

AVOIDING WAR
THE DIPLOMACY OF SIR ROBERT CRAIGIE
AND SHIGEMITSU MAMORU
1937-1941

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ABSTRACT

During the years preceding the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 Britain's Ambassador to Japan was Sir Robert Craigie. His period in Tokyo has since been the object of a good deal of controversy, with some observers criticising him for being an abject appeaser while others have praised him for his skilful diplomacy and for his realism. Similarly his counterpart, the Japanese Ambassador to London, Shigemitsu Mamoru, has had his career much scrutinised, and has been variously labelled as an Anglophile liberal and as a puppet of the Japanese military. Apart from the dispute over their reputations, an analysis of the diplomacy of these two Ambassadors during the years 1937-1941 is important because both men were deeply disturbed by the steady deterioration in Anglo-Japanese relations, and sought to alleviate the growing tensions by espousing alternatives, designed to establish the grounds for a new understanding, to the policies pursued by their respective governments.

This study analyses both the practicality and the practicability of the policies put forward by Craigie and Shigemitsu, and also shows the influence they exerted on the course of Anglo-Japanese relations. This is done by investigating not only their roles in the major crises that shook relations during this period, such as the Tientsin crisis of 1939, the Burma Road crisis of 1940 and the events immediately prior to the outbreak of war, but also the whole range of issues that led to increased tensions. In particular, emphasis is put on the effect that economic forces had on the relations between the two countries, and how the rivalry arising first from the Depression and second from the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939 drove London and Tokyo apart; a process which the two Ambassadors were powerless to stop. It is hoped that this will prove to be a useful contribution to the study of the origins of the Pacific War.

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INTRODUCTION

On 8 December 1941 the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires in London, Kamimura Shinichi, was called to the Foreign Office to be presented with a British declaration of war on his country. This document stated in the lofty tones of diplomatic language-

'On the evening of December 7th His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom learnt that Japanese forces, without previous warning either in the form of a declaration of war or of an ultimatum with a conditional declaration of war, had attempted a landing on the coast of Malaya and bombed Singapore and Hong Kong. In view of these wanton acts of unprovoked aggression committed in flagrant violation of international law and particularly of Article 1 of the Third Hague Convention, relative to the opening of hostilities, to which both Japan and the United Kingdom are parties, I have the honour to inform the Imperial Japanese Government in the name of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that a state of war exists between the two countries.'

This short communication was the culmination of a decade in which, from the time of the Mukden Incident of 18 September 1931, the interests of Britain and Japan in East Asia had come increasingly into a state of collision; but the question arises, was this war unavoidable?

To a number of observers on both sides the depth and range of the clash of interests between the two countries, with Britain as defender of the *status quo* in East Asia and Japan a revisionist power seeking to expel Western influence from the region, meant that a conflict was inevitable. To other interested parties, however, the mutual antagonism between Britain and Japan, the erstwhile allies, was not a cause for fatalism; there were groups in both countries who believed that though the problems that had arisen were serious they were not insoluble, and that in the long term the interests of the two Empires were not incompatible. To these believers in a *rapprochement* it seemed expedient for Britain and Japan to sit down and negotiate in a spirit of compromise and determination to overcome the obstacle of mutual misunderstanding. There was, however, in the ranks of those who pushed for this policy a further division. On one side there was

the group who were at heart sentimentalists and yearned to return to the Elysian days of the Alliance, while on the other there were those who, for reasons of *Realpolitik*, saw a closer relationship as a vital necessity in the harsh international climate of the 1930s. This difference in motivation meant that there existed different levels of conformity within each of the two groups. The first, because of its belief that closer ties were an end in themselves, showed an identity of view between its members in the two countries. In the second group, because the British and Japanese members saw reconciliation in terms of their own countries' self-interest, they were frequently pursuing different and at times directly contradictory ends: this was a significant disadvantage as the members of this group tended to wield the greater influence in their respective countries.

Two figures who can be seen as belonging to this latter group were Sir Robert Craigie, the British Ambassador to Japan from September 1937 to December 1941, and Shigemitsu Mamoru, the Japanese Ambassador to Britain from November 1938 to December 1941. Both diplomats played a vital role in the years leading up to the Pacific War, they were deeply disturbed by the steady deterioration in Anglo-Japanese relations, and sought to alleviate the growing tensions by espousing alternatives to the negative policies pursued by their respective governments; thus they hoped to establish the grounds for a new understanding. In addition, in 1941 they both were aware of how events were pushing the two countries towards war, and urged their respective governments to make compromises to avoid this catastrophe. The fact that these ambassadors shared the view that war could and should be averted, and that their opinions on this matter were rejected by their respective governments, is an important comment on the origins of the Pacific War. It raises a number of questions about such issues as why the views of those who were closest to the heartbeat of Anglo-Japanese relations were ignored, how policy was made, what roles the ambassadors took in this process, and most importantly whether a viable alternative actually existed to the path that eventually led to war.

