achieved by examining three commonalities:

[29]Wolfgang Michalka, *Ribbentrop und Die Deutsche Weltpolitik 1933–1940* (München: Fink, 1980), S. 104–105. Cf. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik 1933–1938* (Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Metzner, 1968), S. 414. Schwarz, op. cit., p. 134. According to Michalka, Ribbentrop realized the naval agreement would be turned to German advantage and he had a clearer grasp of foreign policy than Hitler himself. Michalka, op. cit., S. 103–105. However, as far as Ribbentrop's attitude to Britain is concerned, he often seemed to overlook the context of foreign policy in order to win Hitler's favor.

[30]DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 14. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 413–414. Ivan Maisky, *Spanish Notebooks*, trans. Ruth Kisch (London: Hutchinson, 1966), p. 35. John L. Heineman, *Hitler's First Foreign Minister: Constantin Freiherr von Neurath, Diplomat and Statesman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 130–133.

anti-communism as an ideology they believed they shared with Britain, improper methods of negotiation and two "pendulum theories" relating to their perception of foreign policy decision making.

### *5.2.1 Anti-communist Stances*

Anti-communism, was most clearly espoused by Ribbentrop, who tried to prompt Britain to join an international crusade against bolshevism. Yet, just as Hirota expected that his "three principles" could induce China and Britain to cooperate with Japan under the banner of anti-communism, Yoshida also instructed his British counterparts on the danger of the "Russian menace" to China and Japan. Yoshida thought it necessary to "enlighten" the British leaders, who he believed were ignorant about the East Asian situation. He indeed contended that the February 26 Incident had been caused by "communist" influence in Japan. In spite of such perpetual preaching, the British Foreign Office rightly remarked that it was the firm Japanese pressure on China that had triggered Chinese inclination toward communism.[31]

Nonetheless, Yoshida's dislike of the "pro-German" circle in Japan was strong enough for him to oppose the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in November 1936. He regarded the pact not only as anti-communist but also as a Japanese commitment to the Axis instead of the Anglo–American alternative.[32] His attitude seems to have arisen from the fact that he did not favor any strong ideological orientation that hindered imperialistic bargaining and from his hatred of the "pro-Axis" military group, which had forced him into pseudo-exile. It was also typical of the Japanese to categorize "pro-Axis" and "pro-Anglo–American" cliques through personal relationships rather than through the policies themselves. In fact, once Yoshida had been classified as a member of Makino's group, he was harshly attacked by fanatic ultra-nationalists even though his anti-communism was as strong as Hirota's and the military's. Actually, in the beginning of 1945, Yoshida drafted Prince Fumimaro

[31]TNA, FO371/20277, F4625/3390/10 (30/7/1936); F4808/3390/10 (7/8/1936); FO371/20285, F7043/303/23 (16/11/1936).

[32]Shigeru Yoshida, *Kaiso Junen*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1958), pp. 42, 44–46. DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 19.

Konoe's petition to the emperor to stop the Pacific War in order to hinder a potential communist revolution in reaction to defeat.[33]

Grandi described Ribbentrop as a self-contented plotter, who intended to teach the British that the sole true enemy was Russia. Notwithstanding, Grandi also energetically opposed the Soviet ambassador, Maisky, Grandi's rival representative in the Non-Intervention Committee, who criticized Italian military involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Since the committee provided another spotlight for Grandi after the Ethiopian War, he played the role of an anti-communist fighter to attract the home government.[34] While Grandi spun out "a cunning web of half-truths and half-lies" as delaying tactics in the committee, Ribbentrop was so "uncommonly crude, blunt and unskilful" that he often tore Grandi's carefully woven web.[35] Ribbentrop himself later wrongly recollected that his approach to Britain was impeded because Britain sided with the Soviet Union in the committee.[36] Maisky mentioned in his memoirs Ribbentrop's lack of understanding of the British, whereas he evaluated his most formidable opponent, Grandi, as one of the best-informed ambassadors in London.[37]

Although Grandi cooperated with Britain and France to protect the Locarno Treaty against the German occupation of the Rhineland in March 1936, he praised Ciano's pro-German policies for inducing Britain to approach Italy in November 1936. Grandi's maneuvers to improve Anglo–Italian relations intensified British mistrust, leading Foreign Secretary Eden to guard against accepting Grandi's demand for immediate recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.[38]

[33]Yutaka Yoshida, *Showa Ten'no no Shusen-shi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1992), pp. 21–22.

[34]ASMAE, Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti (hereafter FGCL), F28-32, G31, Verbali di Colloq. e Appunti di Sottoseg. Bastianini (9/10/1936). Maisky, op. cit., pp. 85–86.

[35]Ibid., p. 90.

[36]Joachim von Ribbentrop, *Zwischen London und Moskau*, aus dem Nachlaß herausg. von Annelies von Ribbentrop (Leoni am Starnberger See: Druffel, 1954), S. 105.

[37]Maisky, op. cit., pp. 85, 87. ASMAE, CDG, B40, F93, SF2, Ins. 2, N. 3445 (6/11/1936).

[38]ADAP, C-V, Nr. 161. Francis P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 695–698. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 402–403. Pompeo Aloisi, *Journal* (Paris: Plon, 1957), pp. 358, 361. Manfred Funke, *Sanktionen und Kanonnen. Hitler, Mussolini und der internationale Abessinienkonflikt 1934–36* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1970), S. 139–140. ASMAE, CDG, B40, F93, SF2, Ins. 2, N. 3445 (6/11/1936). DBFP, 2-XVII, No. 356.

However, unlike Yoshida, Grandi was so opportunistic and isolated that the competent but duplicitous ambassador was freer to act with abandon abroad than in his home country. Yet Mussolini was successful in applying a policy of divide and rule against his rivals, who could not form a strong anti-Axis“ group till 1943. Nevertheless, once the opposition group, to which Grandi was actively committed, aligned itself with the supreme mission of stopping the war, they overthrew Mussolini on July 25, 1943 for fear of a communist revolution as well as a total breakdown of the regime.[39]

### *5.2.2 Extraordinary Negotiations*

The second commonality between Yoshida and Grandi was their inclination to use improper methods of negotiation, advancing proposals based on personal speculation and using informal channels. Both Yoshida and Grandi entered into negotiations on the mistaken assumption that their home governments were fervent for a *rapprochement* with Britain, which was only partially true, and not at all costs, as they emphasized, while Ribbentrop's mission to improve Anglo–German relations and settle colonial questions garnered more official approval from his government. As a consequence, the British Foreign Office often deemed the bargaining positions of Yoshida and Grandi to be suspicious and irregular.

Yoshida's first meeting with Foreign Secretary Eden in July 1936 prefigured the succeeding negotiations, which consistently failed to achieve any consensus. Yoshida mentioned that anxiety over the tax burden might restrict irresponsible military expansionism in the autumn when the Diet of Japan opened the discussion on the budget for the next year. Eden, on the other hand, expressed unease about the anti-British articles in the Japanese press. Yoshida thereafter repeatedly suggested that a British sign of reconciliation might improve the Japanese internal situation. The British Foreign Office preferred negotiating on the basis of concrete proposals, bringing cases into the arena of practical policies that could ascertain future changes in Japanese politics.[40]

[39] Paolo Nello, *Dino Grandi: La formazione di un leader fascista* (Bologna: Mulino, 1987), pp. 391–408. Bosworth, *Mussolini*, pp. 399–401. Ray Moseley, *Mussolini's Shadow: The Double Life of Count Galeazzo Ciano* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 168–175.

[40] TNA, FO371/20279, F4320/89/23 (17/7/1936); F5842/89/23 (23/9/1936).

In October 1936, without any direct instruction, Yoshida finally handed a draft memorandum to the British treasury after discussing the matter informally with the chancellor of the exchequer, Neville Chamberlain. In addition to observing that Yoshida had ignored formal diplomatic channels, British diplomats remarked that the proposal listed across-the-board claims but granted very few concessions. Regarding the question of China, Yoshida only promised that Japan would respect sovereignty and the Open Door principle alongside its long-term credit for arms and ammunition, accompanied by Japanese military advisors, in its attempt to restore political order against communist influence in China. With reference to the general international situation, Yoshida demanded the rectification of trade restrictions in the British Empire and British benevolent neutrality in the case of a Russo-Japanese war. In return, Yoshida promised that Japan would reopen negotiations relating to the naval conference and reform of the League of Nations. Despite the ambiguity of his proposed compensation to Britain for agreeing to his concrete demands, Yoshida reported that he had come to an understanding with the British on East Asia.[41]

Many British diplomats were dissatisfied with his bypassing the Foreign Office and approaching Chamberlain personally and, consequently, considered Yoshida an "unsatisfactory," "feeble" and "bold" person.[42] In addition to Yoshida's prejudicial method of negotiation, when the Foreign Office handed the British official response to Yoshida in January 1937, he did not send it to his home government. He stated that the draft memorandum had not explained his ideas clearly and that the British response had also embarrassed him. He claimed to have simply intended to request a vague declaration from Britain, desiring a general agreement with Japan.[43]

[41]DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 1. TNA, FO371/20279, F6724/89/23 (3/11/1936). DBFP, 2-XX, No. 593. After the high-level delegation from the Federation of British Industries to Japan and Manchukuo had published its reassuring impressions, Yoshida unsuccessfully requested of his home government that either Manchukuo or Japan should offer some kind of commercial favors to Britain. JFMA, E. 3. 1. 1. 2-3, Vol. 5, No. 739 (26/12/1936). Cf. Endicott, op. cit., p. 78.

[42]TNA, FO371/20286, F7596/303/23 (4/12/1936). DBFP, 2-XX, No. 593. Cf. TNA, FO371/20279, F7922/89/23 (11/12/1936).

[43]TNA, FO371/21029, F417/28/23 (21/1/1937).

Parallel to Ribbentrop's internal power struggle, Yoshida was rumored to expect a new post in the government in December 1936.[44] However, his political position in Japan was so precarious that he had to exploit all of his personal connections to improve Anglo–Japanese economic relations in 1937. Since Yoshida could not bridge the substantial gap between his home government and the British government during his ambassadorship from 1936 to 1938, he continuously solicited tangible conciliatory gestures from Britain.[45]

Grandi also coped with three different objectives at once; justifying the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War against bolshevism, repairing Anglo–Italian relations after the Ethiopian War and persuading his home government to approach Britain. Similar to the Japanese situation in East Asia, the wars were not directed against Britain but were connected to the key regional interests of the British Empire: Gibraltar in the Mediterranean and the Suez route to India.

On top of these complicated international conditions, the most burdensome problem for Grandi was that Foreign Minister Ciano controlled all aspects of foreign policy and especially those related to the Mediterranean affairs.[46] In fact, Mussolini and Ciano tried to exclude Grandi from the negotiations of the Gentlemen's Agreement in November and December 1936. The context of the agreement of January 2, 1937 was as simple and general as the one Yoshida had wanted Britain to propose to Japan, because both Italy and Britain avoided covering delicate matters in the eastern Mediterranean and Ethiopia.[47]

Concerned about his home government's lack of response, Grandi now actively began to deceive both the British and Italian governments, in contrast to Yoshida's passive attitude of negating his formal proposal

[44] TNA, FO371/20286, F7926/303/23 (17/12/1936).

[45] John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878–1954* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 124–125, 147–149. Yoichi Kibata, "Nicchu Senso Zenya niokeru Igirisu no Tai-Nichi Seisaku," *Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku Ronshu*, No. 29 (1979), 181–188.

[46] John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 165–166, 186–187. ASMAE, Ufficio Spagna, B1, Allegato 3 (8/12/1936). Roberto Cantalupo, *Fu la Spagna* (Milano: Mondadori, 1948), p. 67.

[47] DBFP, 2-XVII, Nos. 363, 483, 499, 514. TNA, FO371/20412, R7037/226/22 (20/11/1936).

and waiting for internal change. Particularly after Neville Chamberlain became prime minister in May 1937, Grandi sent false information to Mussolini that Chamberlain was an admirer of the Duce.[48] Then Grandi fabricated a message from Mussolini in which he expressed his wish for an Anglo–Italian agreement. Grandi also tried to alienate Chamberlain from Eden, who was seriously concerned about Italian reinforcements in Libya and Italian propaganda against Britain in the Middle East.[49]

Ribbentrop said of Grandi that if there were a real conspirator in the world, he was the one.[50] In fact, Grandi established a secret channel with Prime Minister Chamberlain from October 1937, excluding Foreign Secretary Eden from negotiations.[51] Moreover, on February 12, 1938, Grandi would not discuss the problems of Spain and anti-British propaganda with Eden, yet demanded a concession on Ethiopia.[52] Furthermore, on February 18. after Grandi refused to see Eden on the pretext of playing golf, he provided Chamberlain with a forged acceptance of the withdrawal of Italian soldiers from Spain and handed him materials with which he could attack Eden. As a result, Eden became the only one in the cabinet who opposed the prime minister's intention to approach Italy immediately, and he stepped down from office on February 19.[53]

[48] Keith Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 329–330. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 429, 432. Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2: *Lo Stato totalitario 1936–1940* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), pp. 423–424.

[49] Feiling, op. cit., p. 330. DBFP, 2-XIX, Nos. 64, 65. Anthony Eden, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962), pp. 451–453. TNA, FO371/21157, R1981/1/22 (16/3/1937); R1991/1/22 (20/3/1937); R2047/1/22 (20/3/1937); FO371/21158, R2838/1/22 (26/4/1937). Cantalupo, op. cit., pp. 244–248.

[50] Ribbentrop, op. cit., S. 106.

[51] Galeazzo Ciano (verbalizzati da), *L'Europa verso la catastrofe* (hereafter *L'Europa*) (Verona: Mondodori, 1948), p. 251 (13/2/1938, sic 19/2/1938). De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2, pp. 452–453. ASMAE, AP, Gran Bretagna, B24, F2, SF3, Telegr. 667 (6/2/1938). Feiling, op. cit., pp. 335–336. L.W. Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement: A Study in the Politics of History* (New York, London: Norton, 1982), p. 103. Eden, op. cit., pp. 574–575.

[52] ASMAE, AP, Gran Bretagna, B24, F2, SF3, Telegr. A. 727 (9/2/1938); Telegr. A. 778 (12/2/1938); Telegr. A. 783 (12/2/1938); Telegr. A. 787 (12/2/1938); Telegr. A. 788 (12/2/1938); Telegr. P. 2360 (14/2/1938).

[53] Ciano, *L'Europa*, pp. 249–278. Feiling, op. cit., p. 338. Lord Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years* (London: Collins, 1954), p. 279. Eden, op. cit., pp. 582, 592. ASMAE, Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti, Ufficio di Coordinamento (hereafter FGCLUC), F87-90, B14, G89, Telegr. A. 966 (21/2/1938). De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2, pp. 460–461.

Grandi's triumph bore fruit in the form of the Easter Agreement of April 16,1938, whose extensive understanding, which was founded on the Mediterranean status quo, failed to provide Britain with a substantial concession from Italy. Nonetheless, Grandi's peak of diplomatic and conspiratorial success overshadowed his downfall. Even though Grandi sent a fifty-page report in which he claimed credit for Eden's resignation as well, Mussolini's reaction was cold. The agreement was signed in Rome, following a negotiation process similar to that of the the Gentleman's Agreement.[54] In the long run, the agreements, which were based on fabrications, did not sustain a real understanding between both countries.

Yoshida and Ribbentrop seemed to be similar in leaving Britain empty-handed in 1938. Yet Ribbentrop attempted to claim the return of the former German colonial possessions by persistent references to them in his speeches and press comments rather than through negotiation. His propagandist inclination was typically fascist, as seen in his sensitivity to press and public opinion. Yet Ribbentrop's actions deviated far from the normal ambassadorial practice. In February 1937, Ribbentrop demonstrated his arrogance when he made a statement in Leipzig that Germany should claim the return of its former colonies, even using a military threat. His ultimatum was strongly criticized and received coldly, especially in the British newspapers.[55] Although Ribbentrop had spoken confidently to Hitler of the prospect of reaching an understanding with Britain in December 1936, many influential British Conservative politicians denied effecting a diplomatic bargain on the colonies.[56]

Since Ribbentrop also found Foreign Secretary Eden to be a political obstacle, Germans in London became immersed in anti-Eden campaigns. However, their propaganda was for internal consumption and not intended to appeal to British public opinion, so they had no power to damage Eden's political position. Grandi's conspiracy, on the other hand, was victorious. Nevertheless, Ribbentrop succeeded in returning home to be appointed foreign minister in February 1938. Frequently facing a storm of public indignation in the British press because of his remarks,

[54] DBFP, 2-XIX, Nos. 660, 662. De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2, p. 477. ASMAE, FGCLUC, F87-90, B14, G89, no. 1023/466 (19/2/1938); FGCL, F16-27, B24, F1, Minuta autografa di telegr. relativi alla questione spagnola (22/2/1938). Grandi, op. cit., pp. 436, 445, 449.

[55] *Morning Post*, 5/3/1937. Cf. *The Times*, 3/3/1937. *Daily Telegraph*, 5/3/1937.

[56] Glen, op. cit., pp. 147, 150–151.

Ribbentrop grew anti-British, while Yoshida was consistently pro-British to the very end in spite of his repeated hardships in Britain. While both Yoshida and Grandi were too isolated in their respective countries to seek other options, the Axis powers needed Britain's tacit approval of their expansionism at that moment. In fact, one of Ribbentrop's few accomplishments during his ambassadorship was the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan on November 25, 1936, which, ironically, infuriated Hitler, who realized its anti-British implications.[57]

Yoshida's passiveness and Grandi's activeness in negotiations were analogous to the decision-making mechanisms of Hirota and Mussolini, as seen in Chapter 3. Yoshida passively waited for British gestures of goodwill that might change the political circumstances in Japan. Grandi actively created a fabricated environment by practicing deception and eliminating enemies whom he deemed to have "bad" will. However, both well understood the necessity for and difficulty of approaching Britain, in contrast to Ribbentrop's flattering aggressiveness, which solely served his personal advancement.

## 5.3 Two Pendulum Theories

The third point of similarity is concerned with Grandi and Yoshida's perceptions of the world. By a curious coincidence, John W. Dower used the term *pendulum theory* to analyze Japanese politics, and Renzo De Felice described Italy's international position by using the same phrase, although with a different meaning. As Yoshida explained to the British, Dower referred to the term *pendulum theory* to describe the political sway between internationalism and ultra-nationalism inside Japanese government circles. De Felice, on the other hand, used the term to depict how the Italians adopted foreign policy by assessing the power balance between the West and Germany.

