Japan's Asia in the Politics of a New World Order, 1914–19

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Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ushered in a period of feverish speculation regarding the shape of the post-Cold War world. Among the areas of debate has been the likely direction of the centerpiece of American strategy in Asia in the Cold War period, Japan. But analysts have had very little to guide their forecasts of Japanese foreign policy in the twenty-first century.

Academic studies of Japan in English offer a one-dimensional portrait of Japanese decision-making in the modern era. While Meiji Japan's (1868–1912) founders are hailed for steering their country into the modern age, in the foreign policy realm, they appear as powerless pawns of international events. Highlighting Japan's "opening" to the West at the barrel of a gun, diplomatic historians describe the country from the nineteenth century as forever disadvantaged on the international stage.[1] Prejudiced by the record of U.S.-Japanese relations after 1945, specialists of international affairs speak of Japanese statesmen as "determined to follow" international trends.[2] Both of these images are, of course, a far cry from the well-established portrait in the popular literature in English and in Marxist studies in Japan of aggressive Japanese imperialists set to conquer Asia, if not the world.

Without stigmatizing modern Japan's preeminent policymakers as unrepentant imperialists, this paper aims to restore a sense of agency to the academic discussion of Japanese foreign policy. Japanese statesmen have neither been primarily "victims" nor predominantly passive actors on the international stage. They have, rather, actively attempted to shape their relations with the outer world.

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[1] Peter Duus goes so far as to argue that such disadvantages merit the creation of a new theoretical category of imperialism for Japan, called "backward imperialism." See Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[2] See Richard D. Leitch Jr., Akira Kato, and Martin E. Weinstein, *Japan's Role in the Post-Cold War World* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995), 6.

This has been true especially of Japanese relations with Asia. Intellectual historians have recently reminded us of the centrality of Asia in Japanese efforts to shape a national identity in the modern era. Harry Harootunian has highlighted the role of nativist scholars in transforming a Sinocentric into a Japan-centric world in the eighteenth century.[3] And Stephan Tanaka has analyzed the conscious efforts of Japanese historians in the first half of the twentieth century to establish Japanese leadership in Asia by locating China, or "*shina*," within a Japan-centric history of East Asia, or "*tōyōshi*."[4] As an intellectual construct, Asia becomes with these scholars less an objective circumstance to which Japanese elites responded than a blank slate upon which those men fashioned their own image.

Both Harootunian and Tanaka suggest that Japan's intellectual separation from China played an integral role in Japanese aggression on the continent in the 1930s. But intellectual transformations alone do not precipitate major international events. Rather, Japanese statesmen actively aimed to shape their relations with Asia in another arena much more directly related to diplomatic decision-making: politics. If the intellectual separation of Japan from China laid the critical groundwork for Japanese aggression in the 1930s, it is the place of China in Japanese domestic politics that had the greatest bearing upon Japan's specific foreign policy choices in the first half of the twentieth century.

This essay examines the place of Asia in Japanese politics during a pivotal event in the twentieth century: World War I. With the distraction of the great powers to Europe after 1914, the Great War became a time of intensified Japanese diplomatic activity in Asia. The war also marked a critical turning point in the politics of Asia in Japan. Until 1918, Japan's policy-making elite spoke with one voice of the wisdom of strengthening Japanese influence on the Asian continent. And Japan's Asian, particularly China, policy was a critical focus of its turbulent domestic political battles. With the growth of the Japanese economy and the American redefinition of allied war aims, however, the consensus upon continental expansion dissolved. The primary focus of political discussions, moreover, shifted to issues of political reform. The transformation of the politics of China during the first great political, economic, social, and ideological watershed of the twentieth century would have a profound effect upon the direction of Japanese diplomacy in the interwar period. It should also

[3] Harry D. Harootunian, "The Functions of China in Tokugawa Thought," in *The Chinese and the Japanese: Essays in Political and Cultural Interactions*, ed. Akira Iriye (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 9–36.

[4] Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

bear lessons for Japanese foreign policy after the final turning point of the century, the end of the Cold War.

The Domestic Context of Japanese Imperialism

Diplomatic historians describe the origins of Japanese imperialism in Asia primarily in the context of national defense. As one renowned specialist argues, Japanese empire-building in the nineteenth century marked "an entirely reasonable approach to security in an era when much of the world and most of Asia seemed divided up between the powers."[5] But unlike China, after three bombardments of the Satsuma and Chōshū domains in the 1860s, the great powers never physically menaced Japan. On the contrary, Japanese policymakers enjoyed virtually a free hand to construct their own empire in Asia unimpeded. Nor was foreign policy the primary concern of Japanese statesmen in the nineteenth century. Rather, after having forced over two and a half centuries of feudal rule to a close, they faced the much more formidable task of molding a modern unified nation state from over 270 autonomous feudal domains.

The primary context of nineteenth century Japanese imperialism, in other words, is not the international balance of power but the domestic context of nation-building. Within that framework, Japanese expansion in Asia appears less an exercise in national security than in national self-definition. Modern Japan's founders engaged China in war in 1894 not to protect from imminent invasion. They did so to become a great power. At a time when a foothold in China had become a benchmark of national power, Japanese leaders chose more than simple survival. They aimed, in the words of famed educator Fukuzawa Yukichi, to become the "leader of Asia."[6]

The Politics of Asia in Imperial Japan

If the quest to become "leader of Asia" served to define the Japanese nation, it also became the basic adhesive of Japanese politics. The disparate political forces that came to comprise the Meiji state coalesced for the first

[5] Marius Jansen, "Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 76.

[6] Kimitada Mina, "Fukuzawa Yukichi's 'Departure from Asia': A Prelude to the Sino-Japanese War", in *Japan's Modern Century*, ed. Edmund R. Skrzypczak (Tōkyō: Sophia University, 1968), 25.

time with Japan's spectacular victories over China in 1895.[7] And Japanese statesmen came to regard a vigorous pursuit of rights in Asia as an integral component of their political mandate. The failure to secure Japanese rights—such as the inability to obtain all of Sakhalin Island or a war indemnity after the Russo-Japanese War—guaranteed widespread criticism, even violent protest. Japanese policymakers in 1914, then, unanimously welcomed the war in Europe as an opportunity to strengthen Japanese rights in Asia. Although pursued by men of different political stripes, all major foreign policy initiatives undertaken during the war sought to fulfill this aim.