There is, however, a problem here, because the use of Shigemitsu and Craigie as examples of responsible diplomats making realistic assessments

of Anglo-Japanese relations is to beg a very large question, as the academic debate over the reputations of both these diplomats has never reached a firm consensus about their position in history. On the subject of Craigie, one extreme view is the criticism levelled by his contemporaries in Whitehall and by some later historians that he was an unrealistic and abject appeaser. A fairly moderate example is the comment made by the Japanese historian Professor Sato Kyozo who wrote in his recent essay 'The Historical Perspective and What is Missing' of Craigie's belief in the importance of the pro-British faction by stating that

'He held the ill-founded and over-optimistic belief that each concession on the British part would encourage this faction and thus help bring about a redirection of Japanese policy.... He tended to conceive of Britain's East Asian policy solely in terms of Anglo-Japanese relations.'²

This view of Craigie is balanced by those who have praised him for both his skilful diplomacy and his vision. An example of this can be seen in the work of Professor Donald Cameron Watt, who praised Craigie in his book *How War Came* for his 'toughness and negotiating skills' and also noted that he was-

'... the ablest member of the British diplomatic service in this period to fail to win proper recognition for his stature and achievements from his fellow countrymen.... He was stigmatized, quite unfairly, as an appeaser...'³

Shigemitsu, for his part, has stirred up an even wider disparity of opinions, in a debate which is complicated further by the fact that he was one of the defendants at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial. To some Shigemitsu was an anglophile liberal struggling against the virulent nationalism in Japan, a view which is most clearly seen in the works of contemporary commentators such as Kase Toshikazu in Japan and Lord Hankey and Major-General F.S.G. Piggott in Britain.⁴ They saw Shigemitsu as a sincere opponent of the war and as a keen proponent of friendly relations with the West. Kase, who had been Shigemitsu's Private Secretary at the end of the war, described the diplomat in his book *Eclipse of the Rising Sun* as-

'... a man of confirmed liberal views, consistently opposed to any policy of aggression and aggrandizement. Firmly convinced that the triangular cooperation of the major naval powers was the key to world peace, he

unswervingly supported the policy of friendly collaboration with England and America.'⁵

In contrast to this very favourable assessment three articles by the Japanese historian Usui Katsumi have portrayed him as a supporter of expansionism and as a closet ally of the military.⁶ In particular Usui has studied Shigemitsu's role as the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1933 to 1936, and this has led him to write in one essay-

'The Amō declaration, the abrogation of the naval disarmament treaties, the obstruction of the British loan to China and co-operation with the army in its separatist manoeuvres in north China, all these important policies and measures may safely be regarded as part of Shigemitsu's over-all design.'⁷

Usui also contends that the idea of the need for Japanese expansion in East Asia continued to shape Shigemitsu's mind while Ambassador to Britain.

Although the controversy over these two diplomats complicates an assessment of their policies and influence, the actual nature of the disputes over their reputations has its positive side in that it helps to shed light on other issues which are relevant to the origins of the Pacific War. For example, the denigration of Craigie as an appeaser provides a focus for studying the influence of Britain's appeasement policy in Europe on attitudes towards Japan, while the differing assessments of Shigemitsu are valuable as an entry into the question of what constituted a liberal in 1930s Japan, and whether a powerful moderate pro-Western faction actually existed at all in that country. The troubled reputations are also important because they underline the necessity not to look simply at the ambassadorships of the two men in isolation, which might be the temptation if there was a consensus about their respective positions, but to study how their ideas developed, how and to what extent they exerted influence in the years before their assignment, and finally why they were actually appointed as ambassadors.

Before delving into the questions raised by this last passage of the role of the ambassadors before they travelled to their respective posts, it is necessary to say a little about the upbringing, early career and character of the two men. To start with Robert Leslie Craigie, he was born in Southsea in 1883 into the family of a naval officer who went on to become

an Admiral. At the age of seven the young Leslie, as he preferred to be called, visited Japan for the first time while his father was stationed at Hong Kong, but it was not really until the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 that the East began to impinge significantly on his conscience. He recollected later in his memoirs 'Behind the Japanese Mask' that this event caused him to develop a sneaking admiration for the 'go-ahead little Island Empire'. In 1907 he entered the Foreign Office, but it was not until 1916 that he took up his first important foreign posting at Berne. After staying in Switzerland for four years Craigie was assigned to the United States and from July 1920 to July 1923 he served as First Secretary at the Washington Embassy. This posting meant that for the first time he began to develop the acquaintance of a number of influential Japanese figures, a process that was assisted by the holding of the Washington Conference from November 1921 to February 1922. In 1923 he returned to London and, after a brief secondment to the Department of Overseas Trade, entered the Foreign Office's American Department as deputy to Robert Vansittart, and it was here that he began to build up the reputation that was to lead to his rapid promotion in the 1930s.⁸

By this time Craigie had developed into a very able diplomat with a particular aptitude for solving complex diplomatic problems through a mixture of patience, flexibility and optimism; an ability that was to serve him well in the coming years. He was a meticulous and conscientious worker and won the respect of most of his colleagues and political superiors. He was not, however, a figure who garnered affection, which was largely the result of his shy and serious nature. This tendency towards isolation was made the greater by the closeness of his marriage, which limited his desire to socialize, and thus tended to cut him off from his peers and his juniors. His wife Pleasant was the daughter of an American newspaper owner from Virginia and possessed a brusque character, and, as Professor Cameron Watt has noted, 'she left behind her a trail of wounded susceptibilities in the Tokyo Embassy and elsewhere'.⁹ This lack of social graces on the part of the couple is important to take into account when dealing with reports of Craigie by his contemporaries.