Dower's pendulum theory is based on internal political swings. Yoshida tried to persuade the American ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, of his interpretation of Japan's historical experience, which followed a cycle from ultra-nationalists to internationalists. Therefore, in the 1930s, the pendulum also would swing from militarists to moderates.

[57] Ibid., p. 151. *News Chronicle*, 5/2/1937; *Daily Mail*, 6/2/1937; *Morning Post*, 8/2/1937. BA, NS 43/362, Ribbentrop in der Auslandspresse. Heineman, op. cit., p. 155.

The emperor represented the most prominent of pro-British moderates, including Yoshida, Makino and many business circles. Yoshida insisted that British conciliatory gestures would encourage the moderates to reverse the pendulum since they themselves were incapable of paving the way due to the increasing influence of ultranationalists and the military. Nonetheless, British diplomats were skeptical of this theory, according to which only friendly support from outside could help the moderates to control the hard-liners in Japan because a concrete effort to cooperate with Japan, the Leith-Ross mission (discussed in Chapter 4), had failed.[58]

In addition, Yoshida mentioned that there were "two schools of political inclination, one toward Anglo–Japanese cooperation and the other toward Sino-Japanese collaboration,"[59] and the latter was represented in Shigemitsu's plan, which directly dealt with China and excluded foreign influence. Although Yoshida classified himself as a believer in both, he above all distrusted China, believing it to be so chaotic and affected by communism that Japan should continue its quest for law and order in China. Dissimilar to Shigemitsu, Yoshida put more emphasis on a real understanding with Britain on the basis of imperialistic bargaining than on direct negotiations with China. Yet Yoshida's suggestions also implied a hands-off-China policy regarding such developments as the Japanese monopoly of the supply of arms and ammunition into China, which was carried out without taking British interests into account. The British Foreign Office was cautious of reaching an exclusive agreement with Japan that might cause misgivings around the world, including China, the Soviet Union, the United States and the League of Nations.[60]

Yoshida consistently appealed to British diplomats to reconcile with Japan for the purpose of strengthening "pro-Anglo–American" circles in the Japanese government.[61] Contrary to his reputation as an Anglophile in Japan, Yoshida was disliked by a number of British diplomats during the period of his ambassadorship, since he was perceived to make many

[58] Dower, op. cit., pp. 124–126. *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1936–IV (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 220–222. DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 14. TNA, FO371/20277, F3390/3390/10 (9/6/1936).

[59] DBFP, 2-XX, No. 561. Yoshida also admitted that the Chinese excelled over the Japanese in diplomatic methods. DBFP, 2-XXI, No. 1.

[60] DBFP, 2-XX, Nos. 454, 543, 561. TNA, FO371/20279, F6511/89/23 (26/10/1936).

[61] TNA, FO371/20277, F4808/3390/3390 (7/8/1936).

demands on Britain without proposing anything concrete in return from Japan. Indeed, his passive response to the British request and his tendency to make proposals without sufficient authorization from his own government were viewed as typical examples, in British eyes, of Japan's inability to alter the course of its foreign policy unless it was subjected to external pressure.

The pendulum's swing from ultra-nationalism to internationalism was as fabricated a perception as the obsessive assertion of the communist menace, and the British government was not convinced of the validity of either one. The problem of Japanese foreign policy during this crucial period was not only that realistic planners and moderate negotiators could not play their roles on account of fanatic ultra-nationalist suppression, but also that they themselves tried to justify their imperial expansionism as well as plan further strategic moves.

The second pendulum theory of Renzo De Felice focused on an overview of Italian diplomacy as seen from the perspective of international politics. It contrasted with the first pendulum theory of Dower, who emphasized the domestic power structure in Japan. De Felice argued that Mussolini had tried to offer a new formation of international relations in order to end Italy's isolation after the Ethiopian War. According to his theory, Italy was able to hold a casting vote by oscillating between the Western countries and Germany. It was called for a *peso determinante* (determined weight), which Grandi also employed to position Italy, the least of the great powers, still holding the balance of power between two blocs of comparable strength. Mussolini and Grandi were conscious that the pendulum had functioned in World War I and anticipated another diplomatic maneuvering.[62]

Nevertheless, in the period of Nazi Germany's emergence and the Spanish Civil War, which was fastened on an ideological horizon, the Italian political orientation was far from a position of balance during the pre-World War I period.[63] Both "pro-British" and "pro-German" policies were personified by Ambassador to Britain Grandi and Foreign

[62] Renzo De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo*, a cura di Michael A. Ledeen, 2 ed. (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999), pp. 70–71. Id., *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 1, pp. 373, 412–413, 465–467. Grandi, op. cit., pp. 290, 352, 378. Paola Brundu Olla, op. cit., pp. 3–7. R.J.B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers: Italian Foreign Policy before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[63] De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo*, pp. 71–73.

Minister Ciano, respectively. Therefore, Grandi's decline paralleled a weakening inclination toward Britain. In fact, Grandi attempted to persuade Mussolini of Britain's sincerity in seeking good relations with Italy. Grandi even sent false information to both governments as a part of his endeavor to regain power in the fascist regime, revenging his removal as foreign minister in 1932. Yet Grandi was not trusted by Mussolini or the British government due to his double-dealing behind the scenes. Although De Felice did not clearly mention the personalization of politics in his pendulum theory, Mussolini's dictatorship escalated a personal rivalry into an international confrontation.

The highlight of De Felice's pendulum theory might be seen as the Munich Conference of September 1938. Playing the role of mediator between the West and Germany, Mussolini arranged a peace talk on the Czech crisis. However, after Munich, Mussolini started to threaten France, in spite of the premise that the pendulum could only function by keeping doors to the Western powers and Nazi Germany open. Additionally, in East Asia, another Munich was impossible, because Mussolini had every intention of using the crisis as an opportunity to reinforce Italy's position in the Mediterranean, which was a vital route for Britain to the Far East.[64]

In increasing his control over foreign policy, Ciano, on the one hand, began to recognize the danger of Mussolini's insistence on predicting a strong Germany and a weak West in March 1939. Grandi, on the other hand, expressed, in the Fascist Grand Council, his absolute devotion to Mussolini's policy in order to strengthen his position.[65] In May 1939, Grandi, who soon returned to Italy as minister of justice, finally wrote to Ciano that the military alliance with Germany struck the hardest blow to the policies of democratic countries and left Italy's position open not merely vis-à-vis Germany but also vis-à-vis Britain, which was eager to avoid war at the last moment in spite of its preparation for war.[66]

[64] De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2, pp. 544–545, 550–552, 560–561. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 203.

[65] Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 266–271. DBFP, 3-IV, Nos. 377, 448. Mario Toscano, *The Origins of the Pact of Steel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 174, 196–197. Ciano, *L'Europa*, pp. 419–420. Giuseppe Bottai, *Diario, 1935–1944*, a cura di Giordano Bruno Guerri (Milano: Rizzoli, 1983), pp. 142–144. Grandi, op. cit., p. 463.

[66] ASMAE, CDG, B40, F93, SF2, Ins. 5, N. 2363 (20/5/1939); B56, F153, Discorso di Grandi (25/5/1939).

Thus, Grandi played with double-dealing in both pro-British and pro-German policy with the aim of achieving his comeback to the power center.

It is wrong to presume that there was a resolute pro-British circle, drawing an imaginary picture of a coalition between Suvich as a protector of European peace and Grandi as a moderate fascist acting against the fanatic warmonger circle led by Ciano. Although it could be true, as De Felice asserted, that Italian public opinion infiltrated by fascist ideology also forced Mussolini to enter the war against France in June 1940,[67] Mussolini, Ciano and Grandi did not hesitate to steer a course toward military aggression. They swung the pendulum to Germany more actively than the passive attitudes of the Japanese moderates, who expected foreign concessions to bring about their internal change.

Unlike ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy, Nazi Germany did not have such pendulum theories, because it was guided by the *Führerprinzip* (leader principle). Even though Hitler oscillated between Nazi anti-bureaucratic inclinations and the counsel of professional diplomats, Ribbentrop and Neurath were mere tools for his opportunistic but intransigent decisions on important foreign affairs. Hitler's speeches in the meetings did not take much account of negotiations, internal cliques or public opinion, yet they framed plans. Therefore, even Foreign Minister Neurath could not refuse to obey Hitler's orders. In fact, when Neurath opposed Hitler's resorting to force for the acquisition of territory in the Hossbach Memorandum in November 1937, Hitler simply replaced Neurath by the more obedient Ribbentrop. Following his master's example, after his appointment as foreign minister in February 1938, Ribbentrop promoted a few of his personnel from the *Ribbentrop Büro* and abandoned them later.[68]

It is difficult to blame the two negotiators for the whole course of events since they had already lost their strong influence on foreign policy decision-making. Nonetheless, Yoshida and Grandi could be said to reflect the contradictions of their governments. While ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy, after launching military offensives, sought to elude international isolation by *rapprochement* with Britain, the anti-Western circles became too vigorous for the foreign ministries to

[67] De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo*, p. 73.

[68] Heineman, op. cit., pp. 127, 129, 159–166. BA, NS 43/49, Aufgaben eines Aussenpolitischen Amtes der NSDAP.

justify and execute pro-British policies. Yoshida and Grandi consequently resorted to the expedient of anti-communism and made full use of contrived measures in a different way from that of Ribbentrop, who simply carried out, with pertinacity and tactlessness, Hitler's wishes with regard to Britain.

In spite of the fact that swinging the pendulum from pro-German to pro-British was a daydream of moderates, Yoshida and Grandi hardly renounced any advantage acquired by their respective countries' aggressive expansionism. Thus both negotiators lost their credibility, one after the other, as the British government searched for an understanding that would buy it time. The more coercive Germany's foreign policies became, as shown by Ribbentrop's intimidating attitude, the fewer alternatives Japan and Italy were able to choose for their diplomacy.

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CHAPTER 6

# Traditional Diplomats and New Actors

As mentioned in the preceding chapters, 1932 and 1936 were the turning points of the foreign ministries in both Japan and Italy. In Japan, political parties lost their influence in 1932 after the assassination of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai in the May 15 Incident. Accordingly, the Japanese foreign ministry began to enjoy freedom from "the noise" of party politics. In Italy, Benito Mussolini placed himself in the position of foreign minister after removing Dino Grandi and purging other sub-leaders in 1932. For the reason that the Italian traditional diplomats could directly have an impact on Mussolini as foreign minister, they retook their own initiative in forming foreign policies by secluding Mussolini from the stubborn fascists who were ignorant of world affairs.[1]

Traditional diplomatic services in Japan and Italy both played active roles in carrying out aggressive expansionism in China and Ethiopia, respectively. In contrast to what had been stated in the post-war memoirs of the traditional diplomats, which assert that they opposed the ultra-nationalists and fascists, they would cooperate with hard-liners as long as the West was not totally opposed to their military attempts. They tried, in effect, to restrict the levels of aggression to contemporary norms

[1] Hiroaki Shiozaki, *Kokunai Shintaisei wo Motomete* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 1998), pp. 61–108. Ken Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats in the Ethiopian War: The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Fascist Italy" (hereafter Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats"), *Hogaku Zasshi* of Osaka City University, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1996), 994–1004.

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_6

accepted among the imperialist powers. The consensus among diplomats in both Japan and Italy during the period from 1932 to 1936 was that they should avoid a total military confrontation with Britain.

However, the Japanese foreign ministry could no longer restrain the Japanese government from rushing to extremes after 1937, when Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe took over the cabinet with the backing of the military, and similarly, the Italian diplomats lost their influence after an overconfident Mussolini and ambitious Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, gained uncontested control of the government. Gradually losing the initiative in 1936, neither foreign ministries could stop their aggressive wars. Italy passed the point of no return after Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, and Japan did so when it escalated to all-out war against China in July 1937.

Since many traditional diplomats also agreed to establish an anti-communist world order, they were not in a position to prevent further escalation of the conflicts led by the Japanese military or the Italian fascists. The Sino-Japanese War and the Spanish Civil War had three characteristics in common. First, the war planners thought that they could win in the short term, but the quest for quick victory ended in failure. Second, even after reaching a stalemate, they could not cut the conflict short, which inevitably aggravated the international situation. Third, the escalated aggression led to the first examples of massive indiscriminate bombing such as in Shanghai and in Guernica.[2]

This chapter examines the offensive developments of 1937 by focusing on the new actors—namely, followers, promoters and critics (see also Chapter 8) of the policies pursued by the Japanese and Italian governments. It will also pay attention to the former and new actors who emerged as promoters and observers in the decision-making circles and who became so polarized that they had to clarify their definitions of *friend* and *foe* in accordance with the new orientation of foreign policy. The choice between the two poles limited their options and greatly hampered the decision-making mechanisms. In the end, all of the actors, including the new ones, began to rehash policies from the first half of the 1930s, but with fewer alternatives and in more extreme contexts.

[2]For example, see the following books. John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975). Tetsuo Furuya, *Nicchu Senso* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1985).

## 6.1 Followers and Promoters: Yakichiro Suma and Raffaele Guariglia

The traditional assumption is that the traditional diplomats were rational and moderate actors who tried to avert international catastrophe in face of military escalation but without success. Yet, in reality, many Japanese and Italian diplomats collaborated with the hard-line ultra-nationalists and fascists to establish regional hegemony in East Asia and in the Mediterranean, respectively. They sometimes acted more aggressively than ultra-nationalists and fascists even before the period when the foreign ministries lost their initiative. Typical examples of follower and promoter working with harsh expansionist policies were Yakichiro Suma and Raffaele Guariglia.

Yakichiro Suma, whom Foreign Minister Koki Hirota appointed consul general to Nanking immediately after Hirota assumed his post, was considered "the real Japanese power" in the diplomatic community in China from 1932 to 1937. Suma was notorious for a coercive attitude that exemplified the worst aspect of the Japanese foreign ministry when negotiating with the *Kuomintang* (Nationalist Party) government. He claimed a share in any further loan transactions with China in 1934 and treated China as Japan's preserve. Suma asserted that Japan objected strongly to the plan of the China Finance Cooperation unless Japanese interests were first consulted. Further, he classified all the Chinese politicians and foreign diplomats into "pro-" and "anti-Japanese" factions. In claiming to be a China expert, he ended up with the same tendency as had other Japanese diplomats who perceived foreigners as either a friend or a foe. Suma, calling the *Kuomintang*'s anti-communist policy fake, sought even tougher measures against China than the Japanese army had.[3]

In addition, Suma actively carried on a direct negotiation with the *Kuomintang* government and demanded the exclusion of Western influence from Chinese affairs. While he praised his counterpart, Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Tang Yu-jen, for work that put him at the risk of his life, Suma intimidated Tang, in June 1934, over the case of a missing Japanese diplomat who, in fact, had disappeared for purely personal reasons. Suma

[3]The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO371/18097, F2378/107/10 (26/4/1934); FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (21/5/1934); FO371/18169, F3590/57/23 (7/6/1934). Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo, A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 8, Shokaiseki Seiken no Doko by Yakichiro Suma (25/2/1936).

also took a blatantly patronizing attitude to raising the status of the Japanese legation in China to that of an embassy in May 1935.[4]

Compared to Suma, his superiors were not so heavy-handed. However, the policy that he pursued was not drastically different from the general line that Undersecretary Mamoru Shigemitsu had set. For example, both Shigemitsu and Suma viewed the Leith-Ross mission with deep suspicion, since they regarded the mission as a British attempt to occupy China's "financial heart."[5] Although Suma did not reject the Anglo-Japanese negotiations, he thought that after the February 26 Incident Japan had become sufficiently consolidated to press its policy upon China. He was deemed to have great sympathy for the military's aims and methods, which increased his "truculent and bluffing mood."[6]

Suma's arrogance toward China, which he condemned as being an unfaithful opportunist nation, continued after the foreign ministry's initiative under Hirota and Shigemitsu had been terminated in April 1936. Suma even justified Japanese smuggling as a means to lower the Chinese tariff. In addition, the pro-Axis diplomats often cooperated with the military in resorting to coercive measures. While the sectionalism in the Japanese decision-making structure often prevented the government from hammering out a concrete policy, irresponsible hard-liners repeatedly succeeded in canalizing foreign policy in an aggressive direction, and guiding Japan toward a confrontation with Britain. The Japanese foreign ministry was also reluctant to give up some of the gains made through partial victories in the Chinese battlefields. Later, Suma, who had played an active role in promoting war against China, was recalled from Nanking. He became counselor to the Embassy of Japan in the United States in 1937, director of the Information Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in 1939 and finally, minister to Spain in 1940.[7]

[4]Yakichiro Suma, *Gaiko Hiroku* (Tokyo: Shoko Zaimu Kenkyukai, 1951), pp. 7–9, 27–30. Shigeharu Matsumoto, *Shanhai Jidai*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1974), pp. 247–249. Liu Jie, "'Chugoku-tsu' Gaikokan to Gaimusho no Chugoku Seisaku: 1935–1937," in *Nicchu Senso no Shoso*, ed. Gunjishi Gakkai (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1997), p. 104. Shigeaki Uno, "Hirota Koki no Tai-Ka Seisaku to Sho Kai-seki," *Kokusai Seiji*, 56 (1976), 38–39.

[5]Suma, op. cit., pp. 76–77.

[6]TNA, FO 371/20242, F2218/96/10 (20/4/1936).

[7]Suma, op. cit., pp. 181–189. Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943* (hereafter Ciano, *Diario*), a cura di Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1980), pp. 54, 71, 224.

Raffaele Guariglia, already famous in 1926, when appointed director general of the Political and Commercial Department for Europe and the Levant, was described as "somewhat grasping as a negotiator."[8] Designated chief of the Department for Ethiopian Affairs from 1935 to 1936, he was a strong advocate of Italian expansionism in Ethiopia. In fact, he was obsessed with Ethiopia and rejected offers by the West to take Italian expansionism elsewhere, such as Angola and the Cameroons. Guariglia insisted on a glorious victory against Ethiopia, where the Italian army had experienced an embarrassing defeat, presenting himself as the 'Africanist' whose imperial aspirations for the conquest of Ethiopia were as strong as those of the fascists.[9]

When Guariglia became ambassador to Spain in August 1932, the Italian foreign ministry was becoming concerned over rumors of the conclusion of a secret treaty between France and Spain that allowed the French occupation of the Balearic Islands and let French North African troops cross Spanish soil in wartime. Moreover, the fascist government was nervous about a "red conspiracy" against Italy, developing through the network of anti-fascist refugees in the Spanish Republic and France. The ambitious air minister, Italo Balbo, also suggested to Mussolini that Italy should seize Melilla in Spanish Morocco to strengthen the Italian presence in the Western Mediterranean. Mussolini instructed Guariglia to support the anti-Republican plot in Spain and to separate Spain from France. Guariglia faithfully organized fascist propaganda and adopted anti-French policies.[10]

[8] TNA, FO371/11385, C12479/77/22 (26/11/1926).