A consensus upon continental expansion, however, did not mark the end of politics in Japan. On the contrary, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Meiji polity was political turbulence. For modern Japan's founders created a political system incapable of regulating competing demands among the new class of elites. Instead of assuring the hegemony of the architects of the new system as intended, full sovereignty in an emperor who did not actually rule guaranteed a perpetual jockeying for position among would-be policymakers: the elder statesmen, members of the civilian and military bureaucracies, and, increasingly in the twentieth century, members of Japan's rising political parties. If the pursuit of leadership in Asia was a given in Taishō era (1912–26) politics, then, Asian, particularly China affairs, were a central locus of the turbulent political battles that were a legacy of the Meiji polity. Like the more celebrated political campaigns against oligarchic rule and for universal manhood suffrage, the quest for leadership in Asia became a critical component of the turbulent struggle for power among Japanese elites in Taishō Japan.

THE TWENTY-ONE DEMANDS AND FOREIGN MINISTRY SUPREMACY

Japan's primary foreign policy initiatives vis-à-vis Asia during the Great War have been the subject of meticulous research. The Twenty-One Demands, the movement to depose Chinese president Yuan Shikai, the Nishihara loans, and the Siberian Intervention have been highlighted primarily for their significance in the history of Japanese diplomacy. But each initiative had an explicitly domestic political component as well. As such, they reveal Japanese policymakers as less slave to international

[7] For an illustration of the evolution of national symbols and surge of national sentiment during the Sino-Japanese War, see Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 88–89; 135–36.

events than active architects of their own destiny. They are, in short, clear representations less of the strategic pull than of the political push of policy-making vis-à-vis Asia in Taishō Japan.

The list of negotiating points presented by Japan to Beijing in January 1915 and known derisively as the "Twenty-One Demands" enjoys a prominent place in the history of Japanese foreign policy. Together with the Siberian Intervention of 1918, historians regularly describe the demands as a critical step in Japan's eventual march to war against China in the 1930s.[8] But while the initiative did play a critical role in the rise of Chinese nationalism and turned the favor of American President Woodrow Wilson against Japan, its primary import in the history of modern Japan lies not in its lessons for Japanese diplomacy. Rather, the demands offer one of the clearest demonstrations of the political significance of Asia, particularly China, in Imperial Japan.

Appeals for a comprehensive agreement with China flooded the Ōkuma Shigenobu administration (April 1914—October 1916) from all quarters at the outbreak of the Great War. Analyses of Japanese foreign policy during this period tend to stress the complicity of the most extreme elements in Japanese politics in the formulation of the demands.[9] But the Black Dragon Society was only one among a wide assembly of more orthodox foreign policy actors in the fall of 1914 pressing for a thorough negotiation of Japanese rights. The number of these petitions indicates the overwhelming political momentum for continental expansion in Japan in 1914. They reveal, as well, the degree to which most negotiating items as eventually formulated by Foreign Minister Katō Takaaki were accepted as a matter of course in Tōkyō. Indeed, while the demands appeared for the first time as one package, none were remarkable in the context of previous Japanese approaches to Beijing or of the accepted rules of great power competition in China since the Sino-Japanese War.[10] Katō Takaaki titled his negotiating instructions, in fact, "Solution of Pending Problems."[11]

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[8] See, for example, Toyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi, Fujiwara Akira, *Shōwashi* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1959), 7.

[9] Both Marius Jansen and Usui Katsumi stress the complicity of Uchida Ryōhei and the Black Dragon Society in the formulation of the demands. See Marius Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), 180; Usui Katsumi, *Nihon to Chūgoku: Taishō jidai* (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1972), 58–60.

[10] For a detailed analysis of the routine character of the Twenty-One Demands in the context of great power competition in China since the Sino-Japanese War, see Fred Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914–1919* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming), chapter III.

[11] Itō Masanori, *Katō Takaaki*, 2 vols. (Tōkyō: Katō Haku Denki Hensan Iinkai, 1929), II, 155.

And even Yoshino Sakuzō, who would become the most ardent advocate of democracy in Imperial Japan, would describe the initiative as the "bare minimum" necessary.[12]

Even as they expose the powerful political momentum for a strong China policy in Tōkyō, the Twenty-One Demands reveal China policy as a central arena for the basic struggle for power in Taishō Japan. That struggle had exploded in full force in 1913 when for the first time in the history of Imperial Japan a coalition of political parties had toppled an oligarchic cabinet. The Taishō political crisis, as this event is known, revealed the bankruptcy of oligarchic politics less than twenty years after their formal institutionalization. And the subsequent cabinet of Admiral Yamamoto Gonnohyōe (February 1913—April 1914) exacerbated political tensions by promoting the interests of the majority Seiyūkai party and the navy against members of the powerful military-bureaucratic Yamagata faction.

The Twenty-One Demands deserve a place in Japanese political history as prominent as the Taishō political crisis or the Yamamoto cabinet. For in his decisive control of both the substance and timing of negotiations with China, foreign minister and president of the Dōshikai party, Baron Katō Takaaki, handily outmaneuvered the three most powerful contenders for power in Taishō Japan: the elder statesmen (*genrō*), the army, and the Seiyūkai. The Twenty-One Demands are important not as evidence of escalating continental ambitions in Tōkyō but as a decisive victory for cabinet and Foreign Ministry supremacy in the making of foreign policy.

Since their creation of the mechanisms of a modern state in the 1880s, modern Japan's founders had wielded decisive control in the shaping of Japan's domestic and foreign policies. While after the turn of the century they no longer enjoyed a direct hand in policy-making as official members of the cabinet, in their capacity as elder statesmen, these men continued to exert a powerful influence. Field Marshal Yamagata Aritomo, in particular, used a vast network of supporters in the civilian and military bureaucracies (the Yamagata faction) to exercise a commanding voice after the death of his chief oligarchic rival, Itō Hirobumi.

Foreign Minister Katō utilized Japan's China policy first to take aim at the lingering power of the *genrō*. While the elder statesmen expected to participate in the important policy-making process at a time of national crisis, Katō seized the opportunity of war in Europe to entirely exclude the *genrō* from decision-making. Katō single-handedly orchestrated a cab-

[12] Yoshino Sakuzō, *Nisshi kōshōron* (Tōkyō: Keiseiron, 1915), 255–56; cited in Mitani Taichirō, *Shinpan Taishō demokurashii: Yoshino Sakuzō no jidai* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1995), 156.

inet decision for war against Germany on 7 August and informed the elder statesmen of the decision, and of a proposed ultimatum to Germany, only after the fact. He ignored *genrō* advice in September to send a special envoy to negotiate a comprehensive agreement with China, but chose instead to pursue his own agenda via the Foreign Ministry representative in Beijing the following January.