Craigie's Japanese counterpart, Shigemitsu Mamoru was born in 1887 in Oita prefecture on Kyūshū. While still in his teens he decided he was going to become a diplomat, and, after studying German law at Tokyo Imperial University, he entered the Gaimushō in 1911 and was soon sent to the Japanese Embassy in Berlin, where he stayed until 1914. At the outbreak of the First World War he was transferred to London and for the first time was brought into contact with Anglo-Saxon ideas of political culture. This had a marked effect on his thinking, giving him a more cosmopolitan outlook than he had previously, and this development was furthered in 1918 by his posting as Consul to Portland, Oregon. Shigemitsu's stay in the United States was, however, quite brief, as he was soon called to join the Japanese delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, where he worked alongside diplomats such as Arita Hachirō, Matsuoka Yōsuke, and Yoshida Shigeru who were also to rise to prominence in the 1930s. He then returned to Tokyo and during the next five years worked on a series of missions for the Gaimushō, which included a tour of the ex-German mandates and a visit to Canton, where he met Sun Yat-sen. In 1925 he became First Secretary at the Peking legation and was involved in the complicated diplomacy of the Tariff Conference. He stayed in China until 1927 when he was posted once again to Berlin, but this stay in Europe was only to last about six months and in 1929 he was transferred back to China, this time as Consul-General in Shanghai.¹⁰

Shigemitsu had thus in his early career a very balanced range of posts with exposure to both Europe and China, a development which aided his ability to understand Japan's interests in both regions. As a diplomat he had a reputation for hard work and for possessing a very straightforward manner in negotiations, which is a polite way of saying that he was a master of the tart remark if provoked. There is evidence for this in a number of British assessments of Shigemitsu in the 1930s where he is variously described as 'abrupt', 'outspoken' and 'independent'.¹¹ The most important part of his make-up, however, was that he was devoted to his Emperor and his country. This is particularly important because there has been a tendency amongst Western writers to overemphasize his attachment to Anglo-Saxon ideas to the detriment of stating that he was, above all else, a Japanese patriot.

Despite the great difference in character between Craigie and Shigemitsu, it can be seen that there were important similarities in their career pattern. They were both steeped in the diplomatic tradition of their respective foreign ministries, and were very experienced career civil servants who did not owe their early advancement to political patronage or family connections but rather to their ability to cope with and flourish under pressure. Significantly neither of them could be considered as an expert in the field of Anglo-Japanese relations; Shigemitsu had only served in London as a very junior diplomat for three years and Craigie never had a posting in East Asia until his appointment in 1937. Nor did either of them have any overwhelming sentimental attachment to the other nation; they arrived in the late 1930s in their respective posts dreaming of making a success of their tour of duty and hoping for the appearance of a *rapprochement*, but neither was prepared to achieve this end without qualification and at the cost of sacrificing their own countries' self-interest.

NOTES

1. Public Record Office Kew FO371/27893 F13424/17/23 Foreign Office Minute 8 December 1941.
2. K. Sato, 'The Historical Perspective and What is Missing', in K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads, 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Diplomacy*. (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986) pp.207-208. See also for a critical judgement of Craigie, S. Olu Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie Versus the Foreign Office' in *Modern Asian Studies*, 1983, Vol.17 No.3 pp.489-517.
3. D.C. Watt, *How War Came. The Immediate Origins of the Second World War 1938-1939*. (Heinemann, London, 1989) p.350. For other broadly favourable assessments of Craigie see P. Calvocoressi, G. Wint and J. Pritchard, *Total War. The Causes and Courses of the Second World War. Vol.2: The Greater East Asia and Pacific Conflict*. (Penguin, London, 1989) p.256-257, and P. Lowe, 'The Dilemmas of an Ambassador: Sir Robert Craigie and Japan' in *Proceedings of the British Association of Japanese Studies*, 1977 No.2 Vol.1 pp.34-56.
4. T. Kase, *The Eclipse of the Rising Sun*. (Jonathan Cape, London, 1951), Lord Hankey, *Politics, Trials and Errors*. (Pen In Hand, Oxford, 1950), and F.S.G. Piggott, *Broken Thread*. (Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1950).