[9] Esmonde M. Robertson, *Mussolini as Empire-Builder: Europe and Africa, 1932–1936* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 14. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, 2-XIV (London: HMSO, 1976), No. 225. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922–1946* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), pp. 226–227, 259–261. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna e primi passi in diplomazia* (hereafter Guariglia, *Ambasciata in Spagna*), a cura di Ruggero Moscati (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1972), p. XII. George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 21–22.

[10] Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce*, Vol. 2: *Lo Stato totalitario 1936–1940* (Torino: Einaudi, 1981), p. 361. Claudio G. Segrè, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life* (Barkley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 343. The National Archives, Washington, DC, Personal Papers of Benito Mussolini, 1922–44, Microcopy T-586, Reel 468, 035602–3. Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 193–199. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna*, pp. 265–266, 291–292, 302.

In the summer of 1933, Guariglia arranged José Antonio Primo Rivera's visit to Rome to strengthen fascism's impact on the Falange. Moreover, in the autumn of 1933, Guariglia also invited José Calvo Sotelo to plot a military uprising against the Spanish government. Although actual support of this idea was realized by Balbo in 1934, weapons had not been been sent to Spain before the outbreak of a revolt in 1936. Guariglia stayed in contact with the Spanish monarchists, while Mussolini abandoned the old-fashioned plan of a Spanish coup d'état (pronunciamento) in 1932. Guariglia's extraordinary eagerness to increase Italian influence in Spain to overcome that country's pro-Western inclinations sometimes got ahead of Mussolini. Since Mussolini's priority at that moment was to diminish French influence rather than overthrow the Spanish Republic, he recalled Guariglia, appointed him chief of the Department of Ethiopian Affairs in 1935 and did not insist on retaining organized reactionary connections.[11]

Guariglia's dissident network was based upon anti-communism, a sentiment with which the British government sympathized to a certain extent. He also believed that the Italian invasion of Ethiopia was compatible with the interests of the British Empire, which might reward Italy with land in Africa if it agreed to collaborate against Germany. However, Mussolini regarded diplomats only as his tools and reshuffled their roles. After Ciano was appointed foreign minister, this pretender to the position of vice duce accelerated the personalization of diplomacy. As a consequence of the ministry's fascistization, Guariglia was relegated to the minor position of ambassador to Argentina in 1936, to France in 1938, to the Vatican in 1942 and to Turkey in 1943. Although he became foreign minister in Pietro Badoglio's government after the arrest of Mussolini in July 1943, Guariglia was left behind when the king and Badoglio escaped from Rome in September 1943, and he had to seek refuge from the German military in the Spanish embassy in Rome.[12]

[11] Ibid., pp. 302–324. Id., *Ricordi*, pp. 189–190, 193–196, 202–206. Coverdale, op. cit., pp. 41–42, 45, 48, 51–60. Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti, Ufficio di Coordinamento, B9, F37–45, G44, F1, Verbale della Riunione tenuta a Palazzo Venezia, 31/3/1934. NA, T586/1295, 112744-5.

[12] Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 193–199, 202–206, 617. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna*, pp. 265–266, 291–292, 302–324, 321–323. Coverdale, op. cit., pp. 45, 48, 53. Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats", 994. Ken Ishida, *Chichukai Shin-Roma Teikoku eno Michi: Fashisuto Itaria no Taigaiseisaku 1935–39* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), p. 35.

It is true that Suma and Guariglia were not completely identical; the latter was a senior-ranking officer who could play the role of promoter in the decision-making process, whereas the former was a mere consul general who acted on his own authority, without instructions from his superiors in Tokyo. Yet, three common characteristics were shared by these two traditional diplomats. First, Suma and Guariglia were as aggressive as ultra-nationalists and fascists were, for Suma presumed China to be inferior to Japan and Guariglia presumed Spain to be inferior to Italy. Second, the traditional diplomats in both countries rationalized, early on, their intervention in China and Spain by the simple expedient of anti-communism. Third, while the initial objectives of their military intervention were to overthrow the Chinese and Spanish governments, which were deemed to be contaminated by the "reds," Suma and Guariglia were becoming increasingly more willing to adopt a foreign policy that was against the interests of the Western governments. There were many traditional diplomats in Japan and Italy who asked their governments to adopt hard-line policies similar to those these two diplomats supported, but Suma and Guariglia were conspicuous for promoting such policies with zeal. Ultimately, the Japanese and Italian governments demoting Suma and Guariglia to positions in which they could no longer commit themselves to formulating foreign policies before the outbreak of World War II.

## 6.2 Powerless Critics: Naotake Sato and Giuseppe Bastianini

Only a few high-ranking diplomats criticized foreign policy in Japan and Italy after 1936, but they were powerless to influence decision making in those regimes. Naotake Sato became foreign minister in March 1937 and Giuseppe Bastianini became undersecretary in June 1936, when both Japan and Italy started to become increasingly confrontational against the West over the issue of China and Spain. Even though Sato and Bastianini were regarded as anti-Axis, they were nominated to their respective positions through irregular processes that could be seen as indicative of foreign ministry changes in Japan and Italy after 1936.

In Japan, General Senjuro Hayashi succeeded Hirota as prime minister in February 1937 because he was considered easily controllable by aggressive lower-ranking army officers. Initially, he named Yukichi Obata as foreign

minister. Obata was a native of the Ishikawa province, which Hayashi came from. However, Obata refused to work with Toshio Shiratori, the nominated undersecretary, who was known for his ultra-nationalist orientation. Hayashi then excluded Shiratori and chose Sato as foreign minister, who was recommended by Obata, in spite of Sato's pro-Western stance. In Italy, Ciano strongly favored Bastianini for the post of undersecretary. Just as Fulvio Suvich did, Bastianini started his political career in the Italian Nationalist Association. He quickly became a fascist before the National Fascist Party's seizure of power. Bastianini was secretary general of *Fasci all'estero* (Fasci Abroad) until 1927, when he took up a career as a diplomat stationed in Portugal, Greece and Poland. At a restaurant in Rome, he acquainted himself with Ciano, who was later appointed foreign minister by his father-in-law, Mussolini. This personal connection helped his promotion by Ciano, who was four years younger than Bastianini, to the position of undersecretary at the age of thirty-seven.[13]

Sato spent almost thirty-one years abroad, especially in Europe. Hence he had no connections with the important figures within Japanese political circles, which were closed to outsiders. Sato's goals were quite clear: peaceful settlement of disputes, conciliation with China on an equal basis, better diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and amicable resolution of issues between Britain and Japan. Nonetheless, lacking a power base in Japan, Sato was harshly attacked for his speech before the Diet in March 1937 and was forced to withdraw it. Since Sato had opined that a crisis such as the outbreak of war could be brought about by Japan's standpoint on the international level, he refused to deny the truth. He even admitted the failures of Japanese foreign policy and tried to abolish contraband trade without demanding any quid pro quo from China in the nature of a reduction of tariffs. Sato's criticism of the Japanese regime offered an opportunity for the political parties, which were excluded from Hayashi's reactionary government, to drive the cabinet to a general resignation, but by this time, the political parties also

[13]Akira Fujiwara, *Showa no Rekishi*, Vol. 5: *Nicchu Zemmen Senso* (Tokyo: Shogakkan Bunko, 1988), p. 31. Barbara J. Brooks, *Japan's Imperial Diplomacy: Consuls, Treaty Ports, and War in China 1895–1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), pp. 175–176. Ken Kurihara, "Sato Naotake no Gikai Enzetsu to Shusen Iken Dempo", in *Sato Naotake no Memboku*, ed., Ken Kurihara (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1981), p. 3. Ken Ishida, *Nichidokui Sangoku Domei no Kigen* (hereafter Ishida, *Nichidokui*) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2013), pp. 164–165. TNA, FO 371/20414, R3491/241/22 (12/6/1936).

showed a marked leaning toward aggressive expansionism. In fact, one of Sato's notorious accusers was Seigo Nakano, the leader of the Japanese fascist party, who later visited Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Nakano played a part in the censure of the most moderate foreign policies in the late 1930s.[14]

Sato's knowledge of Europe was outstanding, but he was inexperienced in dealing with the issues over China and therefore appointed China specialist Itaro Ishii as ministerial director of East Asian affairs. Yet, the Japanese government's preoccupation with sectional antagonism, especially with the military, precluded reaching any agreement with China or Britain after the collapse of Hayashi's cabinet in May 1937. Sato saw the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact as a necessary evil, which, he remarked, was unfortunate and regrettable for Russo-Japanese relations. The German ambassador to Japan protested against these remarks, yet Sato instructed the Japanese ambassador in Rome to avoid conferring with Ribbentrop, who intended to have Italy join the pact. Nevertheless, Masaaki Hotta, another European specialist and newly appointed ambassador to Italy, reopened the talks with Italy and Germany to conclude the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact immediately after Sato left office. In fact, after three months at the foreign ministry, Sato attempted to persuade his successor, Hirota, to follow his policies. However, Hirota had no apparent desire to end the pro-Axis trend and the conflict in China.[15]

According to the diary of Ishii, who gave Sato's ministry a better rating than Hirota's cabinet, a senior position in the Japanese foreign ministry involved dealing with an internal struggle over personnel changes. The ministry was also easily influenced by the military hard-liners. Sato intended to withdraw the army from China, falling back to the final line of Manchukuo. However, the problem was how to execute such a policy. Ignored by Hirota, Sato expressed his idea of a compromise in China at

[14]Naotake Sato, *Kaiko Hachiju Nen* (Tokyo: Jiji Tsushinsha, 1963), pp. 348–349, 358–359, 364–368. Kurihara, op. cit., pp. 7–11, 13. TNA, FO371/21039, F3763/233/23 (4/6/1937); FO371/21040, F1819/414/23 (22/3/1937). Since Hayashi himself was so unprogressive that he intervened in the general election, his selection of Sato was not politically strategic but purely accidental through personal connections.

[15]Morito Morishima, *Imbo*, *Ansatsu, Gunto: Ichi-Gaikokan no Kaiso* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1950), pp. 121–124. Ishida, *Nichidokui*, pp. 43, 55–56, 60–61. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik* (hereafter ADAP), C-VI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), Nrn. 294, 401, 413. Kurihara, op. cit., p. 14.

a meeting of senior diplomats after the fall of the Hayashi government. The old traditional diplomats were eager to agree with Sato, but they regarded the implementation of his proposal as unlikely. The outbreak of an all-out war against China in July 1937 sank Japan into the mire of aggression.[16]

Giuseppe Bastianini was one of the first fascist deputies to obtain a high-ranking position in the Italian foreign ministry in 1927. After his career as secretary general of the *Fasci all'estero* from 1923 to 1926, organizing Italians abroad to follow fascist expansionism, Bastianini became a stalwart supporter of Italian claims. He succeeded Suvich as undersecretary in June 1936 and remained at his post until July 1939. Although he spent three years on the home front, which was far longer than Sato served, Bastianini could accomplish almost nothing. Five days after his appointment, Bastianini found out that he did not have his own office in the ministry. Ciano told him that he would only be engaged in administrative work, while Ciano would set his mind to political matters. Bastianini claimed in his memoirs that he had criticized Ciano for not informing him of the military intervention in the Spanish Civil War and the occupation of Albania. Eager to take part in diplomatic policy making, he suggested several capricious plans to Mussolini such as forming a German, Russian and Italian bloc and concluding an understanding on the Mediterranean with Britain.[17]

In spite of his criticism of Ciano, who was notorious for his arrogant attitude toward small countries and diplomats he disliked, Bastianini tended to foster similar attitudes. Regarding Italy's intervention in the Spanish Civil War, he believed that the best way to make the Spanish Nationalists accept the Italian demands was to take a very uncompromising stance in the negotiations. Bastianini optimistically believed the Spanish Nationalists could be coerced into adopting a military strategy for a quick victory, in spite of the fact that they wished to adopt a more

[16] *Ishii Itaro Nikki* (hereafter *Ishii Nikki*), ed. Takashi Ito and Liu Jie (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993), pp. 129, 143, 145, 148, 154. Kurihara, op. cit., pp. 14–15.

[17] TNA, FO371/12196, C2895/80/22 (23/3/1927). Giuseppe Bastianini, *Uomini, cose, fatti: Memorie di un ambasciatore* (Milano: Vitagliano, 1959), p. 232. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, Segretaria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato, B37, F Bastianini, 5/9/1936; Appunto per il Duce (28/8/1937). Roy MacGregor-Hastie, *The Day of the Lion: The Life and Death of Fascist Italy 1922–1945* (London: Macdonald, 1963), p. 236. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, *Europe 1930–40*, Italie 270, p. 157 (N. 342: 19/11/1936).

cautious plan. Whereas the British government accused Italy of unnecessarily intervening in the Spanish Civil War when the other countries in Europe were withdrawing their troops, Bastianini complained bitterly to an unofficial mediator that his uncompromising stance could force his counterpart to give way to him. In fact, he stated in his memoirs, even after World War II, that Italy had intervened in Spain to prevent Stalin from controlling Spain, which was, in his opinion, comparable to the American intervention in Korea during the 1950s.[18]

When Ciano appointed Bastianini as ambassador to Britain in September 1939, after Grandi's promotion to the position of minister of justice, Ciano told the British ambassador to Italy that Bastianini's opinions aligned with his. The mechanism of foreign ministry no longer functioned in a bureaucratic manner. Instead, it operated through connections among the individuals in the power centers. Nonetheless, the British Foreign Office clearly recognized that Bastianini had never exercised his influence on the Italian foreign ministry. Moreover, he did not utilize the private channel to the British Conservative Party, which had been first established by Grandi. Therefore British records only made a slight reference to Bastianini, who was politically distant from Nazi Germany but less instrumental than Grandi. In his memoirs, Bastianini emphasized his anti-racist orientation by mentioning that Ribbentrop called him "an honorary Jew." However, compared with other diplomats such as Attolico, Bastianini did nothing to lay restraints on pro-Axis policies. After the war, he claimed that the fascist regime turned into a conformist barrack where petty officers acted like the hotshots, as did Mussolini, who by this time did not listen to the truth anymore and had isolated himself from the rest of the party. Personalization of politics gradually resulted in trivializing figures such as Ciano, who was supposed to be an important vice duce, and consequently, Bastianini's influence as "vice Ciano" declined.[19]

When both Sato and Bastianini were selected for high-ranking posts from their positions as observers, they initially intended to promote foreign policies, but they failed to do so. They were confined to the spheres of negotiation and administration. Because the power center paid no

[18]TNA, FO371/22621, W2308/29/41 (2/15/1938). TNA, FO954/13A, It/37/41 (15/12/1937). Bastianini, op. cit., pp. 237–238, 247.

[19]ASMAE, Carte Dino Grandi, B66, F158, SF2, Vol. 2, pp. 98, 104, 166. TNA, FO371/23829, R8943/7588/22 (17/10/1939). Bastianini, op. cit., pp. 240–245, 259.

heed to their advice, Sato and Bastianini lost their orientation within the decision-making circle. Although Sato was far more sensitive to the international situation than Bastianini was, both ended up as powerless actors who could only criticize, in vain, the faults of their governments. Moreover, the newly promoted diplomats, who occupied important positions in the foreign ministries after 1936, could not do as much to change foreign policies as their predecessors could.

## 6.3 New Key Actors: Fumimaro Konoe and Galeazzo Ciano

While the Japanese and Italian foreign ministries lost their initiative, new political actors emerged from the ruling class. In 1891, Prince Fumimaro Konoe was born of a noble family that shared a common ancestry with the imperial house. His father had an ultra-nationalist tendency, and Fumimaro became a hereditary peer in the House of Lords in his university days. In 1918, Konoe published an article, "Eibei Hon'i no Heiwashugi wo Haisu" ("Rejecting Anglo-British Pacifism"), in which he criticized the safety-first principle of Western imperialism that was interested only in preserving the status quo. In 1903, Galeazzo Ciano was born into a naval family. His father received the title of Count of Cortellazzo for his military distinction and became one of thirty-three fascist representatives in 1921. In 1925, Galeazzo entered the diplomatic service and was sent to China as the secretary of the legation. As chargé d'affaires, he experienced the first Shanghai Incident of 1932. In 1930 he married Edda, the first-born child of Mussolini, which won him rapid promotion to the position of foreign minister in 1936. These new political actors in both Japan and Italy climbed all the way up to the power center through nepotism.[20]

After the breakdown of Hayashi's cabinet, Prime Minister Konoe appeared on the political stage with high expectations. Yet, political watchers from both Japan and abroad soon realized that the young

[20]Fumimaro Konoe, "Eibei Hon'i no Heiwashugi wo Haisu," in *Seidanroku*, ed. Takeshi Ito (Tokyo: Chikura Shobo, 1936), pp. 231–241. Yoshitake Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro: Ummei no Seijika* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1972), pp. 1, 10–11, 20. Giordano Bruno Guerri, *Galezzo Ciano* (Milano: Bompiani, 1985), pp. 39–46. Ray Moseley, *Mussolini's Shadow: The Double Life of Count Galeazzo Ciano* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 6–9.

prince was not capable of taking firm positions. As many Japanese were frustrated by the fact that Konoe commented very little in the meetings, foreign reporters considered him an irresolute leader. His statements, announced by the government during the Sino-Japanese War, were full of aggressive but ambiguous slogans: "Violent China should be conquered," "We ask China to reflect" and "The Chinese Nationalist government must not be dealt with."[21] On the other hand, Konoe argued that public opinion prevented him from moderating conditions for peace, and Foreign Minister Hirota had to incur the blame for failing to negotiate a settlement.[22] A definitive course was not mapped out for foreign policy, because neither Konoe nor Hirota could resist supporting the aggressive actions of the military and ultra-nationalists. As a result, the government ended up expanding military operations and continued to take a high-handed attitude to China.[23] Observing that Japan was delaying negotiations, showing no hint of contemplating a cease-fire and promulgating arrogant slogans that denigrated the Chinese, Giacinto Auriti, the Italian ambassador to Tokyo, reported repeatedly to the foreign ministry in Rome that Japan was a bellicose nation.[24]

Konoe's name appeared in Ciano's diary only once, when an ultra-nationalist politician, Seigo Nakano, acting as an unofficial agent, brought the prime minister's message to Mussolini. In this meeting, which was held on December 21, 1937, Nakano condemned Britain as a "Jewish plutocracy which hindered the young nations from marching on." Mussolini replied that it was desirable to conclude an agreement for closer cooperation with Japan. In fact, Ciano made the same proposal to Seizo Arisue, the Japanese military attaché to Italy, a few days before. Nakano was one of the very few points of contact between Konoe and fascist Italian leaders, and he acquired the wrong ideological impression of the Italian side. Indeed, it is not rare, particularly for dictators or

[21] Katsumi Usui, *Nicchu Gaiko-shi Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1999), p. 230. Ryoichi Tobe, *Gaimusho Kakushin-ha: Sekai Shin-Chitsujo no Gen'ei* (Tokyo: Chuko-Shinsho, 2010), op. cit., pp. 138–139.