Japan's generals had become a powerful political force after the military victories over China and Russia. The Imperial Army had surged from thirteen to nineteen divisions after the Russo-Japanese War and had begun to compete with the Foreign Ministry in China by creating a network of its own representatives throughout the Asian continent. This network attempted, unsuccessfully, to intervene in the Chinese revolution in 1911.[13] But Japan's generals viewed the outbreak of war in 1914 as another opportunity to advance army power via military operations on the continent. Foreign Minister Katō had hoped to deprive the army of such a chance by arranging for the peaceful transfer to Japan of German concessions in Shandong.[14] But having failed to avoid a military campaign, Katō moved swiftly after the Eighteenth Division's seizure of the German fortress at Qingdao in November 1914 to defuse army momentum by replacing operational troops with occupation forces. To avert army interference in subsequent negotiations with China for a comprehensive agreement, Katō delayed the start of talks until these occupational troops assumed their place.[15] And after discussions began in January 1915, he doggedly deflected the army's bid for military action against China.

Since its creation in 1900, the Seiyūkai party had boasted the greatest political strength in the Imperial Diet. Its president, Hara Takashi, moreover, had steadily expanded party influence to the House of Peers, the civilian bureaucracy and to Japanese colonial government. Katō used his command of the nation's important China policy to deal as resolutely with his greatest political party rival as with the *genrō* (elder statesmen) and army. He refused to entertain queries in the Thirty-fifth Diet (7–25 December 1914) regarding his plans for Sino-Japanese relations. And he

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[13] For details, see Kitaoka Shin'ichi, *Nihon rikugun to tairiku seisaku* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978), 93–96.

[14] Itō, *Katō Takaaki*, II, 83–85. To give Berlin ample time to capitulate without a fight, Katō set an ultimatum deadline of seven days, rather than the customary 48 hours.

[15] Governor-General of Korea, General Terauchi Masatake, would lament Katō's failure to begin negotiations before the withdrawal of operational troops from Shandong. Tanaka Giichi kankei monjo, Terauchi to Tanaka, 27 January 1915 (Kensei Shiryō Shitsu, National Diet Library, Tōkyō).

convened the Diet early and orchestrated an early dissolution to prevent Seiyūkai interference with his discussions with President Yuan. Finally, he hoped that successful talks in Beijing would facilitate a Dōshikai victory in the upcoming general election. While the negotiations dragged on as Japanese voters went to the polls, the Dōshikai would, nonetheless, shatter the Seiyūkai's fifteen year Diet majority in March 1915.

Katō pursued talks with China in 1915, then, in an attempt both to define Japan's position in Asia and his own political position at home. He was so successful on both counts that he transformed the Japanese political canvas. Before the war, the confrontation between the expanding Seiyūkai and the primary casualty of its advances, the Yamagata faction, had marked the chief political drama of Imperial Japan. But by decisively commanding the approaches to China, Katō emerged as the preeminent policymaker in Tōkyō. Field Marshal Yamagata would soon abandon his campaign to destroy the Seiyūkai to concentrate upon the more formidable task of suppressing Katō. He would twice assemble the group of four remaining *genrō* to pressure Ōkuma, first to exclude the foreign minister from the policymaking process, then to remove him from office.[16] Meanwhile, Tanaka Giichi, then major general, bemoaned the low "authority of the military vis-à-vis the Foreign Ministry."[17] "There is little hope," he grieved, "for application of the principle that peace can be preserved through arms."[18] On Yamagata's command, Tanaka worked to nudge from office War Minister Oka Ichinosuke, whose cooperation with Katō according to Yamagata presented an "obstacle to the progress of national business."[19] As for Katō's chief political party rival, Seiyūkai President Hara Takashi complained bitterly of the political effect of the foreign minister's initiatives. The declaration of war against Germany, he suspected, aimed to "buttress the cabinet by directing public sentiment outward."[20] And the military pressure applied

[16] At the 24 September 1914 meeting with Premier Ōkuma, the *genrō* commanded Ōkuma to make the fundamental decisions in foreign policy himself in consultation with the *genrō*, after which he was to "compel the foreign minister to obey this." Tokutomi Iichirō, ed., *Kōshaku Yamagata Aritomo den*, 3 vols. (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1969), III, 912. At the 25 June 1915 meeting with Ōkuma, the elder statesmen would call directly for the removal of Katō from office. Itō, *Katō Takaaki*, II, 48; Yamagata hoped, as well, to "destroy the Doshikai." Hara Keiichirō, ed., *Hara Takashi nikki,* 6 vols. (Tōkyō: Fukumura Shuppan, 1981), IV, 100 (18 May 1915) (hereafter, cited as *Hara nikki*).

[17] Terauchi Masatake kankei monjo 315–32, Tanaka to Terauchi, 20 January 1915 (Kensei Shiryō Shitsu, National Diet Library, Tōkyō).

[18] Terauchi monjo 315–34, Tanaka to Terauchi, 3 February 1915.

[19] Ibid.

[20] *Hara nikki*, IV, 26 (14 August 1914).

on China on the eve of the general election was "not external but internal diplomacy."[21]

Removing Yuan Shikai Abroad and the Enemies of Military-Bureaucratic Rule at Home

Fortunately for Yamagata, Katō left the Ōkuma cabinet with Home Minister Oura Kanetake in August 1915 after the latter was accused of buying votes for army expansion. But the foreign minister's resignation did not end the political jockeying that had greeted the outbreak of war in Europe. On the contrary, Japan's next major China policy initiative, the movement to depose Chinese President Yuan Shikai in the spring of 1916, became the next conspicuous attempt to reorder power relations at home.

The policy to depose Yuan began as a modest warning to the Chinese president in October 1915 not to reintroduce imperial rule in China. In light of the domestic unpopularity of the May 1915 Sino-Japanese treaties that were the product of the Twenty-One Demands, Yuan hoped to buttress his own power by donning the robes of the august former occupants of the dragon throne. The reshuffled Ōkuma cabinet issued the October warning on the grounds that such an initiative would bring civil chaos to China and threaten "peace in the Far East."[22] But Yuan's actions were less critical as a threat to stability in Asia than as a challenge to Japanese cabinet and Foreign Ministry claims to be the preeminent foreign policy decision-makers in Japan.