5. T. Kase, op.cit. pp.68-69.
6. K. Usui, 'The Role of The Foreign Ministry' in D. Borg & S. Okamoto, *Pearl Harbor As History. Japanese-American Relations 1931-1941.* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1973) pp.127-148, K. Usui, 'A Consideration of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Japanese Views of Britain, 1937-1941.' in I. Nish (ed), *Anglo-Japanese Antagonism 1919-1952.* (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) pp.77-96, and K. Usui, 'Japanese Approaches to China in the 1930s: Two Alternatives', in A. Iriye & W. Cohen (eds.), *American, Chinese and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia, 1931-1945.* (Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, DE, 1990) pp.93-115.
7. K. Usui, 'A Consideration of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Japanese Views of Britain, 1937-1941.' p.78.
8. This biographical sketch is a compilation of material in R. Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask.* (Hutchinson, London, 1946) pp.9-11, D.C. Watt, 'Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented in November 1941? Sir Robert Craigie's Final Report On His Embassy in Japan and The Reactions of the British Foreign Policy Elite.' (Unpublished Manuscript, 1983) pp.13-14, and P. Lowe, op.cit. p.35.
9. D.C. Watt, 'Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented in November 1941?' p.14.
10. This biographical sketch is taken from A. Coox, 'Shigemitsu Mamoru. The Diplomacy of Crisis.' in R.D. Burns & E.M. Bennett (eds.), *Diplomats in Crisis, United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1918-1941.* (American Biographical Centre, Santa Barbara, Cal., 1974) pp.252-253, and I. Nish, 'Shigemitsu and the Shanghai Crisis, 1932' in I. Nish (ed.), *Shigemitsu Studies.* (LSE STICERD, International Studies series, 1990/II) p.83.
11. See PRO FO371/20882 F899/899/23 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 15 January 1936 and FO371/21044 F8675/8675/23 J. Dodds to A. Eden 30 August 1937.

CHAPTER ONE

'A STRONG NATIONALIST'

'Personally I think it is a mistake to try Shigemitsu and I understand it is being done under Russian pressure because Shigemitsu was known to be very strongly anti-Communist and was in office at the time of the Chang-ku-feng incident. Shigemitsu was, of course, a strong nationalist and believed that the Japanese ought to dominate China.'

Sir George Sansom to M.E. Dening 4 December 1946.¹

The controversy over the career of Shigemitsu Mamoru has for the most part been based on the years before he was sent to London in 1938, and, in particular, on his time as Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs between 1933 and 1936. To understand Shigemitsu's diplomacy in London and his contribution to Anglo-Japanese relations it is essential to understand the nature of this dispute over his reputation, and to see why he has been categorized variously as a virtual stooge of the military, as a moderate man of peace, and as a realist trying to come to terms with the fundamental changes affecting the identity of East Asia during these years. Without a knowledge of this background it is impossible to put his efforts as Ambassador to Britain into perspective, but in so doing one needs to look not only at his time as Vice-Minister, but further back to his period as Minister to China; it is only then that the continuity in Shigemitsu's thought becomes apparent.

Shigemitsu first rose to prominence as a member of the senior rank of Japanese diplomats in 1930, although his sudden promotion owed as much to circumstance as it did to his own obvious abilities. His opportunity came in November 1929, when the Japanese Minister to China, Saburi Sadao, committed suicide. At this point Shigemitsu was still Consul-General at Shanghai, and while Foreign Minister Shidehara Kijūrō decided on Saburi's successor, he, as the most senior Japanese diplomat in China, took on the

temporary position of acting Minister. Almost immediately he was faced with a major crisis; this arose when he informed the Chinese that Shidehara's nominee for the vacant position of Minister to China was to be Ōbata Yukichi, the ex-Ambassador to Turkey, who had previously been in China at the time of the Twenty One Demands as Counsellor to the Embassy at Peking. To the overtly nationalist Kuomintang Government the appointment of a diplomat associated with this shameful incident in Chinese history was unacceptable, and despite urgent lobbying by Shigemitsu and Shidehara Nanking held firm.²

The refusal of the Kuomintang to accept Ōbata meant that instead plenipotentiary powers were conferred on Shigemitsu, who was promoted to the position of Chargé d'Affaires. This was a position of great responsibility for the still relatively young diplomat, as Sino-Japanese relations at this time were gravely troubled by the rise of Chinese nationalism and the demands being made by Nanking, in the name of 'Revolutionary Diplomacy', for the ending of all the unequal treaties. It is tempting to infer from this appointment that Shigemitsu was a devoted follower of 'Shidehara diplomacy', but any such categorization has to be made with some caution, for there was an important division between the two men. The difference can be seen in their respective outlooks on Japan's position in the world; for Shidehara the mainstay of Japanese policy was co-operation with the Western powers, whereas for Shigemitsu the chief concern for Japan was its relationship with China. Shigemitsu's emphasis on China was the result of his conviction that one of the key factors in East Asia in this period was the rise of Chinese nationalism, and that if Japan was to take its rightful position in the region then it had to come terms with the new China in a spirit of co-operation.³ The difference between the two diplomats is most clearly shown by the fact that they were linked to different factions within the Gaimushō, Shidehara being seen as close to the Ei-Bei-ha (Anglo-American group) while Shigemitsu was connected to the Renovationist or China faction that had been founded by Arita Hachirō.⁴

In practice this division meant that Shigemitsu far more than the Minister for Foreign Affairs saw Sino-Japanese relations in solely bilateral terms.

This is confirmed in the former's post-war study of Japan's road to the Pacific War, *Japan and Her Destiny. My Struggle For Peace* (originally published in Japanese as *Shōwa no Dōran*), where he records that, in contrast to his foreign colleagues in China, he resided in Nanking and Shanghai rather than Peking and did not attend the regular meetings of the Diplomatic Corps in the northern capital.⁵ The task facing Shigemitsu was, of course, by no means a simple one; there was a plethora of issues over which the Kuomintang expected to see substantial revisions, and many of them touched on the very basis of Japan's semi-imperial powers not just in China proper but also in Manchuria, the centre of Japanese influence in continental Asia. Shigemitsu's favoured policy was to make concessions over a wide range of these issues, and thus help to improve relations so that when discussion of Manchuria eventually took place it would be in a friendly atmosphere where mutual compromise was possible.