[22] Sadaharu Yabe, *Konoe Fumimaro*, Vol. I (Tokyo: Kobundo, 1952), p. 461. Akira Kazami, *Konoe Naikaku* (Tokyo: Nihon Shuppan Kyodo, 1951), p. 121.

[23] Furuya, op. cit., pp. 129–156. Makiko Takada, "Torautoman Kosaku to Sambohombu Wahei-ha," *Seijikeizai Shigaku*, No. 246 (1986), 46–47, 56–57.

[24] ASMAE, Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Giappone, B13, F1, N. 496/212 (2/7/1936). ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, N. 1044/281 (22/11/1937).

strong leaders, to launch personal missions instead of using formal diplomatic channels. Yet no realistic outcome could have been expected when an eccentric figure such as Nakano acted as an intermediary. In fact, he publicly urged Japan to cooperate with Italy and Germany to compete against British and Russian imperialism.[25]

The new policies undertaken by Konoe's government were not created by the ultra-nationalists and hard-liners in the army alone. The foreign ministry itself drew up the declaration of January 6, 1938, announcing that the Japanese government would not deal with the Chinese Nationalist government. They did not consider this declaration to mean "breaking off relations," but only to warn of "ignoring" the Nanking government. Hirota submitted the matter to the cabinet, and it was officially announced by Prime Minister Konoe without a second thought. On the same day, the government also informed the public that it would call off the ongoing peace talks, which were being mediated by Oscar Trautmann, the German ambassador to China. Konoe even explained that the declaration was a firm resolution against the existing government in China. His remarks had stronger import than a simple refusal to negotiate with the Chinese. He accordingly asserted that this meant both the negation and the annihilation of China itself.[26]

The Amau Statement of April 17, 1934, known as the Japanese Monroe Doctrine, and Konoe's declaration were typical of Japanese foreign policy in that they were measures to satisfy the sectional objectives of the army for domestic consumption and were diplomatically destructive. Why did they repeat the same mistake? The political promoters were often inspired by Japan's inferiority complex in relation to the West, which gradually evolved into strong anti-League and anti-West sentiments, and by the general tendency to think that Japan was superior to contemporary China. First, they adopted hard measures against China,

[25] Ciano, *Diario*, p. 71. Planning a total settlement of the Sino-Japanese dispute, Seigo Nakano traveled to Europe to persuade Germany and Italy of the Japanese position and to fly an observation balloon. Since Nakano deluded himself into thinking that he was "the representative of Japanese spirit in the true meaning," Nakano told Mussolini that Japan would rebuild the world order with the Axis powers. Yasuo Nakano, *Seijika Nakano Seigo*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shinkokaku Shoten, 1971), pp. 278, 282–283, 285.

[26] Yabe, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 469–470. Kazami, op. cit., pp. 106–107. Furuya, op. cit., p. 164.

which provoked Western antipathy. As the servile inclination of the elites to cooperate with the West was criticized by the military and ultra-nationalists, policy-oriented actors also began to "overcome" the Japanese subservient attitude to Western "unequal treatment" of Japan. Konoe and his close friend Hirota expressed similar views, using the words "peace based on international justice," by which they meant equitable conditions of territory and resources among nations. As Hirota began to confirm, or consider, the extension of war, Konoe became inclined to play up to the military and fanatical ultra-nationalists, which prevented the domestic orientation of Japanese foreign policy from being reformed, especially after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.[27] By then, the Japanese foreign ministry could only head into the collision course. The only question was when it should start.

While Konoe's most prominent characteristic, self-deception, originated in his indecisiveness, Ciano wore a double face more intentionally. On November 6, 1937, he signed the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact and declared, "The pact is a realistic instrument to serve the interest of peace and civilisation which Fascism intends to defend against any threat."[28] Yet Ciano wrote in his diary on the same day: "Three nations are embarking together upon a path which may perhaps lead them to war. A war necessary in order to break through the crust which is stifling the energy and the aspirations of the young nations."[29] War rather than peace was often mentioned in the statements of Benito Mussolini during this period. Such double-dealing underlies the classic interpretation of the fascist Italian foreign policy, which emphasizes its fraudulent character: fascist Italy baffled other countries by making statements that were contrary to its intentions and then acting in accordance with their

[27] The spelling of the name of Amau (instead of Amo) is used in the mode of the Western documents during the 1930s. TNA, FO371/21039, F4001/233/23 (17/6/1937); F5864/233/23 (5/8/1937). Even though Konoe's "brain trust" advised that the Japanese new order in East Asia was compatible with "globalism," Konoe did not take the initiative in carrying out cooperative policies. Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 295.

[28] ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F5, Dichiarazioni dei tre firmati (6/11/1937).

[29] Ciano, *Diario*, p. 53. The quotation is from the following English translation. *Ciano's Diary 1937–1938* (hereafter *Ciano's Diary*), trans. and notes Andreas Mayor (London: Methuen, 1952), pp. 28–29.

real objectives.[30] Ciano strove to emulate Mussolini's diplomatic tactics, which often relied on threatening counterparts with war and accelerated the pace of aggression. In that sense, Ciano's policies inevitably traced Mussolini's path in the first half of 1930s.

Few traditional diplomats attempted to stop the negotiations with Germany before the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact, even by turning Ciano's pride to their advantage. Attolico, the ambassador to Germany, reported on October 20, 1937, to Ciano: "[German Foreign Minister] Neurath thought that Italy should negotiate directly with Japan if Fascist Italy—which was the first nation fighting against communism—wanted a similar agreement." In addition, Attolico also remarked on Ribbentrop's opinion that Britain interpreted it as a provocation that could also affect the Anglo-Italian negotiations in a negative manner.[31] Emphasizing Germany's remoteness and Britain's suspicions, Attolico tried to warn of the possible ill effects that Ciano's predisposition to the Axis might bring. However, Ciano, regarding this as a sign that traditional diplomats were opposed to his policy, wrote in his diary: "They don't want to do something which will disturb London, and then they are afraid of Ribbentrop's personal success."[32] Ciano also stressed the fact that Attolico and Neurath conspired with each other against the Axis coalition,[33] which led him to expel capable diplomats and suspect that his staffs were acting behind the scene.

Ciano ridiculed both Japanese and German diplomats for their timidity in sticking to the details of the pact. He wrote in his diary on November 1: "Something very important has happened. The alliance of three military empires… of Italy, Germany, and Japan throws an unprecedented weight of armed strength into the balance of power. England will have to reconsider her position everywhere."[34] Expressing an aggressive attitude to Britain, Ciano further realized, through negotiations,

[30] Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 54, 56. Gaetano Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (London: Gollancz, 1953), pp. 29–31. The most exaggerated expression of the classic interpretation of fascist Italy can be seen in the following book. A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 85.

[31] *I documenti diplomatici italiani*, 8-VII (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1998), D. 462.

[32] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 23. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 47.

[33] Ibid., p. 48.

[34] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 27. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 52.

that even the foreign ministries of the three Axis countries stood as an obstinate barrier of the old regimes, as he believed that these institutions cared too much about unnecessary details of the terms. Whereas Ciano boasted that fascist Italy had conquered fifteen years of bad habits in the foreign ministry, Mussolini, as claimed by Ciano in his diary, insisted that Italy should take more decisive actions to differentiate itself from the conventional diplomacy in the Brussels conference.[35] Mussolini and Ciano recognized that despite some ideological value in the Tripartite Pact, they could not expect much cooperation from Japan or Italy, and this impression was shared by the Japanese and the Germans. Therefore, the fascists began to seek another "diplomatic revolution" in their foreign policy decision-making structure.[36]

After the Ethiopian War, the traditional Italian diplomats only could attempt in vain to deter the fascists from going too far by sending Mussolini and Ciano evidence suggesting that the Axis coalition was acting against Italian national interests. Since Mussolini and Ciano believed the diplomacy stalemate was being caused by foreign ministries, they no longer trusted the diplomats. Ciano, who claimed to be the vice duce, initially tried to imitate Mussolini's posture as a coordinator to deal with the foreign ministry. Nevertheless, as his dictatorial power grew, he started to use repressive measures against the institution. Mussolini and Ciano's belief that foreign ministries not only in Italy but also abroad, were resisting them encouraged these aggressive leaders to head straight into a "diplomatic revolution" and an invasive expansionism, believing that such a course was necessary to break quickly through the international situation.[37] Consequently, the two new key actors, Konoe and Ciano, played roles as active promoters of their "new" foreign policies,

[35] Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 54, 58, 60, 74.

[36] In this chapter a "diplomatic revolution" is characterized by its ideological orientation toward aggressive expansion. It is often considered to be different from the diplomatic bargaining of conventional foreign policy. In fact, in the decision-making process of each Axis power, leading actors tended to take a tougher line than traditionalists in their foreign ministry. Nonetheless, despite their provocative language, the content of the diplomatic revolution basically adhered to that of the old "realist" diplomacy but was accompanied by more opportunistic tendencies. Dissimilar to this chapter's definition, the definition offered in the following study regards a "diplomatic revolution" as a change of German position in Europe. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933–1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[37] Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats", 994.

and carelessly rushed toward the Axis, whereas their predecessors had been bound by the fetters of their own decision-making mechanisms.

The Japanese and Italian foreign ministries managed to recover their influence within the foreign policy decision-making circles for a short period before 1936, yet soon lost the opportunity to exercise their own discretion after the governments of Japan and Italy dismissed diplomats such as Suma and Guariglia, who actively followed and promoted tough policies. Moreover, the coordinators in the power centers ignored newly appointed high-ranking officials such as Sato and Bastianini and reduced them to ineffectual critics. Furthermore, the new key actors, Konoe and Ciano, followed the line of aggressive foreign policies that had been executed by their predecessors, Hirota and Mussolini, with much stronger zeal. To some extent, these individuals were following the paths toward expansionism that were pioneered by the traditional diplomats, but the latter were at least cautious enough not to antagonize the Western powers especially Britain. However, in both Japan and Italy, the governments started to pursue a new policy that provoked a confrontation with the West after the arrival of Konoe and Ciano. They played roles as active promoters of such foreign policies, and carelessly drove their countries into a stronger Axis coalition.

Japan needed to design a new ideology because a full-scale war against China had to be justified by something more than "self-defence." It was in 1937 that their diplomatic goal changed to the foundation of a new order in East Asia. Similarly, Italy started to become more bellicose, especially after the Ethiopian War. In 1937, as Italy insisted on wider adherence to the ideological framework of fascism among the Axis powers, Japan and Germany also commenced justifying their aggressive expansionism through radical ideologies. The next chapter will examine how the various actors in the Japanese and Italian governments reacted to the newly emerging international environment after 1937, and it will also look at how the Axis was globalized during that year. Specifically, it will review how the Italians observed the crisis in East Asia, an issue which has not received an adequate degree of attention in the current historiography.

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CHAPTER 7

# The East Asian Crisis and Globalization of the Axis

From November to December 1937 five important international events occurred in two months: the Brussels Nine Power Treaty Conference, the conclusion of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, Italian recognition of Manchukuo, German mediation of the Sino-Japanese War and Italian withdrawal from the League of Nations. Just after these events, Japanese and Italian elites started to recognize Nazi Germany as a clear point of reference for the East Asian situation. Although Italy was totally neglected within the framework of conventional wisdom that the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact held the key to understanding the Tripartite Alliance, the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact had complex repercussions for the globalization of the Axis. Moreover, Italy's recognition of Manchukuo before Germany's ushered in a new order in East Asia, where the British Empire had controlled basic interests. Being quite conscious of Italy, Germany committed itself more to East Asian affairs. This chapter will analyze Nazi Germany as a new factor in Asia as well as the five events mentioned above, as seen from the perspective of ultra-nationalist Japan and fascist Italy. It will pay particular attention to Italy, since previous studies focus more on the Japanese and German standpoints.[1]

[1] In spite of recent research on the Sino-Japanese War from multilateral viewpoints, it still lacks the Italian perspective. Shigeo Nishimura, Noriyuki Ishijima and Nobuo Tajima, eds., *Nicchu Senso no Kokusai Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 4: *Kokusai Kankei nonakano Nicchu Senso* (Tokyo: Keio Gijuku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2011). Ryoko Iechika, *Shokaiseki no Gaiko Senryaku to Nicchu Senso* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012). Xijun Lu, *Shokaiseki no*

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_7

In terms of how the old actors within the Japanese and Italian decision-making circles collaborated or coped with the new actors and situations (see also Chapter 8 for further details), Koki Hirota and Benito Mussolini, together with new actors such as Fumimaro Konoe and Galeazzo Ciano, played the role of coordinator as well as promoter. The old planners and followers such as Mamoru Shigemitsu, Fulvio Suvich, Shigeru Yoshida and Dino Grandi could no longer have a real impact on determining foreign policies. However, the basic structure of decision making in Japan and Italy did not change very much. In Japan, most diplomats meekly acquiesced to the ambitious and aggressive policies carried out by their government, and the foreign ministry preserved its bureaucracy. Fascist Italy, however, purged many diplomats, such as Roberto Cantalupo, Pompeo Aloisi, and Raffaele Guariglia, but the remaining actors were so capable that the promoters needed to use them as negotiators in major countries.

The aforementioned five events did not happen according to some grand plan of each power. On the contrary, the outcome of the events did not reflect policy objectives. The Brussels Nine Power Treaty Conference, which was the last diplomacy conference conducted in accordance with the Washington Treaty system before World War II, failed to reach a collective solution to the East Asian conflict. Simultaneously, the conclusion of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact led to an internal confrontation between "pro-British" and "pro-Axis" factions in every Axis country. The Italian recognition of Manchukuo did not increase its profits, and the modification of interest among the Axis powers in the Chinese continent ran into difficulties. German mediation of the Sino-Japanese War, which attempted to induce direct negotiations between China and Japan, also collapsed because of the discord within the Axis. The aggressive tendency of each Axis power increased all the more. Italian withdrawal from the

*"Kokusaiteki Kaiketsu" Senryaku: 1937–1941* (Tokyo: Toho Shoten, 2016). Therefore, this chapter concerns itself more with the Italian side and uses more Italian documents. In fact, due to the globalization of the Axis, the overview of East Asia is linked with the European situation. The following analysis consists of three types of images relating to the design of the new order. Ken Ishida, "The German-Japanese-Italian Axis as Seen from Fascist Italy," in *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890–1945*, Vol. II: *The Pluralistic Dynamics of the Formation of the Axis*, ed. Akira Kudo, Nobuo Tajima, Erich Pauer (Folkestone: Global Oriental Ltd., 2009), pp. 282–290.

League only ended in its isolation, as the anticipated ideological bond of the future allies did not develop into a well-formed union. Japan, Italy and Germany took distrustful attitudes toward each other, and each had different aims. As a consequence, while the Axis was globalized during the late 1930s, especially from November 1936 to November 1937, the wars of aggression took place without coordination or any common goal among the three countries.

## 7.1 The Brussels Nine Power Treaty Conference

After the Sino-Japanese War broke out on July 7, 1937, the United States began to participate in world politics more actively. Both the American government and public opinion stiffened their standpoint against Japan. The American government decided to send a delegation to the Brussels conference to support the League's denunciation of Japan and summons of the Nine Power Treaty members. The Far Eastern crisis gradually became more globalized than before. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appealed to "peace-loving" nations for a "quarantine" of the aggressor states so as to prevent the spread of "the epidemic of world lawlessness" in his Chicago speech of October 5, 1937. Nevertheless, the American delegate declared that his intention was to mediate peace and not to become involved militarily vis-à-vis Japan.[2]

Reporting on the American viewpoint, Fulvio Suvich, the Italian ambassador to the United States and former undersecretary for foreign affairs, emphasized that the United States and most powers concerned with the Chinese problem would not accede to the Japanese military advance.[3] According to Suvich, the American government encouraged the Western anti-Japanese policy and regarded the Sino-Japanese War, as it did the Spanish Civil War, as a conflict between fascism and democracy.[4] In addition, he remarked that Italy would "cross the Rubicon" if the Italian delegate were to stand up for Japan at the Brussels

[2] *Survey of International Affairs* (hereafter SIA), 1937-I (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 274. *I documenti diplomatici italiani* (hereafter DDI), 8-VII, (Roma: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1998), n. 384.

[3] Ibid., n. 518.

[4] Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero Affari Esteri, Roma (hereafter ASMAE), Serie Affari Politici 1931–1945 (hereafter AP), Italia, B43, Telesp. 238400 (8/11/1937).

conference.[5] Suvich sent out a warning that Italy would isolate itself if it pushed for the globalization of the Axis.

British Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden was very concerned about the potential threat posed by the German-Japanese-Italian Axis, particularly after the conclusion of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936. The British Foreign Office was worried that the Italian leaders and Italian public opinion leaned toward war against Britain. Hence, using the opportunity of the Brussels conference, the British side suggested the possibility of talks between Eden and Ciano on the topic of Anglo-Italian *détente*. Initially, Ciano took a positive attitude to the plan because he was eager for the limelight as a great politician and the talks were thought to deserve more world attention than the Brussels conference itself.[6] However, Mussolini rejected the idea not only because without adequate preparation it could lead to disillusion and disappointment but also because "it smacked too much in their eyes of collective security and League of Nations".[7]

Germany, on the other hand, continued to sell arms to China even after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, which provoked Japanese disapproval. The German foreign ministry was repelled by the Japanese government's justification of their invasion as an action based on the Anti-Comintern Pact. Many German diplomats did not agree with the Japanese military action, which they perceived as an egocentric program and feared that it would result in spreading communism in China.[8] Moreover, General Alexander von Falkenhausen, sent on a military mission to China, blocked the Italian influence there and became the chief military adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. The Italian ambassador to China, Giuliano Cora, reported in September 1937 that Falkenhausen met Chiang almost every day. The Italian ambassador to Japan, Giacinto Auriti, observed that Germany feared the Soviet penetration of the

[5] ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, Telesp. 240813 (24/11/1937).