Foreign Minister Katō, as we have seen, had used a powerful demonstration of Japanese leadership in China to establish cabinet and Foreign Ministry supremacy. But there were immediate signs of the limits to Japanese leadership. No sooner was an agreement with Beijing concluded than Chinese authorities began capitalizing upon loopholes in the May treaties to fortify their own position in Manchuria.[23] Yuan's proposed assumption of the emperorship offered further proof of the limits of Japa-

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[21] *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 23 March 1915, 2. Katō had relented in march to a temporary expansion of Japanese military presence in Shandong by overlapping the fresh and old troops during the regular troop rotation period. But he continued to refuse army appeals for military action.

[22] Foreign Ministry text of warning to Yuan; Gaimushō, ed., *Nihon gaikō bunsho: Taishō jidai*, 36 vols. (Tōkyō: Gaimushō, 1964–87), 1915, II, 99–100.

[23] Claiming that under article five of the South Manchuria, Eastern Inner Mongolia Treaty Japanese civilians in Manchuria were now legally covered under Chinese police law, the Chinese government in July advised the removal of Japanese police stations in Chouyang in Liaoyuan county. In the beginning of October, the

nese power. Evidence of weakness in China raised doubts about the ability of the architects of the May treaties to effectively conduct Japan's foreign policy. While they had little bearing upon stability in Asia, then, Yuan's actions impinged directly upon the political survival of the Ōkuma cabinet. Justice Minister Ozaki Yukio, author of a November cabinet resolution to withhold recognition of a Yuan monarchy, worried that the "army clique" would use Yuan's demonstration of strength to destroy the cabinet.[24] As a journalist close to the Foreign Ministry informed Seiyūkai president Hara Takashi, the decision to warn Yuan aimed to avoid the criticism that Ōkuma was a "stooge" of the Chinese president.[25]

The modest warning to Yuan not to introduce imperial rule would evolve by March 1916 into a hostile attempt to depose the Chinese president. Like Premier Ōkuma in October, the primary architect of the new plan, Tanaka Giichi, now lieutenant general and vice chief of the Army General Staff, would describe the notably more aggressive posture in terms of security in East Asia. Yuan's inability to suppress domestic opposition, he noted, threatened "peace in the Far East."[26]

But, as with the October cabinet decision, the evidence in the field in March 1916 pointed to Yuan's strength, not weakness. Tanaka aggressively solicited cabinet support for a campaign to depose the Chinese president after reports from general staff representatives in China noted Yuan's likely success in suppressing domestic rebellion.[27] As in October, the Chinese president's actions threatened less peace in Asia or Japanese security than the cabinet's public image. A Chinese show of strength, Tanaka complained bitterly in January, was equivalent to "ignor[ing] the face

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Japanese press reported Chinese claims to their former legal rights over Korean residents in Jiandao, near the Sino-Korean border. This directly contradicted a 13 August Japanese cabinet declaration that the new treaties superseded the Jiandao Treaty of 1909, which had assigned legal dominion to China; see Usui Katsumi, "Nanman, Tōmō jōyaku no seiritsu zengo," in *Tai-Manmō seisakushi no ichimen,* ed. Kurihara Ken (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1966), 126–27.

[24] In an extraordinary cabinet session called on 3 November to discuss Yuan's intransigence; *Hara nikki*, IV, 142 (6 November 1915).

[25] Ibid., 136 (14 October 1915).

[26] Hamaomote Matasuke monjo, no. 15, Tanaka to Banzai, 17 January 1916; in "Hamaomote Matasuke monjo," comp. Yamaguchi Toshiaki, in *Kindai Nihon to higashi Ajia*, ed. Kindai Nihon Kenkyūkai (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1980), 221–22.

[27] Advisor to the Hubei Regular Army, Colonel Teranishi Hidetake, for example, informed General Staff Second Division Chief Fukuda Masatarō on 1 February that if the Japanese government did not decide by mid-month to tacitly support the revolutionary party in China, "the probability that Yuan pacifies Yunnan and establishes imperial government is great;" Hamaomote monjo, no. 27, Teranishi to Fukuda, 1 February 1916, in ibid., 230.

of Japan."[28] More specifically, it jeopardized Tanaka and the Imperial Army's new centrality in Japan's foreign policy decision making.

Indeed, Tanaka's orchestration of the movement to depose Yuan represented a major shift in the locus of policy-making in Japan. While he had served as foreign minister, Katō Takaaki had, as we have seen, excluded Tanaka and his fellow generals from any role in the making of foreign policy. By January 1916, however, after Katō's resignation and his own promotion to vice chief of the general staff, Tanaka had wrested control of Japan's continental policy from the inexperienced new foreign minister, Ishii Kikujirō. He had done so by commanding the network of Japanese army representatives that had been established in China after the Russo-Japanese War.[29]

Tanaka formulated his China policy to be highly advantageous to the Imperial Army. Echoing army ambitions at the time of the 1911 Chinese revolution, he called not simply for the elimination of Yuan Shikai but for a major expedition of Japanese troops to China in the name of containing civil war.[30] Yuan's suppression of rebellion in south China in the spring of 1916, then, threatened not simply to nullify Japanese cabinet support for rebellion. It jeopardized the potentially enormous political benefits to the army of a major military campaign on the continent.

The Nishihara Loans and Terauchi Supremacy

Tanaka's plan for a major expedition of Japanese troops to China evaporated with the death of Yuan Shikai in June. The failure of his scheme, like evidence in the fall of 1915 of serious leaks in the Sino-Japanese treaties, offered the occasion for another major reorganization of power relations in Tōkyō. The Terauchi Masatake cabinet emerged in October 1916 as an attempt by the Yamagata faction to restore the waning power of military-bureaucratic rule. General Terauchi stood second in command in the faction and fashioned a "transcendental" government divorced from all party affiliation.

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[28] Hamaomote monjo, no. 15, Tanaka to Banzai, 17 January 1916, in ibid., 221–22.

[29] Among the key army representatives in the field through whom Tanaka briefly commanded Japan's approaches to China were Lieutenant General Aoki Norizumi, Lieutenant Colonel Taga Muneyuki, Colonel Banzai Rihachirō, and Colonel Teranishi Hidetaka.

[30] See the series of letters between Tanaka and representatives of the army general staff in China in Hamaomote monjo: nos. 41 (Tanaka to Banzai, March 1916), 61 (Tanaka to Morioka, May 1916), 64 (Tanaka to Aoki, 20 May 1916), in ibid., 239, 253, 255.