His first major success came in May 1930 when he negotiated an agreement under which Japan recognized China's tariff autonomy, a move which brought Japan into line with the other imperial powers.⁶ The problem was, however, that these concessions from the powers only helped to stoke the fire of Chinese nationalism further and created a momentum where the Kuomintang, in order to live up to its rhetoric had to press for ever more extravagant demands. This culminated in the spring of 1931 with a newspaper article by C.T. Wang, the Chinese Foreign Minister, in which he listed his timetable for the recovery of China's rights, starting with complete customs autonomy and working through to the return of legal jurisdiction over foreigners and the ending of all foreign concessions and leases; the last with obvious implications for Manchuria. At more or less the same time Wang told the representatives of the powers that the next item on his agenda was extraterritoriality and that they would either have to negotiate away this right bilaterally or face the fact that China would abolish it unilaterally.⁷ In the face of this new forthright policy Shigemitsu considered that it was necessary to return to Tokyo to explain the situation to Shidehara and the Japanese Cabinet, and to urge them to continue to make concessions to Nanking in the hope that an outright clash could be avoided. His warnings, and a specific proposal he made for the return of two minor territorial concessions at Suchow and Hangchow, were,

however, dismissed, for the Minseito Government led by Wakatsuki Reijirō, due to the criticism of its China policy by the Army and the Seiyūkai party, felt itself in too weak a position to envisage further compromise with Nanking.⁸

The stage was therefore set in the summer of 1931 for a steady deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations. As expected the catalyst for this rise in tensions was Manchuria; by June the Wanpaoshan Incident and the subsequent anti-Chinese riots in Korea had led to the beginning of a damaging economic boycott of Japanese goods at Shanghai.⁹ The problem for Shigemitsu was how to stem this tide of mutual antagonism. He was helped in his endeavours by Shidehara's decision in August to appoint him officially as Minister to China; a move which caused Sir Francis Lindley, the British Ambassador in Tokyo, to observe to the Foreign Office-

'Although a young man he [Shigemitsu] is recognised as being a capable diplomat well acquainted with the difficulties of the present situation. ... The Opposition ... seem on the whole to deprecate the appointment as foreshadowing the continuation of the present Government's weak policy towards China.'¹⁰

This promotion allowed Shigemitsu to negotiate with greater authority, and was met in Nanking with none of the resistance that had been evident over Ōbata.

The main strand in Shigemitsu's policy to forestall a major split with China was to hold a series of talks with T.V. Soong, the Chinese Finance Minister and brother-in-law of Chiang Kai-shek, about the future of Manchuria. This became even more necessary in August, when the apparent murder of a Japanese intelligence officer, Captain Nakamura Shintarō, by Chinese soldiers threw the region into even deeper crisis. In an effort to ease tensions Soong and Shigemitsu travelled to Dairen and there, in a meeting with Uchida Yasuya, the President of the South Manchurian Railway, drew up a comprehensive plan, to deal with the problems in the region, which Shigemitsu subsequently sent back to the Gaimushō. After receiving approval for this plan from Tokyo, Shigemitsu and Soong decided to make a further visit to the north-east so that they could discuss the proposals in detail with Uchida and Chang Hsueh-liang, the Chinese ruler of Manchuria.

Four days before their planned date of departure on 20 September, their chances of achieving a success were given an apparent boost when the Chinese authorities in Manchuria arrested the man responsible for the murder of Nakamura, which offered the possibility that the tensions in the region would recede. This proved, however, to be a false dawn as the Kwantung Army had already decided that the time had come for action.¹¹

Shigemitsu's first reaction to news of the confused events in Mukden on the night of 18 September was to meet with Soong the next day to discuss how to stop the fighting. Soong proposed that a six-man commission containing three officials from both countries should be set up to settle the incident as quickly as possible. Shigemitsu enthusiastically endorsed this proposal and, in order to facilitate a prompt end to the fighting, offered to continue with the planned visit to Manchuria. After this meeting Shigemitsu communicated these proposals to Tokyo where they met with Shidehara's complete approval. The promise of a joint effort to restore peace soon, however, slipped away; on 22 September Soong told Shigemitsu that, in the light of the continuing expansion of the fighting by the Kwantung Army, the plan for a commission was dead and that China would instead appeal to the League of Nations.¹² The Chinese decision to turn away from bilateral negotiations was a great blow for Shigemitsu and in a telegram to Shidehara on 23 September he wrote of his disgust at the unilateral action taken by the Kwantung Army and lamented that-
'... all the unremitting efforts to build up our position abroad are being destroyed in a day.'¹³