[6] ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F1, Il patto nippo-tedesco, dicembre 1937. *Parliamentary Debate: House of Commons*, 5 ser., Vol. 318 (London: HMSO, 1937), col. 825., Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937–1943* (hereafter Ciano, *Diario*), a cura di Renzo De Felice (Milano: Rizzoli, 1980), pp. 50–51.

[7] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (hereafter DBFP), 2-XIX (London: HMSO, 1982), No. 314. Cf. DDI, 8-VII, n. 551.

[8] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 147, 184. *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik 1918–1945* (hereafter ADAP), D-I (Baden-Baden: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950), Nr. 472.

Chinese market as a result of Russian support for China. Yet Adolf Hitler, unlike the German foreign ministry, thought that the Brussels conference was a chance to make Japan turn to both Germany and Italy.[9]

The Japanese gained such a bad impression of German measures in China that they even demanded the recall of Oskar P. Trautmann, the German "anti-Axis" ambassador to China. Nevertheless, the German foreign ministry rejected the Japanese demand and explained to the Chinese government that they were not attending the Brussels conference because they would be requested to assume a pro-Japanese attitude.[10] Hitler, too, observing Japan's refusal to attend the conference, and the Soviets acceptance of the invitation, decided to not send a delegation. He also utilized the Italian accession to the Anti-Commintern Pact, which took place three days after the conference opened, to strengthen the global Axis as well as damage the conference. The Italian "anti-Axis" ambassador to Germany, Bernardo Attolico, commented that the German side avoided getting deeply involved in the complicated conflict as opposed to committing themselves to the cause of anti-communist and pro-Japanese policies.[11]

Fascist Italy, conversely, accepted the invitation from Belgium, after making sure that the conference had no connection with the League of Nations. Ciano justified their acceptance by declaring that the conference was conceived as a form of mediation based only on the Washington Treaty settlement and would not render judgment on the Japanese invasion of China. After Ciano confirmed that the conference could not influence the Sino-Japanese War, he told Masaaki Hotta, the Japanese ambassador to Italy, that Italy was participating in the conference for the purpose of defending Japan. It was declared that the Italian delegate would withdraw from the conference if it deviated from the context of the Washington Treaty and based a solution to the conflict between China and Japan on the League's system. Therefore,

[9]The spelling of Chinese names will follow those of Western documents during the 1930s. John P. Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern Crisis, 1931–1938* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 219. DDI, 8-VII, nn. 303, 366. Erich Kordt, *Wahn und Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlag, 1947), S. 169.

[10]DDI, 8-VII, nn. 248, 405. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 488. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter FRUS), 1937-III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 649–650. Fox, op. cit., p. 251.

[11]DDI, 8-VII, n. 491. Fox, op. cit., p. 254.

the fascist government objected that the other parties to the Brussels conference were trying to impose collective pressure on Japan, and in the end, the Italian delegate asked for a postponement of the conference.[12]

Nonetheless, Japan continued to insist on direct Sino-Japanese negotiations excluding interference by a third party, even the nine powers of the Washington Treaty. China, on the other hand, considered that Japan proposed the bilateral negotiations only to negate the Brussels conference. In fact, Japan soon dropped the proposal of dialogue with China immediately after the conference. Although Italy assumed a more friendly attitude toward Japan than Germany did, its actions were neither highly appreciated by Japan nor trusted by China. In contrast, Germany's absence at the conference and its pro-Chinese stance established a footing for expanding its influence in East Asia.[13]

Whereas the United States appealed to the world to contain Japan, Britain started an appeasement policy. Meanwhile, Japan used the Anti-Comintern Pact to justify invading China, Germany was keen on its interests in China, and Italy, at best, advocated excluding the League. The Brussels Nine Power Treaty Conference involved many nations but revealed that the participants were divided over this issue. Roosevelt himself finally disapproved of economic sanctions against Japan since American public opinion was not eager to intervene in overseas disputes. Hence, the collective action suffered a setback. In the end, despite the fact that the conference lasted as long as three weeks in November, it barely expressed support to China and that was only with words; it did not offer substantial aid. The Axis powers once again showed their open disdain for a conflict resolution based on the collective security system. China was so disappointed in the League and the Western powers that it began to hope for the mediation of Germany, which continued to adopt a friendly attitude.[14]

[12]DDI, 8-VII, nn. 412, 443, 449, 460. Kumao Harada, *Saionji-ko to Seikyoku*, Vol. 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952), p. 138. Frank M. Tamagna, *Italy's Interests and Policies in the Far East* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941), pp. 31–32

[13]DDI, 8-VII, n. 442. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 501. Gerhard Krebs, "Sambohombu no Wahei Kosaku 1937–38: Torautoman Kosaku wa Donoyoni Umare, Donoyoni Zasetsu Shiteittaka," *Nihon Rekishi*, No. 411 (1982), 40, 42. Cf. DDI, 8-VII, n. 486, nota 4.

[14]DBFP, 2-XIX, No. 321. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 525. Giorgio Borsa, "Tentativi di penetrazione dell'Italia fascista in Cina: 1932–1937," *Il Politico*, 44 (1979), 409. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 54. Yasuo Nakano, *Seijika Nakano Seigo*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shinkokaku Shoten, 1971), pp. 283–287.

## 7.2 Conclusion of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact

The Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact signed on November 6, 1937 was almost a repetition of the terms of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact signed on November 25, 1936, although the content of the Tripartite Pact was diluted with ambiguity in comparison to the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact. The original bilateral treaty had three distinctive characteristics. First, its ideological aspect was transmuted into a formal treaty, although in a very crude form. Second, it lacked concrete arrangements. The pact was an ambiguous promise to cooperate against communism rather than a real anti-Russian alliance, as both countries wanted to keep open the possibility of forming some kind of agreement with the Soviet Union. Third, despite its conclusion in Germany, it was signed not by senior officials of the foreign ministry in Berlin but by Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German ambassador to Britain. The German foreign ministry intentionally distanced itself from the pact and let Ribbentrop sign the pact with the intention of alienating him.[15] These characteristics also revealed themselves in the process of Italy's accession to the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact. Hence, Germany became a consequential factor in the analysis of how the Axis's globalization applied to all the main actors of foreign policy in the three countries.

### *7.2.1 Italy's Ideological Inclination*

From the Italian viewpoint, ideology played a specific role. By accepting the Anti-Comintern Pact, many fascists could claim to be faithful to their ideological orientation. When Mussolini visited Germany in September 1937, solidarity with Nazi Germany was praised more than during the time of his first meeting with Hitler in June 1934, in Venice, when Undersecretary Suvich implanted anti-German feeling in Mussolini's mind. Foreign Minister Ciano prided himself on initiating pro-Axis

[15] Masaki Miyake, *Nichidokui Sangoku Domei no Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Nansosha, 1975), pp. 35–38. Theo Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten, 1935–1940: vom Antikominternpakt zum Dreimächtepakt. eine Studie zur diplomatischen Vorgeschichte des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1962), S. 43, 49. Tokushiro Ohata, "Nichidoku Bokyo Kyotei Do Kyoka Mondai, 1935–1939," in *Taiheiyo Senso eno Michi*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbunsha, 1963), pp. 17–30. Nobuo Tajima, *Nachizumu Kyokuto Senryaku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1997), pp. 98–128.

policy. Therefore, in order to maintain his prestige, he intended "to draw a line from Rome to Tokyo" that would connect all the capitals of the Axis nations, excluding the passive ambassadors in the United States and Germany, Suvich and Attolico.[16] Simultaneously, Ciano asserted that Italy would enjoy a special position within the anti-Comintern alliance, owing to the fact that fascist Italy was the first nation to fight bolshevism. Finally, on October 22, 1937, yielding to the founder of anti-communism, Ribbentrop agreed to treat Italy as an original signatory of the pact rather than as a new member.[17]

Nonetheless, Japan's inclusion in the Axis became an issue, due to the racism prevalent in Germany and Italy. For example, even during the negotiations for the Tripartite Pact, a Munich newspaper carried a biased report claiming that Mussolini and Hitler objected to the foundation of an empire by the yellow race. The Italian ambassador to Tokyo, Auriti, reported that the article increased Japanese prejudice against whites.[18] Before the Ethiopian War, the Italian press agitated against "the yellow peril" so harshly that Italo–Japanese relations deteriorated for a while. Attolico, the Italian ambassador to Germany, commented in his report on the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact that the Japanese concluded the pact because they feared complete isolation from the international community. Moreover, Attolico's report mentioned that Ribbentrop sold the pact in the name of defence against communism, but in reality he was potentially leading the Axis powers toward a world war in the context of an anti-Western alliance, which even included non-Aryan powers.[19]

[16]The quotation is from the following English translation. Galeazzo Ciano, *Ciano's Diary 1937–1938* (hereafter *Ciano's Diary*), trans. and notes Andreas Mayor (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 16. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 40–41.

[17]Sommer, op. cit., S. 83. Galeazzo Ciano (verbalizzati da), *L'Europa verso la catastrofe* (hereafter Ciano, *L'Europa*) (Verona: Mondodori, 1948), p. 214.

[18]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, Telegr. P. N. 6786 R (28/9/1937). Heated exchanges of racial abuse between Italy and Japan started during the Ethiopian War. *Corriere della sera*, 23/7/1935. *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 24/7/1935. Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo (hereafter JFMA), A. 4. 6. 1. ET/I 1-2, Vol. 1, No. 86 (23/7/1935). ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B10, F2, Telegr. P. 1322 R/C (23/7/1935). FRUS, 1935-I, p. 613. The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), FO371/19120, J3192/1/1 (26/7/1935).

[19]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, Telesp. 240503/C (9/12/1936). See Chapter 2 and also Ken Ishida, "Racisms Compared: Fascist Italy and Ultra-Nationalist Japan," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2002), 383–386.

Attolico, who addressed Ciano in the intimate second person singular (*tu*), was recorded as one of the few anti-Fascist diplomats in an official document of the *Segretaria Particolare del Duce* (Duce's Special Secretary) file.[20] Attolico agreed with Suvich, the Italian ambassador to the United States, who raised the alarm that an excessive inclination toward the Axis was quite dangerous. Unlike them, Ambassador to Britain Dino Grandi, a trueborn fascist, sent more intentional messages to his home government. His logic was contrary to Attolico's, asserting that the pact with Japan would compel Britain to cooperate with Italy.[21] He emphasized in his private letter to Ciano of August 5, 1937, that Italy was successful in reaching the Anglo-Italian Gentlemen's Agreement in January 1937, following the Rome-Berlin Axis in October 1936 and the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936. Grandi added that the Tripartite Pact should refrain from assuming an anti-British character in order to leave open the possibility of using it as a valuable card for Anglo-Italian *rapprochement*.[22] He tried to persuade the British side to resume negotiations with Italy for the purpose of hindering the German-Italian alliance.[23] In his report to Italy, Grandi expressed the "realist" logic that the British considered the Axis a bluff or a mere ideological statement. He also called attention to the fact that Italy alone was pitted against Britain and France after Germany had retreated from the Mediterranean in the Spanish Civil War.[24]

Although Ciano was conscious of the objections of Attolico and Grandi to anti-British policy, he rarely followed their advice and took no steps to prevent further complications. Ciano welcomed the formal German proposal of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, which completely disregarded Anglo–Italian relations.[25] He was fully aware of its anti-British character, writing in his diary on the day of signature: "Italy has broken out of her isolation: she is in the centre of the most

[20]Attolico was one among only four anti-Fascist diplomats named in the following file. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma, Segretaria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato, 364/R, B62, F. Elenchi degli ufficiali, funzionari ed agenti antifascisti divisi per Ministeri.

[21]ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F1, Lettera da Grandi a Ciano (5/8/1937).

[22]Ibid. DDI, 8-VII, n. 178.

[23]DBFP, 2-XIX, No. 297.

[24]DDI, 8-VII, n. 540.

[25]ADAP, D-I, Nr. 10.

formidable political and military combination which has ever existed."[26] Ignoring Attolico's warning, Ciano was more disposed to form the anti-British Axis alliance than to escape from isolation. While Grandi enticed Ciano into the strengthened Axis to acquire a strong diplomatic card, Attolico attempted to prevent Ciano from concluding the pact in concert with Konstantin von Neurath, the German foreign minister.[27] However, the difference of opinion over the Axis in the Italian foreign ministry was not accompanied by a serious power struggle as in Nazi Germany. Since there were few fascists talented in diplomacy, Mussolini overlooked Grandi's double-tongued actions at the last moment. In the treatment of Attolico, Ciano contemplated dismissing him but chose not to purge such a competent traditional diplomat.[28]

### *7.2.2 Japan's Ambiguous Realism*

The Japanese foreign ministry intended to deny the anti-Anglo-American character of the pact, for fear of its being recognized that the ministry had shifted the emphasis of its foreign policy from Britain to Germany. In fact, at the beginning of 1937, Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita in Hirota's cabinet contended that the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact would not affect the Japanese policy of "promoting friendly relations with all Powers in a spirit of universal concord and harmony".[29] As a consequence, they primarily postponed negotiation on a consultation treaty with Germany and worked upon China to join the Anti-Comintern Pact for the purpose of diluting its pro-German character. After China's refusal, the Japanese foreign ministry instead made overtures to open the German-Japanese committee, which would justify the Sino-Japanese War under the guise of anti-communism. Yet, the Japanese proposal failed, due to the opposition of the German foreign ministry, which feared that the Japanese action would drive China into the hands of communism.[30]

[26] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 29. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 53–54.

[27] Ibid., p. 48.

[28] Ibid., p. 236.

[29] TNA, FO371/21040, F414/414/23 (21/1/1937).

[30] Hachiro Arita, *Bakahachi to Hito wa Iu: Ichi Gaikokan no Kaiso* (Tokyo: Kowado, 1959), p. 79. Id., *Hito no Me no Chiri wo Miru: Gaiko Mondai Kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1948), p. 282. Toshikazu Inoue, *Kiki nonakano Kyocho Gaiko: Nicchu Senso*

Later in 1937, Foreign Minister Hirota in Konoe's cabinet was suspicious that the Italians were plotting to promote an Anglo-Japanese confrontation with the aim of obtaining a free hand in the Mediterranean. Hirota's passiveness angered the Italian side and they asked the Japanese army to pressure him into accepting the tripartite cooperation. At last, on October 22, 1937, Italy gave priority to signing the tripartite pact by accepting the compromise that they agreed to benevolent neutrality without a secret protocol and verbal consultation in case the signatory went to war.[31] As a result, the Tripartite Pact itself became poorer in substance than the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact, and it laid greater stress on its appearance than on its content.

From the viewpoint of fascist Italy, the indecisiveness of the Japanese foreign ministry contrasted with the decisiveness of the Japanese army.[32] Auriti reported that it was difficult to grasp the real sense of Hirota's intention. The report added that Hirota was easily swayed by hard-liners and seemed very ready to yield to the Japanese army, whose demands on the foreign ministry were then reinforced.[33] Another remark about Hirota referred to his preference for using ambiguity, as seen in Chapter 3. It was difficult for foreigners to understand his dubious answers and speeches. Even the Japanese public often could not understand his real objective when he used phrases such as "Japanese mission as a stabilizing element in the Far East," "coexistence and co-prosperity of Asian nations" and "contribution to peace and welfare of the general public."[34]

Equivocation was not only the special talent of Hirota and the vice of the irresolute Konoe but also typical of Japanese diplomats. After signing the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact on November 6, 1937, Masaaki Hotta, the Japanese ambassador to Italy, made the following vapid comment: "The pact successfully brings fruitful results since the three countries have the most antique traditions, the most youthful aspirations and

*niitaru Taigaiseisaku no Keisei to Tenkai* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1994), pp. 247–275. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 473.

[31] Ibid., Nr. 485. Mario Toscano, *The Origins of the Pact of Steel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 9. Ciano, *L'Europa*, p. 215.

[32] Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 54, 74.

[33] ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, N. 1044/281 (22/11/1937).

[34] ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B13, F1, N. 186/77 (19/3/1936).

the most industrious national characters."[35] While it is true that Hotta's comment was vague and diplomatic in comparison with those of Ciano and Ribbentrop, Hirota, Konoe and Arita continuously emphasized that the Sino-Japanese conflict was a war against communism. Their justification was not accepted internationally, yet their "ambiguous realism" circulated in the Japanese power center. As it camouflaged the meaning of military aggression, which also targeted the Western imperial powers, the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact turned such fabrications into realities.

According to Hotta's comment after the war, the pact with Italy seemed to him "mere nonsense." By pretending to be a moderate diplomat, Hotta said that he had concluded the pact because it was thought to restrain German aggressive actions within the framework of anti-communism.[36] At the time of negotiations, the Japanese side recognized that Neurath opposed the pact. However, as Ciano stated in his diary, Hotta insisted on "establishing very intensive collaboration in the military field between Italy and Japan" with a pact of "very, very benevolent neutrality" in July 1937.[37] This was not merely the personal stance of Hotta, who was a veteran of European affairs, as was Naotake Sato. Many Japanese diplomats took convoluted measures to deal with the Axis problem by applying their internal logic of "ambiguous realism" to the international situation, though the exceptional Foreign Minister Sato had instructed them not to push the negotiations of the pact forward.[38] Konoe's government jumped onto the wrong bandwagon, for the main actors considered the problem subjectively and lightly. Whereas Ciano intentionally neglected the advice of Grandi and Attolico, Konoe took

[35]ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F5, Dichiarazioni dei tre firmati (6/11/1937).

[36]Yomiuri Simbunsha, ed., *Showa-shi no Tenno*, Vol. XXI (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1973), p. 32.

[37]The quotation is from the following English translation. Galeazzo Ciano, *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers* (hereafter *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*) ed. Malcolm Muggeridge, trans. Stuart Hood (London: Odhams Press, 1948), p. 131. Ciano, *L'Europa*, p. 201. Yomiuri Shimbunsha, op. cit., pp. 32–34, 44–46. Even if we do not take Ciano's story at face value, Hotta at least assumed a positive attitude to the pact in comparison with his predecessor, Yotaro Sugimura. Ciano, *L'Europa*, pp. 198–202. Ernst L. Presseisen, *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy 1933–1941* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), pp. 167–168, 170–171.

[38]The following study exhibits a classic interpretation of the pre-war Japanese elites. Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, expanded ed. by Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, c1963, 1969), pp. 8–19, 103–115.

refuge in the self-deception that the Axis could save Japan from international isolation without damaging Anglo–Japanese relations.