The public reacted angrily to this first non-affiliated cabinet since the Taishō political crisis."[31] But the chief political drama of the Terauchi years transpired not between the soldier-premier and the champions of representative government. Terauchi diffused the political pressure in the Diet by coopting some of its leaders in a new deliberative body, the Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs. The greatest political challenge to the new premier, rather, came from within the Yamagata faction itself. While he owed his premiership to factional patriarch Yamagata, Terauchi had indicated upon assuming office that he would not be bound by the field marshal's commands.[32] Rather than welcome Yamagata associate Hirata Tōsuke to the new government, the general granted the pivotal post of vice premier to Hirata rival Gotō Shinpei. And following a pattern since the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Terauchi, to Yamagata's great surprise, assigned budget priority to the navy.

One of Terauchi's most conspicuous attempts to throw his political weight was in the arena of China affairs. Following the advise of Gotō and others, the new premier distinguished himself from his predecessor via a declaration of change in Japan's approaches to China. The March 1916 cabinet decision to depose Yuan Shikai had been kept from the public. Terauchi now exposed the conspiracy and vowed, in his first official statement on China in January 1917, to refrain from interfering in the country's internal affairs.[33]

The Nishihara loans, which would become the centerpiece of Terauchi's China policy, would hardly constitute non-interference in Chinese domestic politics. Premier Duan Qirui would make full use of Japanese largesse to subdue his political enemies. But as an exercise in financial diplomacy, the loans are justifiably noted by historians as a departure from the military schemes of Tanaka Giichi. They also reflected the new financial power enjoyed by Japan. Thanks to the expansion of markets for Japanese arms, shipping, and textiles since the outbreak of war, Japan en-

[31] *Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbun*, 6 October 1916; in *Terauchi Masatake naikaku kankei shiryō*, ed. Yamamoto Shirō, 2 vols. (Kyōto: Kyōto Joshi Daigaku, 1985), I, 441.

[32] During discussions with Premier Ōkuma in July 1916 over an eventual transfer of power, Terauchi had informed Yamagata that he was no longer a child, and could not, therefore, listen to everything that the elder statesman said. Oka Yoshitake, ed., *Taishō demokurashiiki no seiji: Matsumoto Gōkichi seiji nisshi* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1957), 13 (19 July 1916 diary entry).

[33] Gaimushō, *Nihon gaikō nenpyō narabi ni shuyō bunsho, 1840–1945*, 2 vols. (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1965), I, 424–27.

joyed a balance of payments surplus by 1916 for the first time in its history.[34]

But Terauchi and deputy Nishihara Kamezō devised the new loan policy not simply to utilize the new foreign policy instrument at their disposal. The January declaration of change may not have signalled a genuine shift to non-interference in Chinese domestic affairs. But it did mark a substitution of the chief foreign policy actors. Tanaka Giichi, as we have seen, had, since January 1916, monopolized the approaches to China by directing members of the army general staff in the field. If he hoped to wield any authority in the foreign policy arena, Terauchi had to neutralize this impressive network of Tanaka subordinates. Indeed, the new premier's advisors were unanimous in their counsel that Tanaka be removed from the position of vice chief of the army general staff.[35]

Simple cabinet declarations had no effect upon the vice chief's clandestine operations. The Ōkuma regime, after all, had budgeted monies after Yuan Shikai's death to dissolve the military operations aimed at deposing the Chinese president. But these funds had been diverted by the same men who had orchestrated the anti-Yuan plot to schemes against the new regime of Duan Qirui in Beijing.[36] Nor did General Terauchi, serving as premier outside of the military chain of command, enjoy any authority over operational planning in the General Staff. The new prime minister vowed, therefore, to maneuver around Tanaka's network via a policy that he could hope to command: financial diplomacy. The Nishihara loans, in other words, reflected not only the availability of a new instrument of diplomacy. They marked a specific attempt by Terauchi to outflank the network of continental military advisors that Vice Chief of the General Staff

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[34] By 1916, Japan had transformed a consistent annual balance of payments deficit from 1903, which had reached 106.6 million yen in 1913, to a healthy excess of 604.7 million yen. Kazushi Ohkawa and Miyohei Shinohara, eds., *Patterns of Japanese Economic Development: A Quantitative Appraisal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 334.

[35] This included Gotō Shinpei, Communications Minister Den Kenjirō and Chōshū elder Miura Gorō, who spoke of Tanaka as "the epitome of the China problem." For Gotō, see Terauchi monjo 27–50, Gotō to Terauchi, 3 October 1916. For Den, see *Hara nikki*, IV, 224 (12 October 1916). For Miura, see *Hara nikki*, 229 (5 November 1916). Miura also informed Terauchi of a consensus among party leaders Hara and Inukai, and Itō Miyoji on the need to remove Tanaka; Terauchi monjo 441–46, "Miura shishaku danwa yōryō (12 October 1916)," in Yamamoto, *Terauchi naikaku shiryō*, I, 187. Den and Hirata Tōsuke agreed in a discussion in November on the advisability of dismissing the vice chief of staff; Den Kenjirō nikki, 17 November 1916, in Yamamoto, *Terauchi naikaku shiryō*, I, 146.

[36] Terauchi monjo 208–15, 16, 17, Nishihara to Terauchi, 24, 26, 29 December 1916, in Yamamoto, *Terauchi naikaku shiryō*, I, 160–166, 169–171.

Tanaka Giichi had used to monopolize the approaches to China under Premier Ōkuma.[37]

The most exciting drama of the Nishihara loans, then, unfolded not across the negotiating table between Nishihara and members of the Duan regime, but between the two chief contenders for foreign policy leader in the Terauchi regime, Nishihara Kamezō and Tanaka Giichi. Tanaka was able to foil Nishihara's first attempts to establish ties between Terauchi and Duan.[38] And he aimed during a personal mission to China in the spring of 1917 to secure the political supremacy of President Li Yuanhong, with whom the General Staff had developed a close rapport, over the recently deposed Premier Duan.[39] But by July, Duan would establish decisive military control in Beijing. And via 200 million yen in loans to the Chinese premier, Terauchi and deputy Nishihara would finally control Japan's approaches to China.

SIBERIA AND THE REVITALIZATION OF ARMY AND EMPIRE

In the first half of the Terauchi regime, then, Tanaka and the Imperial Army were rendered as powerless in the prosecution of Japan's continental aims as they had been at the hands of Katō Takaaki in 1915. Added to the budget priority that Premier Terauchi continued to grant the navy, this represented a humiliating loss of political power. By 1917, however, there appeared an even more serious challenge to army authority: the fundamental transformation of the world order.