The tensions between the two countries were further exacerbated following the start of the fighting in Manchuria by Nanking's decision to retaliate against the Japanese aggression in Manchuria by escalating the boycott of Japanese goods. In the economic climate of the early 1930s, when the Depression had already caused a decline in the markets available to Japanese exports, this was a provocative move to make. The boycott introduced in July had already had a severe effect, and trade figures for July and August revealed a drop in trade for each month of 69-70 million *yuan* compared to the same months the previous year, and a tightening of the economic screw could only lead to a worsening of relations.¹⁴ The

Kuomintang tried to evade criticism for their action by presenting the boycott not as government policy but as a spontaneous outburst of patriotic feeling on the part of the people; it was, however, obvious to the Japanese where the responsibility lay. By 10 October the previously conciliatory Shigemitsu, under pressure from Japanese businessmen in Shanghai, was reduced to warning the Chinese that if the boycott did not stop Japan might have to send naval reinforcements to Shanghai, and that any solution to the Manchurian question must also include an ending of the boycott.¹⁵

If one were to take a critical view of Shigemitsu it might be held that it was at this point that he began to veer away from his previous policy of conciliation and move closer to the coercive line favoured by the Army. This would, however, be an exaggeration; what he was trying to do in the autumn of 1931, with the explicit support of Shidehara, was to protect Japan's economic stake in China as best he could. This had after all been at the centre of Shidehara's policy of conciliation ever since the Northern Expedition of 1926. Also his pressure on the Chinese to end the boycott must be seen in the context of the pressure being put on the Japanese Government by those companies that operated in China, and also the belief in government and business circles in Japan that the Chinese were using the dispute over Manchuria as an excuse to open an economic war with Japan. In fact Shigemitsu was criticized by the Japanese community in Shanghai for being too patient with the Chinese failure to curb the boycott.¹⁶

To protect himself from these accusations and to influence the new Seiyūkai government to follow a moderate policy towards Nanking, Shigemitsu returned to Tokyo on 3 January 1932 without even waiting for approval for his movements from the Gaimushō. At first, due to his unauthorized presence in Tokyo, the new Foreign Minister, Yoshizawa Kenichi, refused to meet him, and even when they did eventually hold an interview the latter showed little enthusiasm for Shigemitsu's idea for a declaration announcing a new policy towards China, and failed to take any notice of his warnings about the dangerous rise in tensions in Shanghai.¹⁷ Shigemitsu was, however, able to communicate his fears to other interested parties, and on 21 January presented a lecture on the problems in China to the Emperor, who, when the Minister had finished, asked Shigemitsu if he thought that close

Sino-Japanese relations were impossible at this time. Shigemitsu replied that as long as the Manchurian problem remained there could be no amicable relationship.¹⁸

Shigemitsu arrived back in Shanghai at the end of January to find that his warnings about the fragile peace in the city had been justified and that fighting had broken out between the small band of Japanese Marines in the city and the Chinese Nineteenth Route Army. Acting to safeguard the interests of Japanese residents and businesses, he felt he had no choice but to ask for reinforcements from Japan, and in a comment to the Japanese press he stated-

'... it is not yet the time to announce a new policy towards China. We must fight to protect our interests and right in China. We must protect ourselves against revolutionary anti-foreign movements.'¹⁹

To some his actions at this time have appeared as a needless escalation of the conflict; Shigemitsu, however, defended this action in *Japan and Her Destiny* by writing-

'... it was out of the question that I should tamely submit to the annihilation of thousands of unarmed Japanese, together with their vast holdings, for it was only right that Japan should defend her treaty rights at Shanghai.'²⁰

The subsequent campaign in Shanghai and its environs raged for the next month until in early March, after further reinforcements had arrived, it was clear that the Japanese forces had emerged triumphant. At this point Shigemitsu, fearing the international repercussions of continued fighting and only too aware that the League of Nations Assembly was due to open very soon, persuaded General Shirakawa Yoshinori, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese forces, to agree to a unilateral ceasefire and the opening of armistice talks.²¹

In the conference that followed Shigemitsu acted as the chief Japanese negotiator. This was to prove a very frustrating job, for as well as being faced with the intransigence of the Chinese, he also had to contend with the uncompromising stance of the Japanese Army. Sir Miles Lampson, the British Minister to China, who was also taking part in the conference, noted in his diary-

'One gets an irresistible impression that Shigemitsu representing the civilian side is only a facade in all this and that it is the military who dictate what shall be done regardless of what Shigemitsu may say or feel.'²²

Shigemitsu's difficulties were also noted years later by another of the British officials present at the talks, Captain John Godfrey, who went on to become Britain's wartime Director of Naval Intelligence, and who noted approvingly in his memoirs-

'Even then, in 1933 [sic], he never disguised his feelings, and disagreed openly with the Japanese army C in C at international meetings.'²³

It took almost two months of hard negotiations from the time of the ceasefire for a draft armistice to be drawn up on 28 April. Before the armistice could be signed, however, disaster struck.