### *7.2.3 Germany's Internal Turmoil*

The serious confrontation over foreign policy among actors inside the Nazi regime can be explained more easily by looking at the decision-making structure. It reflected a power struggle between the German foreign ministry and Ribbentrop, who maneuvered the Axis policy for his ascendancy. At first Neurath rejected the opinion that the ministry should promote the expansion of Axis cooperation, as he expected Hitler's objection to Italo-Japanese negotiations.[39] Neurath believed that the extension of the Axis to include Japan ran against German interests. In fact, he told Attolico in February 1937 about the planned German-Italian anti-communist treaty with which Ribbentrop had tried to persuade Hitler that Germany could become the champion and commander of anti-communism.[40] Neurath attempted to restrict German–Italian relations within "a community of interests" whose aim should be to maintain "a genuine and beneficial peace" instead of "a tactical link."[41]

It is notable that the collision between Neurath and Ribbentrop was over earning Hitler's approval. On October 20, Neurath assured the Italian side that Hitler recognized the policy of equilibrium toward Japan and China, which came into conflict with Ribbentrop's plan.[42] Nonetheless, the next day, Ribbentrop won Hitler's consent and decided to visit Rome to navigate his way through strenuous negotiations. Attolico pointed out that Ribbentrop tried to drag Italy to the German side to forestall his downfall since Ribbentrop had failed in his mission to accomplish a *rapprochement* between Britain and Germany. Dissatisfied with Ribbentrop's victory, Attolico added that Ribbentrop was unlikely to be pro-Japanese because, contrary to Japan's request, he opposed the withdrawal of German military advisers from China.[43]

[39] ADAP, C-VI, Nr. 401.

[40] DDI, 8-VI, n. 163.

[41] ASMAE, AP, Germania, B37, F3, Documentazione Varia 1937-8, Rapporti italo-tedeschi (25/10/1937).

[42] Ciano, *Diario*, p. 48.

[43] DDI, 8-VII, n. 466.

Ironically enough, Attolico and Ulrich von Hassell, the German ambassador to Italy, both endeavored to restrain their home governments from strengthening the Axis. At any rate, they were too abhorred by fascist and Nazi leaders to exert direct political influence upon the situation.[44] In comparison with Attolico and Hassell, the German and Italian ambassadors to Japan, who had been delegated to a peripheral post, took a positive stance on enlarging the Axis so as to keep their presence visible and return home.[45] Nevertheless, these diplomats could no longer play the role of promoters or planners and remained mere negotiators in 1937. Since Germany at this point held more confrontational actors in its decision-making process than Italy did, the internal power struggle incurred irrefutable confusion. It was a struggle for existence, in which all the main actors would render services to Hitler. Accordingly, Ribbentrop was rebuked for not giving any information to Foreign Minister Neurath against Hitler's instruction, even though Hitler had authorized Ribbentrop to enter into a close alignment with the Axis.[46]

After the triumph against Neurath became apparent, Ribbentrop frankly confessed to Mussolini that he had failed in his mission to incorporate Britain into an anti-communist bloc. Hence, as an alternative measure, Ribbentrop desired to expand the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact into the tripartite pact. It is interesting to note in such a complex clash that the battle between Neurath and Ribbentrop was not fought directly in the field but in the context of an internal power struggle. Therefore, Neurath admitted the contradiction in the German foreign ministry's policies toward Japan and China, and even Ribbentrop acknowledged that Japan was a substitute for Britain rather than his real target. On account of his success, Ribbentrop also persisted in his search

[44]Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 48, 50–51. Petersen, op. cit., S. 118. Gregor Schöllgen, *Ulrich Von Hassell 1881–1944: Ein Konservativer in der Opposition* (München: Beck, 1990), S. 69. In addition to having a "pro-British" tendency, Hassell was detested by Ciano, who realized that Hassell underestimated the Italian foreign minister. Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Rome-Berlin Axis.* 3 rev. ed. (London: Collins, c1949, 1969), p. 86.

[45]Fox, op. cit., p. 199. Cf. TNA, GFM33/4811, M336/M014490-5 (2/3/1934). The Italian and German ambassadors to Japan did not trust each other. DDI, 8-VII, n. 757. The German ambassador to Japan, Herbert von Dirksen, is discussed in detail in the following works. Fox, op. cit., pp. 5, 24, 28–29. Tajima, op. cit., pp. 26–27.

[46]Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 51, 59. Kordt, op. cit., S. 174–175.

for a tripartite military alliance.[47] He reiterated "the inevitable development of a Pact" and said to Mussolini: "When negotiations between Germany and Japan began it was said that it was a question of constructing a small wooden bridge so as to be able to build later a great permanent iron bridge between the two nations. That is a formula which can be usefully repeated."[48]

On November 5, 1937, just one day before the signing of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, Hitler talked about his plan to executive members of the German military and foreign ministry. The meeting was summarized in a document known as the Hossbach Memorandum, which reported that Hitler did not give war against Britain a high priority, in comparison to Mussolini's aggressive words recorded by Ciano. The memorandum as a whole was nothing more than a plan of invasion based on racist doctrine, yet Hitler did not jump right into an Anglo-German war, which the traditional bureaucrats strongly opposed. At the same time, he said that the position of the British Empire was no longer secure after the rise of the Axis.[49] Hitler also realized that he could not carry out his original plan to reshape the existing international order with British cooperation. As a consequence, Hitler aimed to acquire the new territories without paying any respect to British interests, while he still sought to avoid antagonizing Britain directly. Although Hitler took the opposing views of traditional diplomats into consideration, his decision predominated in the main foreign policies. In an attempt to prevent the deterioration of Anglo–German relations, the German foreign ministry insisted that the Axis was searching for a favorable peace, which inspired British confidence in its appeasement policy. For that same reason, the ministry encouraged mediation of the Sino-Japanese War, which threatened to complicate the international situation and exert a malign influence upon Germany's relations with Britain.[50]

[47] Ciano, *L'Europa*, p. 216. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 49.

[48] *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, p. 141. Ciano, *L'Europa*, pp. 216–217.

[49] ADAP, D-I, Nr. 19.

[50] Josef Henke, *England in Hitlers politischem Kalkül 1935–1939* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt Verlag, 1973), S. 100–101. ASMAE, AP, Germania, B37, F3, Telesp. 1806/422 (6/5/1937); Documentazione Varia 1937–8, Rapporti italo-tedeschi (1937/10/25). ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F1, Telesp. N. 5393/1732(8/11/1937). ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, N. 40/13 (15/1/1938).

## 7.3 The Italian Recognition of Manchukuo

China was the place where the interests of the three countries became entangled when the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact was signed. Between 1934 and 1935, Italy sent an air mission to China. Its influence enabled Italy to sell military aircraft and equipment in the amount of forty-eight million lira. However, the Italian attempt to dispatch a further military mission in 1934 and 1937 was blocked by political interference of Germany's foreign ministry and military.[51] Moreover, Germany concluded credit and trade agreements with China to export armaments in 1936 when it seized the opportunity provided by the League's economic sanctions against Italy. The German government's explanation for selling arms to China was that the Soviet Union would establish a footing in China unless it cooperated with Chiang Kai-Shek.[52] In addition to supplying arms to China, Germany was dumping its machinery in China, while Japan was spending energy on the export of heavy industry and chemical industry to Asian countries.[53]

As Italy protested against the Chinese approval of the economic sanctions on Italy after the Ethiopian War, Foreign Minister Ciano decided to stop selling aircraft to China in August 1937 and to withdraw the air mission completely in December 1937.[54] Italian recognition of Manchukuo on November 29 could be considered as a part of such a policy. On the other hand, the Germans claimed to have suspended their anti-Japanese business, but arms flowed into China even in November 1937, under the pretext that they had only implemented contracts made prior to the military conflict.[55] By August 1937, the total amount of arms sales to China reached 223 million Reichsmark, and even thereafter, additional contracts came to 59 million Reichsmark. In addition, the activities of the German military mission continued to be supported by the German military and foreign ministry, which caused further friction with Ribbentrop.[56] In the end, Hitler and Hermann Göring blocked

[51] Borsa, op. cit., pp. 398–400. Fox, op. cit., p. 219.

[52] Borsa, op. cit., pp. 410–411. Ciano, *L'Europa*, pp. 198–199. DDI, 8-VII, n. 303.

[53] *The Japan Advertiser*, 17/12/1936.

[54] ADAP, C-V, Nr. 602. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 27, 29. DDI, 8-VII, n. 729.

[55] Ibid., nn. 324, 546.

[56] Sommer, op. cit., S. 62–63. DDI, 8-VII, nn. 494, 511. Even the German Ambassador to Japan Herbert von Dirksen, who was eager for cooperation with Japan, maintained that the withdrawal of the German military mission would exert a harmful influence upon

the new plan for exporting arms worth 120 million Reichsmark, and the Japanese foreign ministry returned a curt expression of gratitude for the belated decision.[57]

On December 1, 1937, Hitler told the Japanese ambassador to Germany, Kintomo Mushakoji, that the Germans could not recognize Manchukuo since they imported iron ore and manganese from China, which were indispensable for building up their military. Just when Hitler emphasized that a strengthened Germany would also profit Japan, Neurath accentuated a German connection with China as essential to the mediation of the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese countered that if Germany were to recognize Manchukuo, China would give up its resistance and Japan could supply the necessary strategic goods from the occupied land.[58] Finally, on February 20, 1938, Hitler issued the following statement recognizing Manchukuo: "By deciding to take this step we make a final break between a policy which is fantastic and incomprehensible, and one which implies a sober respect for real facts."[59] The same type of logic was expressed by Italian Ambassador Auriti to German Ambassador Dirksen in Japan on December 30, 1937: "We tried to place priority on the reality of facts over an elaborate pretence and also for the same reason withdrew from Geneva."[60] Yet, the gap over the East Asian situation among the three Axis powers could not be filled and, on the contrary, widened.

Nazi Germany's economic penetration in China not only led to a serious confrontation with ultra-nationalist Japan but also removed fascist Italy from the East Asian sphere of influence. Germany continued

German mediation between Japan and China because Germany could lose the trust of the Nanking government. ADAP, D-1, Nr. 520.

[57]DDI, 8-VII, n. 563. Göring later demanded compensation of 100 million Reichsmark from the Japanese government for the damage caused by the suspension of arms exportation. The Japanese, on the other hand, hindered the advance of foreign goods into the occupied China in retaliation. Presseisen, op. cit., pp. 146, 155–156.

[58]DDI, 8-VII, n. 641.

[59]The quotation in English is from the following book. Norman H. Baynes, *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler: April 1922–August 1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 1395. Max Domarus, *Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945*, Bd. I: *Triumph* (Wiesbaden: R. Löwit, 1973), S. 798.

[60]DDI, 8-VII, n. 757.

to oppose Italian inroads into the Manchurian market.[61] On the other hand, Italy recognized Manchukuo in order to win political and economic advantage in East Asia by adopting pro-Japanese policies in the Sino-Japanese War and at the Brussels conference. Such an attitude contrasted with German procrastination in recognizing Manchukuo, as seen in a German diplomatic document stating that "caution was necessary and that we should preferably give recognition only half an hour before the others."[62] Yet the Japanese foreign ministry, by a curious coincidence, also used the same expression and reserved its judgment to approve the Italian conquest of Ethiopia until November 1936.[63] Similarly, Italy, too, hesitated to recognize Manchukuo at first and repeatedly asked Germany to join it in a simultaneous recognition. However, Germany delayed responding and finally left the matter to Italy's discretion.[64] Ciano grew impatient and decided to act independently, giving an overdrawn description in his diary: "Whereas any uncertainty or vacillation would keep people away, the loyal and helpful policy we are carrying out cements our friendships."[65]

Contrary to Ciano's expectations, Italy could not readily yield a reasonable profit in return. While Germany sent the ex-prime minister Hans Luther, to Manchukuo and Northern China to build connections with the area controlled by the Japanese, Germany continued to obstruct the Italian plan to develop its heavy industries in East Asia and to increase trade through the Italo-Manchurian agreement. Italy also sent a personal adviser to Chiang Kai-shek to support financial and economic policies on a war footing, which risked antagonizing Japanese and British interests. In addition to the politically motivated mission spending a few months in China, Mussolini dispatched another special mission to China, whose head was the ex-minister of finance. However, helping China during the period of Sino-Japanese disputes could be regarded as an act against the spirit of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact. In fact, Japan did not treat

[61] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 371, 589, 669.

[62] ADAP, C-II, Nr. 237. The quotation in English is from the following translation. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918–1945*, Series C, Volume II (London: HMSO, 1959), pp. 449–450. Cf. Fox, op. cit., pp. 29, 36, 39.

[63] JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/1, 1-1., No. 49 (27/6/1936).

[64] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 568, 573, 599, 601, 605, 617. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 57.

[65] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 38. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 63. Cf. ASMAE, AP, Italia, B43, Telegr. P. 1949 R (29/11/1937).

Italy more kindly. Japan's consortium plan of 50–200 million yen was proposed not only to the Fiat company, whose technical cooperation interested the Japanese, but also to North American companies.[66]

The Italian diplomats strove to secure an order for cars from the Manchurian government after their recognition, while the *Kanto Gun* (Japanese Kwantung Army) struggled for self-sufficiency.[67] Moreover, Italy wanted to procure Japanese assurance that it could access markets on the Chinese continent and maintain *un prestigio dei bianchi* (prestige of the whites) in Shanghai.[68] Nevertheless, even after Italy's conquest of Ethiopia was recognized by Japan, the Italian government was too discontented with Japan's monopolization of 90% of the Ethiopian cloth market to negotiate a commercial treaty. The treaty of December 30, 1937, simply extended the Italo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1913 to the Italian colonies. As for Manchukuo, the Japanese government still generally regarded foreign participation in its market as an encroachment upon its protectorate.[69] After Italian recognition of Manchukuo, the only ostensible fruit was a promise made by Hideki Tojo, the *Kanto Gun*'s chief of staff, who appreciated Italy's pro-Japanese policies, that the army would purchase Fiat tanks to the total value of one million dollars.[70]

Ciano's aspirations for political success in East Asia quickly turned into disillusionment. Germany not only placed obstructions in Italy's way, regarding East Asian affairs, but also began to approach France. Ciano accused Germany of disloyalty to the Axis, while Italy had remained "faithful" to it.[71] Moreover, Germany was suspected of betraying the spirit of anti-communism, since the Italian foreign ministry was informed in December 1937 that members of the German armed

[66]DDI, 8-VII, nn. 510, 589, 618. TNA, FO371/20945, F1710/4/10 (19/3/1937); FO371/20945, F1731/4/10 (19/3/1937); FO371/20945, F1935/4/10 (2/4/1937).

[67]DDI, 8-VII, n. 632.

[68]Ibid., n. 625. Cf. Ibid., n. 640.

[69]SIA, 1937-I, p. 304. Tamagna, op. cit., pp. 24, 26–27, 33. ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F1, Telesp. 2975/1304 (5/8/1937). In 1936, Japanese trade with the Italian colonies such as Eritrea, Libya and Somalia was greater in its total amount than the trade between Japan and the Italian homeland. Recovering its trade with Ethiopia, Japan could expect more gains. *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 7/11/1937. *Hochi Shimbun*, 7/11/1937.

[70]DDI, 8-VII, nn. 229, 700.

[71]Ibid., n. 657.

forces fought with Russian pilots in the Chinese military against Japan. Furthermore, during the same period, the ministry also received information that Germany had outwitted Italy and acted independently for mediation between China and Japan.[72] Thus, the reactions of Japan and Germany to the Italian pro-Axis policy were far from what Italy had expected. The new political actors in Japan and Italy could not coordinate closely with other Axis members. Prime Minister Konoe vacillated between confrontation and compromise, because hard-liners put pressure on him to follow internal logic in a way similar to that of Hirota. Foreign Minister Ciano, even though freed from the demands of traditional diplomats, many of whom he purged, still suffered from international constraints, as Mussolini also encountered.

## 7.4 The German Mediation of the Sino-Japanese War

On November 6, 1937, Mussolini put forward a joint German-Italian mediation of the Sino-Japanese War, as he anticipated the failure of the Brussels conference. Hitler, too, favored arbitrating the war on condition that China joined the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact and Japan guaranteed that all the interests of foreign powers would be respected. In fact, Hitler assumed it would be beneficial for him to display to the world German success at mediation.[73] On November 17, the Japanese army also agreed to negotiate with China through German-Italian mediation.[74] The Chinese side accepted the proposal of negotiations through the good offices of Oskar P. Trautmann, the German ambassador to China. However, the Japanese government, which had, at one point, asked for mediation, rejected it on the grounds that there was

[72] ASMAE, AP, Italia, B43, Telegr. 1522 P/R (18/12/1937). DDI, 8-VII, nn. 663, 671. Setting aside whether the information of Soviet-German cooperation was true or not, it was a matter of common knowledge, even between Japan and the United States, that there were many Soviet aircraft and pilots in the Chinese military. It was natural to question the veracity of German anti-communism so long as the German military mission was stationed in China. FRUS, 1937-III, pp. 616, 639; 1938-III, pp. 56–57. Arthur N. Young, *China and the Helping Hand 1937–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 125.

[73] Ciano, *L'Europa*, p. 219. Kordt, op. cit., S. 174.

[74] DDI, 8-VII, n. 582.

"an insulting remark" in the Chinese reply.[75] Foreign Minister Hirota, who had previously declared that Japan harbored no territorial ambitions against China, began to contend in a cabinet meeting that the Japanese should make the conditions of peace severer, following their heavy casualties. German mediation could hardly settle the dispute.[76]

The Japanese side explained that the grounds for excluding Italy from mediation were the deterioration of Sino–Italian relations. Ciano became indignant with Japanese disloyalty to Italy since he thought "the spirit of absolute friendship" with Japan was the main reason that aggravated Italian relations with China.[77] He surmised that the Japanese diplomats were conspiring against the Axis and considered it necessary to urge the Japanese foreign ministry to overthrow "the traditional positions of professional diplomacy," just as Mussolini had after the Ethiopian War.[78] The Japanese foreign ministry, on the other hand, conjectured that Italy had approached Japan only because it could not expect to develop Italo–Chinese commercial relations.[79] The Italian diplomatic reports at the beginning of November 1937 stated that the Japanese "pro-British" faction preferred Germany to Italy as a mediator because Britain considered Italy a rival in the Mediterranean. Fascist Italy was dissatisfied with getting no better treatment than Nazi Germany, and thus the German attempt at mediation only seemed to raise Germany's prestige by debarring Italy from activity in East Asia.[80]

The Germans approached Britain and tried to mediate the Sino-Japanese War, calculating that such actions could check Eden's containment policy of the Axis through the Anglo-American alignment. Chamberlain took a positive attitude toward the inclusion of the United States in the Nine Power Treaty Conference. Nevertheless, he found no reason for Britain to take direct action against Japan so long as European

[75] Kazuo Horiba, *Shinajihen Senso Shido-shi* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1973), p. 117. Cf. *Ishii Itaro Nikki* (hereafter *Ishii Nikki*), ed. Takashi Ito and Liu Jie (Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1993), p. 227.