Historians of Europe and the United States have long recognized the transforming effects of the Great War in their respective countries. Unlike the main European belligerents, Japan's wartime experience was, of course, less one of destruction than of production. The Japanese economy thrived as its industries filled wartime orders from the allies and entered new markets opened by the withdrawal of European power from Asia.

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[37] Terauchi had directly confronted Tanaka in early October for his reckless schemes on the continent. *Hara nikki*, IV, 223 (11 October 1916). But in response to Miura Gorō's petitions in early November to remove the vice chief of staff from power, the premier suggested that "there is another means;" *Hara nikki*, IV, 229 (5 November 1916).

[38] Specifically, Nishihara suspected the hand of General Staff officer Aoki Norizumi in the Chinese Guomindang's refusal to sanction the dispatch of a special-Chinese envoy from the new Duan Qirui government in Beijing to Tōkyō in November 1915; Terauchi monjo 208–13, Nishihara to Terauchi, 12 December 1916, in Yamamoto, *Terauchi naikaku shiryō*, I, 155–56.

[39] See Takakura Tetsuichi, *Tanaka Giichi denki*, 2 vols. (Tōkyō: Tanaka Giichi Denki Kankōkai, 1958), I, 653–58.

But while devastating human and material losses transformed European politics and society, economic growth had profound social and political consequences in Japan. Most conspicuous was the rise of private industry and capital and the explosion of labor unrest. Prime Minister Terauchi decried the new "wind of luxury and frivolity" that now gripped Japan and considered the increasing frequency of work stoppages "most troubling." In October 1917, he urged an assembly of police bureau chiefs to promote a mood of "frugal industry and simplicity" and a spirit of loyalty and patriotism.[40]

The transformation of Japanese society within was facilitated by a pivotal event without: the American declaration of war. The United States entered the war in April 1917 seeking not merely a resolution to the European conflict. President Woodrow Wilson declared his intention to eliminate war for all time. To do so required a complete transformation of international politics. For the largest war the world had ever known, Wilson held, had sprung from the misguided practices of the "old diplomacy:" from balances of power, the quest for empire, the competition for armaments, and international negotiations behind closed doors. To prevent the recurrence of another great war, the president proposed a cooperative international association of states (a League of Nations), the self-determination of peoples, peaceful economic competition, and open covenants.

Wilson's rejection of the "old diplomacy" was equivalent to a condemnation of the national trajectory of modern Japan. For Japanese statesmen, like their European counterparts, had followed the practices of the "old diplomacy" in their quest for international respectability since the mid-nineteenth century. The American president's censure of German "militarism," moreover, translated in Tōkyō into a condemnation of Japan's national polity. For modern Japan's founders had followed the example of Imperial Germany in creating a highly centralized system of military-bureaucratic rule. After having been hailed abroad for the military conquest of China in 1895 as the "pioneer of progress in the Orient," then, Japan in 1917 suddenly appeared to stand upon the conservative side of world change. As Kenseikai orator Ozaki Yukio noted in a January 1918 interpolation in the Diet, "although the Western allies are trying to destroy militarism, the Terauchi cabinet is trying, at home and abroad, to strengthen and protect it."[41]

It is this context of a fundamental questioning of the world order and the Japanese state in which Japanese statesmen drafted plans for the last great foreign policy initiative of the war: the Siberian Intervention. Anal-

[40] Oka Yoshitake, *Tenkanki no Taishō* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1969), 89.
[41] Ōtsu Junichirō, *Dai Nihon kenseishi*, 10 vols. (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1970), VIII, 163–64.

yses of the intervention typically discuss it within the context of a transformation in the balance of power in the Russian Far East.[42] The Russian revolution of 1917 produced a political vacuum in Siberia and threatened the spread of Bolshevik power. Indeed, allied governments proposed a joint expedition to Vladivostok precisely to deal with the Bolshevik advance.

But Japanese aims in the Russian Far East in the fall of 1918 are less understandable in the context of a Bolshevik advance in Siberia than within the framework of Japanese politics at home. They are less a response to an external threat than they are reflective of an unprecedented opportunity. As we have seen, since the outbreak of war in Europe, Japanese policymakers had enthusiastically seized the political momentum in Tōkyō for a stronger Japanese position in Asia by promoting ever more aggressive policies in China. The political vacuum in Siberia offered another great opportunity to advance Japanese continental interests. With the war winding down in Europe, moreover, Japanese statesmen recognized the occasion as very likely the last such opportunity. As Japanese troops embarked for Vladivostok, Tanaka Giichi hailed the chance for a "display of national authority at the end of the war" as the "crowning act of the Empire."[43]

But the opportunity for a major expedition of troops to the Asian continent assumed particular significance in light of the social and political changes sparked in Japan by wartime economic growth and America's entrance into the war. To many, the rising popularity of motion pictures and the Asakusa opera and the explosion of labor strife signalled social dissipation. Wilson's appeals to make the world "safe for democracy," moreover, played directly into the hands of the enemies of military-bureaucratic rule. Members of the transcendental Terauchi cabinet, then, relished the opportunity presented by a new military campaign on the continent to shore up the bases of military-bureaucratic rule. Finance Minister Shōda Kazue advised Terauchi in late January to "use relations with Russia to direct domestic trouble outward."[44] And Communications Minister Den Kenjirō insisted that, as with the Sino- and Russo-Japanese

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[42] See, for example, the classic studies of the expedition, Hosoya Chihirō, *Shiberia shuppei no shiteki kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 1955) and James Morley, *The Japanese Thrust into Siberia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957). While both men offer detailed analyses of policy battles in Tōkyō, they describe the expedition primarily as a reaction to the spread of Bolshevik power.

[43] Takakura, *Tanaka denki*, II, 141–42.

[44] Terauchi monjo 297–20, Shōda to Terauchi, 30 January 1918, in Yamamoto, *Terauchi naikaku shiryō*, II, 45.

wars, with an expedition of troops to Siberia, "national opinion will uniformly return to militarism."[45]

The likely political effects of an expedition to Siberia were particularly attractive to the Imperial Army. For, in addition to their loss of control of Japan's continental policy and continuing budget inferiority to the navy, Japanese economic growth and Wilson's pronouncements directly challenged the raison d'être of Japan's generals. The surge of private capital produced decreasing willingness to support large military expenditures. And Wilson's rejection of empire and armaments struck at the heart of a force that had been created in the 1880s to project Japanese power upon the Asian continent. The Imperial Army's founder, Yamagata Aritomo, not surprisingly, worried about the army's loss of "public sympathy" due to wartime economic growth.[46] And he objected fiercely to Wilson's vision of a new world order. "I wonder," he protested in March 1918, "if militarism and imperialism are really so hateful?"[47]

Two weeks after the American declaration of war, Vice Chief of the General Staff Tanaka Giichi informed Premier Terauchi of a grandiose plan to restore the slipping power of the Imperial Army. Conceived as a revision of the 1907 Basic Plan of National Defense that had served as the basic outline of military strategic planning, Tanaka's "Draft for Army Preparedness" hoped to commit both the navy and the government to an unprecedented program of expansion for the army.[48] The problem was how to justify the 57 percent increase in size of the standing army.