On 29 April at a Japanese parade in Shanghai to honour the Emperor's official birthday a bomb was thrown by a Korean nationalist at the viewing platform containing the senior Japanese dignitaries. The explosion killed General Shirakawa and injured many others including Shigemitsu; the latter was badly hit in the leg, and for a while the future of the armistice appeared to be in jeopardy, as it was at first believed that the outrage had been committed by a Chinese nationalist. Shigemitsu, however, realizing that his work was threatened, insisted that the agreement be signed and kept on negotiating, despite his great pain and discomfort, until finally the armistice was signed in his hospital room on 5 May. It was only after the end of the negotiations that he finally allowed the doctors to undertake surgery on his damaged leg which led to its amputation at the hip.²⁴

This episode was an important event in Shigemitsu's career. In the short term it led to his being praised widely in Japan for his fortitude and becoming something of a national hero, with even the Emperor enquiring about his condition.²⁵ In the long term the incident was also to be important as it became a key piece of evidence in Shigemitsu's defence at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial and a number of affidavits recalled his crucial role in bringing about a settlement. For example Sir Miles Lampson (or Lord Killlearn as he had become by 1947), recorded in his affidavit that-

'On the Japanese side Mr. Shigemitsu from the outset co-operated wholeheartedly and much of the credit for reaching an agreement was due to his persistent efforts and patient co-operation.'²⁶

These sentiments were confirmed by the affidavits from Nelson Johnson, the American Minister, who also emphasized Shigemitsu's vital role in achieving a peaceful settlement, and from Moriya Kazurō, the First Secretary at Shanghai, who wrote in detail of Shigemitsu's sick-bed diplomacy.²⁷

The injury sustained by Shigemitsu in the bombing incident was so serious that he did not return to work for another year. When he did reappear in May 1933 it was not as Minister to China, but as the successor to Arita Hachirō as Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, a considerable promotion for the forty-six year old diplomat. This was a decision which was acclaimed widely in Japan and the Counsellor at the British Embassy, Snow, reported back to London that-

'From the warmth of the welcome he received it is clear that in the popular estimation he ranks among the heroes of the Shanghai incident. His selection as Vice-Minister should accordingly, do much to enhance the Ministry's prestige with the public.'²⁸

For Shigemitsu, however, this was not to be an easy posting and his time as Vice-Minister has generated the greatest controversy about his career. He held the post for almost three years until March 1936, a period in which Japan pursued a continental policy of trying to force Nanking to accept Japanese dominance over the region and of increasing its hold over North China. The charge levelled against him by his critics is that during these years he acted as the chief ideologue within the Gaimushō for a policy of regional domination, and that this included a willingness to coerce China into accepting Japanese leadership and support for the Army's policy of encouraging the North Chinese autonomy movement.²⁹

There is an element of truth in some of these assertions, but before the accusation is made that Shigemitsu was an unqualified advocate of aggression towards China, the motives for the policy he supported as Vice-Minister have to be explained. It must first be understood that the Manchurian Crisis had left Japan diplomatically isolated and with a feeling

that its grievances were being ignored by the international community. This dissatisfaction was exacerbated further by the fact that those same Great Powers, such as Britain and the United States, who led the public criticism of Japan were themselves imperialists, and that between 1930 and 1932 they had, as a response to the economic ravages of the Depression, closed off their own spheres of influence to competition from foreign trade. Shigemitsu, like many others, felt that this was unjust, and his disagreement with the nature of the world order was expressed at length in an August 1935 memorandum. In this Shigemitsu pointed to the basic hypocrisy of the *status quo* powers and wrote-

'[The] Nations most committed to upholding the *status quo* are the victors [of the First World War], particularly those endowed with large territory and abundant resources, accounting in fact for the bulk of what the earth has to offer.... These countries have acquired all that they could and then speak of maintaining the *status quo*. Such an assertion is losing validity today.... The idea that the maintenance of the *status quo* equals peace is becoming more and more difficult to accept.'³⁰

The economic policies of Britain and the United States particularly affected Japan because of its lack of raw materials and need for export markets. The obstacles put in the way of access to the markets controlled by Britain and America forced Japan to concentrate on building its economic future in East Asia, but here too there were problems; the setting up of Manchukuo had led to a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment sweeping China and to an apparent resurgence of Soviet interest in the region, exemplified by Stalin's recognition of the Nationalist Government in China in December 1932. To safeguard its investment in China and Manchukuo, Japan had to exercise political and military dominance over the region, a policy which could be justified by pointing out that it was no different to British dominance over an Empire which covered a quarter of the globe, or to the United States control over Latin America through the Monroe Doctrine. The problem was, however, that this policy portended an unavoidable clash with the Western powers, as Japanese dominance over the region could never be assured while the West still held on to their privileges in China.

It may seem at first sight that for Shigemitsu to espouse such a policy of regional domination goes against the diplomacy that he had carried out as Minister to China. Two factors need, however, to be borne in mind; first, that he had always viewed the bilateral Sino-Japanese relationship as the crucial linchpin for the region and, second, that in September 1931 it was the Chinese who had abandoned, on the governmental level, the policy of working for a mutually beneficial regional arrangement and instead opted for a policy of co-operation with the West in order to contain the Japanese. To Shigemitsu it was therefore necessary to persuade China to give up its anti-Japanese policy and to achieve this by weakening its ties with the West, so that eventually a Japan-China-Manchukuo bloc could be set up in East Asia for the economic benefit of all. Shigemitsu also advocated this policy because he was a staunch anti-communist and, fearing the effects of Soviet expansionism, desired to establish a buffer in China to contain Soviet influence. In essence the policy he pursued as Vice-Minister was only different from that he had espoused previously in the fact that circumstances now decreed the need for more overt political control and for China to be coerced into relinquishing its links with the West.³¹