[76] Horiba, op. cit., pp. 117, 128–131. *Ishii Nikki*, p. 227. DDI, 8-VII, n. 567.

[77] Ibid., n. 449.

[78] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 50. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 73–74.

[79] *Gaimusho Shitsumu Hokoku Toa-kyoku*, Vol. 3, Showa 12 (1) (Tokyo: Kuresu Shuppan, 1993), pp. 873–874.

[80] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 531, 747.

dictators were "in a thoroughly nasty temper."[81] On the other hand, the Japanese "pro-British" faction daydreamed about cooperating with the British "pro-Japanese" faction, including Chamberlain and the treasury. It is worth noting that in comparison with Italy, the Japanese negotiators had high expectations of the "pro-Japanese" faction in Britain, even for the settlement of the Sino-Japanese War. Without doubt any government tends to lean toward those individuals in the other party who are sympathetic, yet it is difficult to rely totally on specific individuals for improving diplomatic relations.

For example, Shigeru Yoshida, the Japanese ambassador to Britain, wrongly believed that he could simply have direct contact with the "pro-Japanese" Chamberlain, over the head of Eden and the British Foreign Office, who were judged to be "anti-Japanese". Yoshida tried to persuade Britain that it should support Japan's "pro-British" faction in opposition to its "pro-Axis" ultra-nationalists, with the vision of steering Japan on a moderate course. He went wide of the mark by projecting his own country's decision-making style upon his British counterpart. Yoshida's person-first (or factional) approach, which ignored the need for a concrete compromise, could not succeed in any *rapprochement* with Britain. Whereas Yoshida had already lost the initiative in making "pro-British" policy, the style of many other "anti-British" actors also resembled Yoshida's, including Yakichiro Suma's attitude toward China, whose selection of "pro-" or "anti-Japanese" actors in the Chinese government determined a basic line of negotiations.[82]

Italian Ambassador Auriti filed a protest with Foreign Minister Hirota that Japan had refused to do Italy a favor in Manchukuo and the occupied Chinese regions even though Italy had adopted pro-Japanese foreign policies at the sacrifice of friendship with China.[83] Auriti also blamed German Ambassador Dirksen for ignoring Italy and for the Germans neglecting to consult with Italy. Dirksen pleaded that Italy appeared to be indifferent to mediation, and Auriti retorted that Italy undoubtedly did make an effort to work on mediations with Germany. The German foreign ministry opposed a joint intercession with Italy

[81] Keith Middlemas, *Diplomacy of Illusion: The British Government and Germany 1937–1939* (Hampshire: Gregg Revivals, c1972, 1991), p. 144.

[82] See Chapters 5 and 6. See also Ken Ishida, *Nichidokui Sangoku Domei no Kigen* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2013), pp. 151–153.

[83] DDI, 8-VII, n. 675.

from the beginning and came into collision with Ribbentrop's pro-Axis policies.[84] It seemed to Italy that both Japan and Germany, lacking in ideological consistency with respect to foreign policies, were neglecting their Axis partner. Additionally, in the pro-Axis faction, there did not exist as a firm a collaboration as among Neurath, Attolico and Ulrich von Hassell, the German ambassador to Italy. Compared with the anti-Axis faction in the three countries, pro-Axis actors such as Ciano, Ribbentrop and Hiroshi Oshima, the Japanese military attaché in Germany, were mavericks and often acted on their own. As a consequence, they could not make adjustments for their separate interests and simply played with ideological solidarity window-dressing.

The discrepancies among the Axis powers were acknowledged even before 1937. At the time of the Manchurian Incident, Italy cooperated with the League of Nations. During the first Shanghai Incident of 1932, Ciano was in China and very critical of the Japanese conspiracy to establish Manchukuo.[85] Likewise, Foreign Minister Hirota offered no sympathy to Italy and even approved Japan's cooperation with the League's economic sanctions against Italy. Nazi Germany was one of the last countries that continued exporting arms to Ethiopia, and until 1936, obstructed Italy's purchase of arms and resources during the conflict.[86] The same type of unfriendly action could be seen in the period of the Sino-Japanese War, when the German foreign ministry and army supported their military mission along with a huge export of arms to China, as mentioned above. On account of a bitter rivalry between the foreign ministry and the Nazi party inside the Third Reich, Hitler's adulterous strategic calculations made Germany exert a more baneful influence upon the military situation in China than on the Ethiopian situation. Incited by the faithlessness of other partners, the Italian government entertained a strong suspicion that the Japanese plotted to construct a flying field or to give aid to Ethiopia. As the tension between Japan and China grew, Italy bolstered the Chinese air force by constructing an

[84]Ibid., n. 757. Cf. Fox, op. cit., p. 269.

[85]Tamagna, op. cit., p. 24. ASMAE, AP, Cina, B3, F2, Telesp. 1594/455 (23/11/1931). ASMAE, AP, Cina, B4, F1, Telegr. 3623 R (10/11/1931).

[86]JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/1, 1-1. Telegr. No. 180 (Most Secret) (19/10/1935). Ken Ishida, *Chichukai Shin-Roma Teikoku eno Michi: Fashisuto Itaria no Taigaiseisaku 1935–39* (hereafter Ishida, *Chichukai*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1994), p. 83.

aircraft factory in Nanchang.[87] Among such acts of betrayal, Germany's was most noticeable, since its economic and military power had a stronger effect than those of Japan and Italy.

The 1930s were the formative years of cascading aggression. The success of the Manchurian Incident encouraged Mussolini's fanatic idea to invade Ethiopia. He expected that the League would not issue sanctions against Italy and that Britain would confirm the *fait accompli*.[88] Indeed, Japanese Foreign Minister Arita perceived that the course of the Ethiopian War resembled that of the Manchurian Incident.[89] Such developments led Hitler to occupy the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, at the time of the Ethiopian War. Hitler certainly surmised that neither the League nor the Western powers would carry out further sanctions against Germany.[90] These developments were both a simple imitation and an opportunistic chain reaction. It can easily be imagined that the League members and Western powers regarded other countries' aggressive actions as a pretext for their own expansionism. Asking for approval of expansionism ex post facto, Mussolini declared, "Justice is done by the Italian side, and injustice is done by the other European countries."[91] As Hitler blamed the League for injustice, Konoe proclaimed that Western countries "misunderstood" the Japanese application of international justice as aggression.[92]

There existed a basic perception among the Axis powers that the West was eager to maintain the status quo and the Axis deserved to be compensated by the advanced imperialist countries. This dual perception had the effect of encouraging aggressive acts of expansionism by each newly emerging imperialist power. The Axis powers distinguished friend from foe and justice from injustice in their own way. Moreover, they

[87] Presseisen, op. cit., p. 165. Ken Ishida, *Fashisuto no Senso: Sekaishiteki Bummyaku de Yomu Echiopia Senso* (Tokyo: Chikura Shobo, 2011), pp. 123–129. Borsa, op. cit., 401.

[88] Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini: A Biography* (New York: Vintage, 1983), pp. 174–175. Renato Mori, *Mussolini e la conquista dell'Etiopia* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1978), p. 21.

[89] JFMA, A. 4. 6. 1. ET/1, 1-1. Telegr, No. 49 (Most Secret) (27/6/1936).

[90] Pompeo Aloisi, *Journal* (Paris: Plon, 1957), p. 357.

[91] Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia di Benito Mussolini* (hereafter O. O.), a cura di Edoardo e Duilio Susmel, XXVII (Firenze: La Fenice, 1959), p. 203.

[92] Domarus, op. cit., S. 798. Jun'ichiro Shoji, "Nicchu Senso no Boppatsu to Konoe Fumimaro 'Kokusai Seigi'ron: Toa Shin-Chitsujo eno Dotei," *Kokusai Seiji*, Vol. 91 (1989), 40.

took advantage of unstable situations rather than interceding in a conflict. And Japan, Italy and Germany confronted each other behind the scenes. As a result, mediation became a meaningless fabrication instead of a reconciliation.

## 7.5 The Italian Withdrawal from the League of Nations

On December 11, 1937, Mussolini announced the Italian withdrawal from the League of Nations to which he referred as "the staggering temple not working for peace."[93] The German government immediately announced that they understood Italy's decision and were in great sympathy with its action. Owing to Mussolini's anxiety about Germany's return to the League, Nazi Germany had to repeat its assurance. The Italians were afraid of the worst scenario: Germany would make approaches to Britain and rejoin the League after Italy deepened its isolation. Conversely, fearing that the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact would be considered linked to the recognition of Manchukuo and Italian withdrawal from the League, Hitler was wary of a Western quarantine of the enlarged Axis.[94]

As far as Hitler's speeches in 1937 were concerned, the Germans were the most wary of the Axis powers in terms of avoiding a frontal attack upon Britain. On September 7, 1937, Hitler declared that the Versailles Treaty was "dead" and Germany had become "free." He added that Germany's freedom could be guaranteed by its "own army." Moreover, Germany "was united in close friendship" with Italy and Japan to counter "an attack on the civilized world."[95] Hitler repeated the necessity of German *Lebensraum* (living-space), and his contention corresponded with Mussolini's perception of "the proletarian nation."[96] In his November 8 speech, Hitler emphasized that after Germany's isolation was ended, the new relations among the Axis powers were not well adapted to League ideology and yet matched German interests. At the

[93] O. O., XXIX, p. 33.

[94] TNA, T188/155, No. 11 (31/1/1938). Ishida, *Chichukai*, p. 57. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 524. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 61.

[95] Domarus, op. cit., S. 716–717.

[96] Ibid., S. 740, 760. Baynes, op. cit., p. 1358. Cf. Ishida, *Chichukai*, pp. 27, 29.

February 20, 1938, celebration of his seizure of power, Hitler harshly criticized the League for being "not an institution of justice, but rather an institution for the defence of the wrong done of Versailles".[97] He clearly denied the possibility of Germany's return to the League because the League did not acknowledge Germany's equal right to armament. Hitler also denounced the League for having ideals that coincided "rather too closely with the exceedingly realistic interests of its chief Powers," namely, Britain and France. He said that his government refused "to allow their people to be sacrificed on the altar of the fantastic ideals of the League of Nations."[98] Hitler at this moment did not directly mention in public the war against the West, but in the aforementioned Hossbach Memorandum, he secretly approved the overthrow of the status quo by means of military power.

Receiving the German declaration, Italy requested similar support from Japan. Nonetheless, the Japanese government limited itself to commenting on the Italian withdrawal from the League within the confines of confirming their bonds of friendship. The Japanese government certainly protested against the settlement of the Sino-Japanese War based on the Washington Treaty system or the League at the Brussels conference and rejected the intervention of any third-party in negotiations between Japan and China.[99] After a long pause, the Japanese press remarked that the Italian withdrawal would not lead instantly to war since Mussolini still mentioned international cooperation outside Geneva.[100] Ciano, on the other hand, made a reference in his diary to the timing of the Italian withdrawal from the League: "There could not be a more favourable moment than the present, if only because of Japan's crushing victory."[101]

All the Axis powers engaged in almost identical discourses concerning the action of the League, which had the potential to destroy the existing international system. Germany repeatedly blamed the League for not solving world political issues and censured the anti-German international system for committing to "the opportunistic coalition among beneficiaries of the Versailles system."[102] On top of anti-communist

[97] Domarus, op. cit., S. 798.

[98] Baynes, op. cit., p. 1400.

[99] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 697, 705. Ciano, *L'Europa*, p. 225.

[100] *The Japan Chronicle*, 14/12/1937. *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun*, 11/2/1938.

[101] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 42. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 67.

[102] ASMAE, AP, Italia, B44, F3, Telegr. P. s. n. s. d.

implication in the League's criticism, Prime Minister Konoe denounced the Nine Power Treaty, which amounted to a total renunciation of the Washington Treaty settlement.[103] In Italy, especially after Mussolini's speech in Palermo on August 19, 1937, many diplomats actively began to deny the supra-national function of the League. They impugned the League for only lending lip service and doing nothing constructive, resulting in increased pressure to reorganize the League. On August 19, Mussolini attacked bolshevism in the Mediterranean, despite criticism from the League in the context of recognizing the conquest of Ethiopia.[104] However, he vilified the League in his newspaper article of December 1 on the topic of the Brussels conference: "Although old miss humanists might not be fond of my argument, the roaring sound of artillery in the Far East loudly overwhelms a resolution adopted in Geneva."[105]

Withdrawing from the League on December 11, Mussolini asserted that he would take no notice of menacing voices raised by democratic countries. The Duce boasted about Italian bravery and Italy's highly efficient military: "Nobody could discourage the heroic spirit of Fascist revolution."[106] In Genoa on May 14, 1938, Mussolini declared that there no longer existed a containment policy by Britain, France or Italy against Germany, and he praised fascist Italy's friendship with Nazi Germany. He alluded to a solution for ironing out the misunderstanding with Britain regarding the Easter Agreement of April and laughed off the comments of the Western press on Italian preparations for ideological war. Yet, he emphasized that, once faced with such a war, totalitarian states would unite to push forward to the bitter end.[107] Mussolini held communism in contempt in his public statements, but his attack gradually locked onto different targets such as the League and democratic countries. The Duce's pronouncement on his admiration of military power heightened fascist Italy's bellicose image all the more.

Many Japanese diplomats, who used to have the reputation of being pro-British, also adopted similar views to those of Konoe and Mussolini. Shigemitsu, the former undersecretary and ambassador to the Soviet

[103] Shoji, op. cit., 41.

[104] O. O., XXVIII, pp. 241–242.

[105] O. O., XXIX, p. 27.

[106] Ibid., pp. 33–34.

[107] Ibid., pp. 99–102.

Union in 1937, presumed the League of Nations to be "a semi-propaganda institution of the left," even in his memoirs after the war.[108] As a matter of fact, he had prepared an "East Asian Monroe Doctrine" and contended that Japan should establish a regional sphere of influence. Moreover, as Hitler did, Shigemitsu considered the League system to be a symbol of the status quo, which hindered Japan's expansionism, and he argued that the Nine Power Treaty should be voided. Shigemitsu's report of March 1, 1937, actually championed the "positive actions" of the Japanese empire and even emphasized the power of enforcement by the Axis in order to stabilize East Asia.[109]

The driving ideology of the Axis, which was anti-communism, anti-League and revisionism received the general assent of many traditional diplomats in the three countries. Skepticism toward deliberation and the collective security system in the League was so strong among the fascists and conservatives that they were eager to replace the League with a new consultation system in Europe, which would have consisted of Britain, France, Germany and Italy.[110] German Foreign Minister Neurath pointed out that the League wasted much time discussing certain political issues without achieving practical results. Therefore, he stressed the importance of direct negotiations among the interested powers.[111] In parallel, the British shifted their ground to appeasement and underlined their intention that they would not try to estrange the Axis powers from each other. They began to distance themselves from the League in view of the fact that the League was said to have become a tool for delaying the globalization of the Axis. In addition, Britain also started negotiations on the problem of revisionism outside the League in order to avert a direct attack on the Versailles-Washington system. This line of policy was appreciated by the traditional diplomats in the Axis and Western countries, who did not want to destroy the status quo through excessive measures such as a full-scale war.[112]

On October 28, 1937, exploding the fallacies of the Versailles Treaty, Mussolini asserted that Germany should reacquire a colony in Africa.

[108] Shigemitsu, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 132.

[109] Takeda, op. cit., pp. 96-100. JFMA, A. 2. 0. 0. X1, Shigemitsu Taishi no Oshu Hokoku, "Oshu no Seikyoku: Kore nitaisuru Teikoku no Chii" (1/3/1937).

[110] DDI, 8-VII, n. 616. DBFP, 2-XIX, No. 321.

[111] ASMAE, AP, Germania, B37, F1, Telesp. 239104 (12/11/1937).

[112] DDI, 8-VII, nn. 412, 545, 602. ADAP, D-I, Nr. 23.

Ciano also expressed the same opinion in a German periodical article, and this was welcomed by the German military. Although Cameroon and the colonies of Portugal and Belgium were mentioned, the German government issued an official statement denying its interest in Africa.[113] On December 13, Foreign Minister Neurath explained that, taking the Anglo-Portuguese friendship into consideration, they would not request Portugal to return the former German colony. Britain offered colonial compensation to Germany in return for the abandonment of its expansionism in Central and Eastern Europe. Italy feared that Britain would make a great concession to Germany without consulting Italy.[114]

Another question of former German colonies arose in the Asia-Pacific region. On December 14, 1937 Germany and Japan reached an understanding that Germany would relinquish its claim on its former colony in the Pacific islands.[115] In December, Germany demanded the restoration of its privilege in Tsingtao on the Shantung Peninsula with the aim of industrial and trade penetration into China.[116] Since Japanese hard-liners sought the domination of East Asia, Foreign Minister Hirota requested China to evacuate its troops from Tsingtao. While Japan continued the war, German Ambassador Dirksen was anxious that a weakened China only benefited the Soviet Union and encouraged further Japanese expansionism.[117] The Italians, too, repeatedly showed concern about "the struggle based on the superiority complex of Asian race" and even feared that Japan and China could get together against the West if the conflict were settled before restoring the status quo.[118]

However, Prime Minister Konoe maintained that the Sino-Japanese conflict was different from the Western invasion as Japan's "advancement" was a calling for "the construction of the new order in East Asia."[119] Axis expansionism transformed the logic from the revision of

[113]ASMAE, AP, Germania, B37, F3, Documentazione Varia 1937–8, Rapporti italo-tedeschi (28/10/1937; 1/3/1938). DDI, 8-VII, nn. 549, 660, 689.

[114]Ibid., nn. 576, 701.

[115]ASMAE, AP, Italia, B43, Telegr. 8433 R (14/12/1937).

[116]DDI, 8-VII, n. 720.

[117]Takada, op. cit., 56. Harada, op. cit., Vol. 6, p. 192. DDI, 8-VII, n. 758.

[118]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B13, F1, Appunto per il ministro (12/8/1936). Cf. Count Carlo Sforza, "The Conflict between China and Japan," *International Conciliation*, May 1938, 217.