It was precisely at this time, as the army scrambled to stem the continuing erosion of its position vis-à-vis the government and the navy, and when even its chief raison d'être, continental empire, had been called into question, that opportunity knocked in the Russian Far East. Confronted with Premier Terauchi's austerity, Tanaka's "Draft for Army Preparedness" did not go anywhere after its submission in April 1917. By September 1918, however, Japan's generals had committed the government and the navy not only to the mobilization of ten divisions to Siberia. They had obtained sanction, as well, for Tanaka's colossal program for army expansion. The Siberian Intervention, then, provided Yamagata and the general staff with tangible cause to re-anchor Japanese defense firmly upon the

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[45] *Hara nikki*, IV, 421 (26 July 1918).

[46] The field marshal worried particularly about the effects of the rice riots. Tokutomi Sohō kankei monjo 40–42, Yamagata to Tokutomi, 5 September 1918, in Itō Takashi et al., eds., *Tokutomi Sohō kankei monjo*, 3 vols. (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1985), II, 395.

[47] Yamagata, "Jikyoku iken (15 March 1918)," in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho*, comp. Ōyama Azusa (Tōkyō: Hara Shobō, 1966), 360.

[48] Kitaoka, *Nihon rikugun*, 326.

continent and to justify an enormous expansion of army power.[49] After having been displaced by the financial diplomacy of Nishihara Kamezō, Yamagata and Tanaka succeeded, as well, in steering their way back to the center of foreign policy decision-making via the restoration of a military solution to Japan's continental interests.

DISSOLUTION OF A CONSENSUS ON ARMY AND EMPIRE

If the Siberian intervention offers a glimpse of the continuing political potential of expansion in Asia, it also marks, nonetheless, a turning point in the politics of Asia in Taishō Japan. The expedition may have advanced the domestic position of Yamagata and the Imperial Army in the immediate term. But it did nothing to address the long-term threat to military-bureaucratic power posed by economic growth and Woodrow Wilson's appeals for democracy and internationalism. Like members of the Terauchi cabinet, Yamagata had hoped that a major military operation on the continent would help stem the dissipation in public consciousness spurred by economic change and Wilson's pronouncements. At a time when peaceful coexistence had become the catch phrase of the day, the field marshal insisted that the war had proven, rather, the importance of armaments. "The Great European War," he observed in June 1918, "has done away with the delusion of the promoters of peace and demonstrated that the complete independence of all states must be preserved through enormous war preparations."[50] An expedition of troops to Siberia, he had explained to Seiyūkai President Hara Takashi in March, would help to "raise the idea of militarism among the people."[51]

Unfortunately for Yamagata, the expedition did no such thing. Expecting to witness a spontaneous burst of enthusiasm for military conquest on the scale of that seen for the Sino- and Russo-Japanese Wars, the architects of the intervention, rather, faced civil protest throughout Japan. One day after the official announcement of Japanese participation in an expedition, the most dramatic effect of wartime economic growth leapt into the national headlines. An inflationary spiral of rice prices brought two million protesters to the streets in a rampage of burning and looting that required

[49] Lieutenant General Ōi Shigemoto, Commander of the Twelfth Division sent to Siberia in August 1918, later remarked that the Imperial Army had seized upon the American proposal to rescue Czech forces in Siberia as the "perfect pretext to deploy troops on the continent." Shinobu Seizaburō, *Taishō seijishi*, 4 vols. (Tōkyō: Kawade Shobō, 1951), II, 536.

[50] Yamagata, "Kokubō hōshin kaitei ikensho (June 1918)," in *Yamagata Aritomo ikensho*, 373.

[51] *Hara nikki*, IV, 376 (30 March 1918).

one hundred thousand troops to suppress. Yamagata viewed the bad timing of the rice riots with "unbearable regret."[52] And Lieutenant General Machida Keiu lamented the "cold stare" directed by the public at Japanese troops embarking for Vladivostok. "Compared to the hearty send-offs and welcomes and cries of 'banzai' resonating at the train stations and ports each time the expeditionary forces passed in the last two great wars," he noted, "there is truly a world of a difference."[53]

Legacy of the Great War in Interwar Japan

Indeed, public sympathy for imperial conquest now seemed a luxury of the past. For the combination of wartime economic growth and Woodrow Wilson's appeals for a new world order had decisively altered the place of Asia in the politics of Imperial Japan. While not even Yoshino Sakuzō had doubted the wisdom of pushing aggressively for Japanese continental interests in 1915, the Forty-First Diet (December 1918—March 1919) actively challenged the utility of sending 73,000 Japanese troops to the Russian Far East.[54] Japanese public opinion steadfastly hoped for great power recognition at Versailles of all of Japan's wartime gains. But as the peace conference proceeded in the first months of 1919, public attention focused elsewhere. Rather than cheer Japanese wartime accomplishments with handsome floats and celebratory lanterns, Tōkyō trembled from signs of a new world order. In January, the Kenseikai's Hamaguchi Osachi hailed the "great tide of democracy" that was "overwhelming the entire world at this moment."[55] On 1 March an assembly of 50,000 students, merchants, and factory and clerical workers swarmed Hibiya park to rally for universal manhood suffrage. On 30 August the single union Yūaikai became a Japanese national federation of unions vowing "not to refrain from a struggle of martyrs" for expanded labor rights.[56] And Yoshino Sakuzō called in the spring and summer of 1919 for partial self-government in Ko-

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[52] Tokutomi monjo 40–42, Yamagata to Tokutomi, 5 September 1918, in *Tokutomi Sohō kankei monjo*, II, 395.

[53] Uehara monjo 102–19, Machida to Uehara, 28 August 1918, in *Uehara Yūsaku kankei monjo,* ed. Uehara Yūsaku kankei monjo kenkyūkai (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1976), 484.

[54] See Tatsuji Takeuchi, *War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935), 209–212.

[55] Hamaguchi Osachi, "Tōrai no sandai mondai," *Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbun* 5 January 1919; cited in Mitani Taichirō, "Taishō demokurashii no kenryoku to chishikijin," in *Kokka to shimin,* ed. Kokka gakkai hyakunen kinen (Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 1987), II, 69.

[56] Oka, *Tenkanki no Taishō*, 122–23.

rea and an end to the Japanese association with the pro-Japanese "military bureaucratic clique" in Beijing.[57]

The economic and political changes ushered in by the Great War did not bring outright rejection of empire in Japan. But they did move continental expansion away from center stage in Japanese politics and slow the unrelenting quest for "leadership in Asia" that had typified the war years. Japan's ever tumultuous struggle for political power would in the 1920s revolve not around the quest for leadership in Asia but around issues of political reform: universal manhood suffrage, labor, and tenant rights. And the increased attention to greater political and fiscal responsibility would, by mid-decade, bring genuine reductions in both the Japanese empire and the armed forces.[58]

Katō Takaaki's Kenseikai (after 1927 Minseitō) party dominated the turbulent politics of 1920s Japan. But it did so not, as its predecessor in 1915, via an aggressive promotion of Japanese continental interests. On the contrary, Katō deftly rode the popular wave for universal manhood suffrage and domestic political reform. Meanwhile, his foreign minister Shidehara Kijūrō kept China out of the major domestic political debates by rejecting the impulse to control events on the continent.

By coopting the most popular domestic political agenda of the day and downplaying the significance of crises in China, the Kenseikai and Minseitō decisively outmaneuvered their chief political rival, the Seiyūkai, in the 1920s and early 1930s. With its primary source of power among landed elites, the Seiyūkai, after all, stood at a decided political disadvantage after the adoption of universal manhood suffrage in 1925. Nor could it hope to defeat the Kenseikai with its conservative approach to the problem of rural and labor strife. Unable to compete in an era of liberal reform, the Seiyūkai, in the latter 1920s sought to shift the political dialogue from domestic reform to international crisis. Field Marshal Yamagata had responded to the social dissipation accompanying economic growth and Wilson's appeal for democracy and internationalism in 1917 by stressing the value of arms and empire. Likewise, the Seiyūkai created a vision of crisis in China in the latter 1920s to defuse the momentum of liberal reform at home.

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[57] Yoshino Sakuzō, "Chōsen bōdō zengosaku," *Chūō Kōron* 34, no. 4 (April 1919): 122; Yoshino Sakuzō, "Peipin gakuseidan no kōdō o manba suru nakare," ibid. 34, no. 6 (June 1919): 1.

[58] Japanese troops withdrew from Shandong and Siberia in 1922, Japan agreed to naval arms limitations at the Washington Conference in the same year, and the Katō Takaaki cabinet paved the Imperial Army by four divisions in 1925.

Lessons of the Great War for Post-Cold War Japan

The Seiyūkai and its military-bureaucratic allies succeeded in the latter 1920s in tapping into a latent sentiment for Japanese leadership in Asia. By manufacturing an image of crisis in China and declaring the Kenseikai and Minseitō responsible, they destroyed the most powerful domestic force for democratic reform. They also shattered the chances for democracy itself and ultimately invited the obliteration of Imperial Japan.

In the era of peace that followed the Sino-Japanese and Pacific Wars, the United States replaced China as the central focus of Japan's domestic political battles. Japanese conservatives and progressives defined their respective positions not by their degree of enthusiasm for expansion in China but by their acceptance or rejection of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. A transformation of the place of China in Japanese domestic politics after the Great War had a profound effect upon Japanese diplomacy in the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, the direction of Japanese diplomacy in the post-Cold War era will likely depend upon changes in the place of the United States in Japanese domestic politics.

While the historian must be wary of drawing parallels between two distinct eras, a few simple comparisons might be instructive. The first great watershed of the twentieth century, the Great War, complicated Japanese politics by advancing a new definition of national power. In place of militarism and imperialism, economic growth and Wilson's pronouncements offered the prospect of greater social mobility at home and peaceful cooperation abroad. Those who stood to lose most politically by the new order responded with a vigorous new drive for militarism and imperialism.

The last great watershed of this century, the end of the Cold War, offered another new vision of the world order. In the place of a polarized world poised on the brink of destruction, a relaxation of the Soviet-American rift raised the possibility of a less confrontational multi-polar world. But, as in 1918, there were powerful political forces in post-Cold War era Japan that benefited from a continuation of the old order. Just as Yamagata and the Imperial Army rose to power at the turn of the century via an aggressive pursuit of "leadership in Asia," the Liberal Democratic Party enjoyed thirty-eight years of uninterrupted rule from 1955 largely due to strong ties cultivated with the United States under the U.S.-Japan security alliance.[59] The immediate reaction of the LDP to the end of the Cold War,

[59] For an extraordinary look at the symbiotic relationship between the LDP and successive American administrations, see Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan since the Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

then, was not to weaken this centerpiece of United States Cold War strategy in Asia. It was to strengthen it.

As with Yamagata and the Imperial Army in 1918, however, there were signs in the 1990s that the LDP was swimming against the political tide in Japan. While Japanese public support for the U.S.-Japan alliance reached an all-time high in the 1980s, domestic criticism of the unwavering American military presence in Japan grew after the wide publicization of the rape of a Japanese schoolgirl by American servicemen in Okinawa in 1995. After yielding in the 1980s to a debate over political reform, disagreements over the direction of the U.S.-Japan alliance, moreover, returned to center stage in Japanese politics.[60] The degree to which the LDP's political rivals tap into domestic sentiment for a relaxation of ties with the United States will have a significant bearing upon the thrust of Japanese policy toward the U.S. in the post-Cold War era.

A change, in turn, in the place of the United States in Japanese politics will likely affect the position of Asia in the future political dialogue in Japan. The political momentum for continental expansion of course, dissipated after 1945. But the yearning for "leadership in Asia" did not. In the mid-1990s, rightwing political activists attempted to force the issue of disputed territory between Japan and its Asian neighbors to the center of the Japanese political stage.[61] The degree to which this endeavor succeeds in the future will have a direct bearing upon Japan's post-Cold War relations with Asia.

[60] The Social Democratic Party, for example, cited conflict with coalition partner LDP over the new defense guidelines in its decision to forgo cooperation with the LDP in the summer 1998 upper house elections. "Shamin, getsunai ni yotō ridatsu mo," *Asahi Shinbun*, 2 May 1998, 1.

[61] Particularly, the dispute between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands and that between Japan and Korea over Takeshima Island.