[119]Shoji, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

borders after World War I to the establishment of a new order. It first provoked the overthrow of the League and Versailles-Washington system and, gradually, the Axis powers tried every maneuver to achieve hegemony over other power blocs in accordance with their racist ideology. Mussolini saw himself as an arbitrator of the two civilizations of Japan and the West. Konoe also believed that "the synthetic harmony" between the East and West could contribute to a new world.[120]

In spite of mutual distrust among the three Axis powers, their attitudes toward Britain became more hostile. In particular, Japanese antagonism against Britain became prevalent. Italian Ambassador Auriti wrote on January 15, 1938, that further Japanese expansionism had caused anti-British sentiment to surpass anti-Russian and would inevitably result in a clash with the British Empire. He added that Japan considered Italy more significant than Germany because it was a power that could prevent Britain and France from taking a short cut to East Asia through the Mediterranean. Similarly, the ex-undersecretary, Shigemitsu, admitted in his report on Europe that fascist Italy posed the greatest threat to the British Empire.[121]

Before Ciano's ministry, the Italian foreign ministry let Japan play an anti-British role without the ministry's direct involvement in the issue. Nonetheless, before the end of 1937, Ciano and Mussolini began to take an interest in the world strategy against the British Empire. Simultaneously, when the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded, both the Japanese military and naval attaché expressed their desire to conclude a military treaty with Italy. The Japanese naval attaché in Rome said that the common enemy of Japan and Italy was not only communism but also Britain, whose presence in East Asia and the Mediterranean would hinder their future expansionist endeavors.[122] In reply, on December 1, 1937, Ciano gave him maps of Singapore, the British naval stronghold in Asia, remarking in his diary, "We must

[120]Valdo Ferretti, *Il Giappone e la politica estera italiana 1935–41* (Milano: Giuffrè, 1983), p. 10. Naikaku Johobu, ed., *Shina Jihen nikansuru Seifu Seimei oyobi Soridaijin Enzetsu-shu* (1938), p. 21.

[121]ASMAE, AP, Giappone, B17, F1, N. 40/13 (15/1/1938); N. 1044/281 (22/11/1937). JFMA, A. 2. 0. 0. X1, Shigemitsu Taishi no Oshu Hokoku, "Oshu no Seikyoku Kore nitaisuru Teikoku no Chii" (1/3/1937).

[122]Ferretti, op. cit., p. 120. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 54. ASMAE, AP, Italia, B43, Telesp. 240670/C (24/11/1937).

work on the Japanese General Staff, in order to arrive at the military agreement which alone can decide the issue with England."[123] It cannot be said that only Japanese servicemen jumped the gun and made irresponsible remarks. Konoe himself referred to the Sino-Japanese War as a military action that aimed to achieve "international justice" and admitted that the establishment of a new order would lead to armed conflict with the traditional imperialist powers.[124]

In October 1937, Ciano still believed that Italy should not pursue total war because Germany had not completed its military preparations. Nevertheless, his warmongering attitude was repeatedly expressed in his diary from the time of the Brussels conference to the Italian withdrawal from the League.[125] Mussolini desired to eradicate every trace of Italian indecisiveness "by means of a policy as straight as the blade of a sword."[126] Both Mussolini and Ciano did not hesitate to speak about the unavoidability of a war against Britain in their private conversations.[127] They wanted to encourage Italians, who were no longer "mandolin players," overcome bourgeois cowardice and become real soldiers on the battlefield.[128] However, Mussolini's candid references to an Anglo-Italian war were not publicized, and only threatening messages of war preparations were announced. The Japanese press also claimed that Mussolini was not, in reality, eager for war but demanded a share of British and French colonies as the price for peace.[129]

Their apprehensions regarding the new revisionism and new order contributed to the increased efforts of the three Axis powers to further their military expansionism. As a result, they confronted the British Empire all over the world and their conversion of ideologies into bellicose hegemonism impelled the diplomats to engage in this new mission.

The year 1937 is important year for the historical discussion of the origins of the Tripartite Alliance. As Japan, Italy and Germany escalated their belligerence, each country changed its ideological stance from

[123] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 39. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 54.

[124] Naikaku Johobu, op. cit., pp. 20, 31, 47–49. Shoji, op. cit., 40.

[125] Ciano, *Diario*, p. 43.

[126] *Ciano's Diary*, p. 29. Ciano, *Diario*, p. 54.

[127] Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 53, 58, 67.

[128] Ibid., p. 115. Cf. Ibid., pp. 53, 56. Grandi, op. cit., p. 452.

[129] O. O., XXIX, pp. 99–102. *The Japan Chronicle*, 14/12/1937. Presseisen, op. cit., p. 182.

anti-communism to anti-West, which entailed the evolution of a simple denial of the interwar international system into the new revisionism of individual quests for regional dominance. Since the "realism" of Axis nations assumed an exclusive and offensive character, their foreign policies swung back and forth between alliance and rupture. Even their own decision-making processes sustained considerable tension and contradictions between traditional conservatives and new revisionists. Their foreign ministries abdicated their traditional role of restricting extremist diplomacy, while the British appeasement policy confirmed their predisposition to expect Britain to be "friendly." All these factors obscured the paucity of reciprocal actions and led to an alliance with almost no concrete content.

How the Axis coalition became globalized is an issue that has not been adequately discussed in the historiography up to this point. Italian accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact resulted in its redesign as well as its enlargement, which consequently transformed the Axis alignment from an anti-Soviet cooperative venture into an anti-British convergence. The significance of this change has not been recognized in the previous interpretations.[130] Although Japan, Italy and Germany pursued different and contesting interests, especially in East Asia, it was the development of conflicts in Asia, Africa and Europe that allowed the emergence of a coalition against the British Empire. Although the Axis powers' decision-making structures did not change, a flashpoint appeared in 1937, when uncompromising attitudes clearly developed among the Axis powers and each power's self-centered, aggressive rhetoric began to conflict with that of the others. Such complexities in the diplomacy of individual countries and their bilateral relations can only be effectively analyzed in their multinational context.

[130]Tetsuya Sakai, "Bokyo Gainen no Donyu to Nisso-Kankei no Hen'yo," *Hokudai Hogaku Ronshu*, No. 5/6 (1990), 2305–2313. Robert Mallett, *Mussolini and the Origins of the Second World War, 1933–1940* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 151–157. Paul Schmidt, *Statist auf diplomatischer Bühne* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1949), S. 209–211.

CHAPTER 8

# Conclusion

Why did Japan and Italy venture to form the Axis coalition despite the fact that they pursued so many conflicting interests and had to contend with a sizable number of "pro-British" factions in their foreign ministries that, on surface, seemed capable of obstructing the "pro-Axis" factions? Many of the "pro-British" diplomats in these countries supported the adoption of aggressive foreign policies but sought to do so in a manner that would not directly antagonize the British government. Nonetheless, they were not against military expansionism itself. Traditional diplomats in Japan and Italy contributed to the isolation of their countries by actively collaborating on a determined plan of aggression, which resulted in spurring "pro-Axis" policies.

Japan and Italy saw themselves as dominant regional powers but not strong enough to wage war upon the British Empire. Traditional diplomats also domestically suffered from their power structures: Japan struggled with fragmented sectionalism and Italy with unbalanced multicentricity. Hence, diplomats in both countries should not be evaluated by classifying them merely as pro- or anti-Axis, or hard-liner or soft-liner. Closer attention should be paid to the conduct of the policy makers, who were hampered by their own systems.

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The original version of this chapter was revised: The term 'Vice-Minister' has been changed to 'Undersecretary' in the figure. The correction to this chapter is available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_9

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_8

| | | Eagerness for policy planning | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | High | Low |
| Distance from power center | Near | Promoter | Critic |
| | Far | Follower | Observer |

**Fig. 8.1** Four types of attitude to decision making

Figure 8.1 shows how decision makers could be swayed by the external situation and internal logic. Four types of decision makers are assumed.

Individuals eager to participate in policy planning and close to the power center could promote a policy easily. If they were distant from the power center, they would choose to follow the policies of their superior in the hope of future opportunities. Individuals who were skeptical of the existing policy and disinterested in pursuing personal ambition and who had access to the power center would spend a great deal of time criticizing an existing policy. Many individuals in less privileged positions often had little enthusiasm for policy making and therefore acted only as passive observers, who would report on existing conditions and were prepared to wait for their promotion. Some followers, or even promoters, were forced to become observers by assignment.

Figure 8.2 shows how, from 1936 to 1937, sixteen politicians and diplomats in Japan and Italy (eight from each country) would be categorized based on the typology described above. The distance between these figures and the power center can be ascertained on the basis of whether they were working at home or at diplomatic posts abroad. It is also important to note that some of these individuals were appointed to other roles during this period—promotion or demotion among the ranks between the government and diplomatic posts—which is indicative of the changes in the structure of the foreign policy-making process.

The eagerness of these individuals to be involved in decision making can be measured by looking at whether they were "policy-oriented" individuals who aimed at promoting their ideas, or "negotiation-oriented" individuals who sometimes had to detach themselves from active participation in planning policies. The policy-oriented individuals, who were more active in the decision-making process than those who were

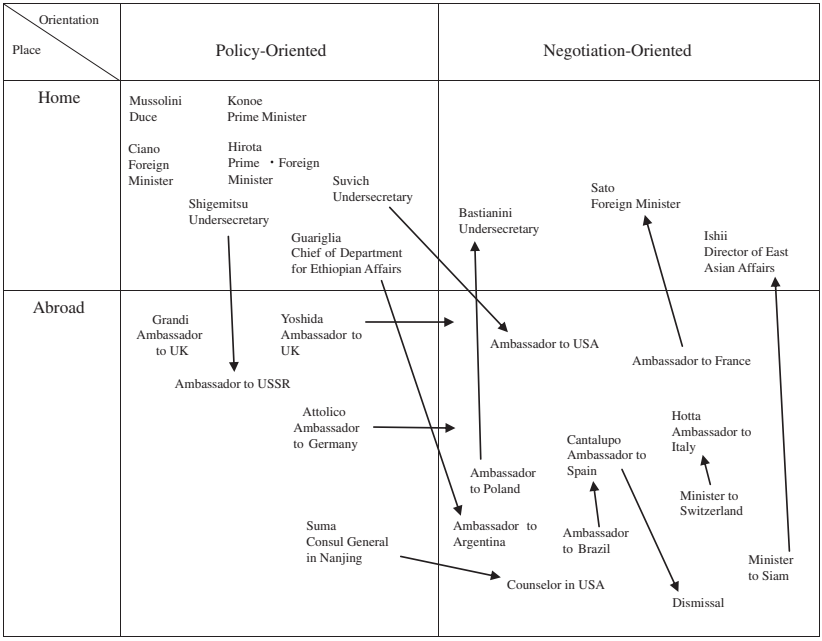


**Fig. 8.2** The positions of actors in the Japanese and Italian foreign policy-making process in 1936–1937

negotiation oriented, supported the aggressive foreign policies that their government pursued from 1936 to 1937.

Figure 8.2 shows that there were three characteristics that Japanese and Italian foreign policy making had in common. First, core members who could act as promoters of policy arrangements became fixed at a very limited number of individuals, namely Koki Hirota and Benito Mussolini with the newly emerged Fumimaro Konoe and Galeazzo Ciano. Second, many diplomats were downgraded to the role of negotiator. They could only execute the policies formulated in the central government instead of participating in the decision-making process. Some of them, such as Naotake Sato and Giuseppe Bastianini, returned home to higher-ranking posts, but they could only act as powerless critics. Third, although there were some policy-oriented actors abroad, such as the ambassadors Mamoru Shigemitsu and Dino Grandi, they could have only a limited impact on foreign policy making. Shigeru Yoshida and

Bernardo Attolico remained in the same position. Nevertheless, later in the period, they could only act purely as observers or critical reporters.

Moreover, fascist Italy assigned important diplomats such as Fulvio Suvich and Raffaele Guariglia to the other continents to eliminate their influence on the core of decision-making circle. In comparison to Italy, the Japanese foreign ministry maintained its normal pattern of reshuffling staffs, except in the case of Sato's promotion and Suma's degradation. These individuals were considered to be extremely "pro-" or "anti-British". Furthermore, the personalization of politics was far stronger in Italy than in Japan, as Ciano's selection of Bastianini as undersecretary indicated. Yet neither Sato nor Bastianini could prevent their leaders from promoting pro-Axis policies.

Unlike the British Foreign Office, the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy gradually lost their ability to pursue internal deliberations and consolidate ministerial opinions. Yoshida and Attolico constantly opposed the Axis formation, while Shigemitsu and Grandi maintained ambiguous attitudes toward the Axis. Individuals such as Yakichiro Suma, Suvich and Guariglia wholly supported the aggressive actions of their governments to achieve regional dominance. Most vectors of the arrows in Fig. 8.2 point downward or to the right, indicating less promotion and the decline of political leverage among diplomats. The individuals who rose as masters of coordinating contested interests were Hirota, Konoe and Mussolini. Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita can be found in Fig. 8.2, next to Hirota, as a mini-Hirota but less influential, and Ciano also imitated the coordination skills of Mussolini as a vice duce whose ambition and power were far greater than those of Hirota. Nevertheless, they were not as effective as their masters, due to their narrow-mindedness: Ciano's jealousy of others and Arita's bureaucratic inertia. In addition, since Japan or Italy could not by themselves control the international situation, their actions often swayed between ideological provocation and realistic restriction.

Both promoters and followers of Italian and Japanese decision-making circles shared a strong sense of racism and anti-communism, which was reinterpreted in pro-Axis, pro-imperialist and anti-internationalist foreign policies. Hirota and Mussolini supported all three policies and were promoters as well as capable coordinators of foreign policies. Shigemitsu and Suvich acted as planners at the Japanese and Italian foreign ministries in their attempts to implement expansionist foreign policies amid economic difficulties. Individuals such as Yoshida and Grandi,

who sought power, pretended to act as diplomatic negotiators loyal to their superiors. In spite of the fact that many traditional diplomats did not intend to antagonize Britain, whose presence in East Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean could not be easily destroyed, they supported their country's efforts to establish regional dominance, which ended in a serious confrontation with the British Empire. In making expansionism their ultimate goal, Japan and Italy inevitably became increasingly isolated from the international community. So long as traditional diplomats actively collaborated with their regimes, they could not restrain aggressive policies.

From 1932 to 1936, Japanese and Italian diplomats were convinced that they had managed to recoup their influence in the decision-making circles. Ironically, many of them used that influence to advocate military ventures, and thus presented themselves as being more efficient at organizing such policies than the junior members of the ultra-nationalist and fascist factions. On that account alone, government leaders utilized them as useful subordinates who would execute their blueprint for aggression, which culminated in strengthening the Axis. Promoters and followers started to become even more aggressive after Japan's establishment of Manchukuo and the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.

Full-scale intervention in China and Spain forced the Japanese and Italian diplomats, respectively, to choose a specific path, which impelled them to view their negotiating counterparts as either friend or foe. They also accelerated the bipolarization of self-righteous promoters and powerless observers in their foreign ministries. The negative effect of bipolarization affected even negotiation-oriented colleagues abroad. It appeared in the obvious dissimilarity between the flattering Masaaki Hotta, who, as ambassador to Italy, suddenly reopened the talks to conclude the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, and the candid Roberto Cantalupo, who, until he was dismissed, severely criticized Italy's intervention policy against Spain. After 1937, when the Axis was globalized, critics in Japan and Italy walked away from the political scene. As a result, the already top-down political system internally distinguished friend from foe. The more polarization developed, the less choices remained.

Of course, there were significant dissimilarities between the two countries. First, with respect to the making of foreign policies, Hirota and Konoe were indecisive leaders, who could not control deviation among the ranks in military. Their influence in the decision-making circle could not compare with that of the charismatic Mussolini and his son-in-law

Ciano, a mere miniature copy of Italy's resolute dictator. Consequently, the direction of Japanese politics oscillated back and forth, while in Italy, fickle decisions muddied international waters.

Second, Japan enjoyed stronger conformism to authority than Italy did. Anyone like Itaro Ishii, who delivered a scathing condemnation of Japanese conduct against China, was easily airbrushed out of the picture. Whereas, throughout the 1930s, the Japanese government maintained intact its regular bureaucratic pattern of personnel transfers, Italy's fascist government constantly promoted and relegated important actors. In many cases, censorious individuals such as Cantalupo were shunted aside. Nevertheless, Mussolini occasionally relied on individuals such as Grandi and Attolico, who sometimes ignored his orders but possessed practical diplomatic skills.

Third, particularly in the late 1930s, ultra-nationalist Japan tried to solve its domestic political deadlock, caused mainly by political and bureaucratic sectionalism, by diverting attention from its internal struggle to external conflict through military expansionism. In contrast, during the same period, fascist Italy developed a more despotic style due to bellicose activism and personalization of politics. Neither the diplomats nor generals could keep abreast of their leader's ambitious plans since Mussolini's variable diplomacy swayed according to Italy's fluctuating position in world politics. Additionally, plagued by political clientelism, Italy suffered more from the serious corruption of personal connections than servile Japan.

Yet, there remained, in the decade discussed in this study, structural features that the Japanese and Italian governments shared. They both developed an unstable autocracy whose existence depended on the coordination of interests between various actors and situations rather than on a democratic checks-and-balances system. Both regimes also contrasted sharply with the Nazi model of dominance, in which Hitler wielded great influence over the decision-making process as well as over the international situation in which Germany established a strong footing. Moreover, all the Axis powers including Japan and Italy regarded public opinion as something that should be manipulated, not something that should affect their foreign policies, as was the case in Britain, and they indoctrinated the masses to see the rest of the world as their enemies.

In the late 1930s, the internal contradictions in Japanese and Italian political structures began to be exposed. From 1932 to 1936, the coordination mechanism appeared to function in the foreign policy-making

process. As these systems centered on individuals who held exclusive powers, however, they started to malfunction when leaders rooted out the critics and even the followers with opinions that could have offered useful options to the reckless military expansionism.

New ideological justifications gradually induced them to expand the scope of their operations from anti-communism to anti-League and anti-West. They thrust their engine into high gear for war against Britain, which was one final option that most of the traditional diplomats attempted to avoid. However, it was too late to apply the brakes, and the Axis powers faced international isolation. What they underestimated was that Japan and Italy had very few common interests, notwithstanding the fact that their unlimited aggression in East Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean had a tremendous impact on both internal conditions and external environment. As a result, globalization led to the Tripartite Alliance, which terminated in total destruction.

# Correction to: Conclusion

**Correction to:**
**Chapter 8 in: K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*, Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_8**

The original version of the book was revised to change the term "Vice-Minister" to "Undersecretary" in three occurrences of Figure 8.2 in Chapter 8. The correction chapter and the book have been now updated with the change.

The updated version of this chapter can be found at
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_8

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*,
Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8_9

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8

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K. Ishida, *Japan, Italy and the Road to the Tripartite Alliance*, Security, Conflict and Cooperation in the Contemporary World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96223-8

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