The position facing Shigemitsu as he took office was that Nanking was continuing with its pro-Western line despite the ending of the crisis over Manchuria. The chief protagonist of this policy was T.V. Soong, who was attempting to negotiate a series of loans with the West such as a wheat and cotton loan with the United States and a new loan from the banks that had traditionally made up the China Consortium, but excluding the Japanese Yokohama Specie Bank, and to build on the recommendation included in the Lytton Report that the League of Nations should help with the reconstruction of China.³² The Chinese attempt to interest the Western powers in the region was viewed in the Gaimushō as an effort to improve Nanking's ability to resist Japan and therefore as a threat to the peace and stability of East Asia. The Japanese reaction was to try to forestall the Chinese plans and assert Japan's regional dominance by warning other powers from interfering in East Asia. This line was first made public on 1 April 1934 when Foreign Minister Hirota Kōki told the Japanese Diet that Japan had sole responsibility for the stability of East Asia. This was

followed on 17 April by the infamous and more specific Amai Statement, in which the head of the Gaimushō's information division, Amai Eiji, told Japanese journalists that Japan not only had the responsibility for maintaining peace in the region, but also opposed any efforts by third parties to provide China with financial or military aid, as such attempts to assist Nanking were bound to have political significance.³³

The Amai statement, which caused considerable concern in Nanking and the capitals of the West, can be seen as having its origin in a memorandum drawn up by Shigemitsu in September 1933. In this important document, which had been inspired by the need to study the link between the concept of disarmament and the security of East Asia, he had argued that the problems of maintaining peace in the region were such that disarmament could only be viewed as 'idealistic' and that instead-

'Other nations should, explicitly or implicitly, recognize Japan's special position in the Far East. Should any nation attempt to interfere with this position, Japan must resolutely take any measures necessary for its defence. Japan has no aggressive intentions, territorial or political, toward the United States or other powers. Japan is, however, determined to defend at any cost its position of responsibility in the Far East.'³⁴

To support his argument Shigemitsu noted that this policy was justified due to the internal turmoil of China and the expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union, two factors that made control of East Asia by the tenets of Wilsonian internationalism totally impossible. The motivation for the Amai statement can also be seen in a conversation Shigemitsu held with Baron Harada, the secretary to Prince Saionji, in which he declared that-

'At the present time the League of Nations is loaning money to China and giving aid. Great Britain is also giving aid to China and certain types of assistances become a hindrance for Japan. Therefore, Great Britain may withdraw from China because of the statement that was made in the papers and I think that the issue will quiet down.'³⁵

The Amai statement did, however, have the desired effect on Nanking. Chiang Kai-shek, who was pursuing a policy of non-resistance towards Japan while he dealt with the threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party, quietly cancelled the various projects that Soong had been arranging and

showed a willingness to engage in talks about re-establishing air and postal links between Manchukuo and the rest of China.³⁶ The apparent success of this policy caused the Gaimushō to study how this momentum could be built upon, and in a memorandum drawn up on 20 October 1934 Shigemitsu elaborated on his views that foreign power in China should be curbed. He suggested that Japan should seek the dissolution of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, which was dominated by Britain, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and naval forces from North China through the abolition of the Boxer Protocol garrisons in the region, the promotion of Japan's diplomatic representative to China to the status of Ambassador and his transfer from Shanghai to Nanking, and that eventually an offer should be made to negotiate over extraterritoriality.³⁷ The idea behind these measures was that a large number of concessions would blunt the anti-Japanese movement in China and therefore China's xenophobia would instead be directed towards the West; Japan meanwhile would retain its influence in the region due to its position in Manchukuo.³⁸ Again there is here a clear consistency in both method and aim with the views that Shigemitsu had expressed to Shidehara in April 1931; which is that Japan by readjusting its relations with China could make the bilateral Sino-Japanese relationship the centre of regional politics with Japan as the dominant partner, thus forcing the Western powers to accept a considerably weakened position where they were only to operate in China as states with economic ties rather than political and military influence.

The problem for Shigemitsu was that this policy attracted the strong disapproval of the Army, for, although the Army shared some of the same beliefs, their main concern was to weaken Chiang Kai-shek so as to further their plans for an autonomous North China and they certainly had no intention of withdrawing their forces from that region. The result was that over the coming year Japan was to develop a dual policy towards China with the Army and the Gaimushō pursuing at times completely contradictory aims. Unfortunately the Army came out of this power struggle victorious; their earliest triumph was to persuade the Cabinet on 7 December 1934 to agree to a policy of seeking 'to reduce to a minimum degree the influence of the Chinese central government in North China'.³⁹ Despite this Hirota carried on with the line proposed by Shigemitsu, and on 22 January 1935 the

former told the Japanese Diet that Sino-Japanese relations were improving and called on China to end all anti-Japanese activities and to collaborate with Japan and Manchukuo in the economic field. This speech met with a favourable response in Nanking and efforts were made by the Kuomintang to censor anti-Japanese newspapers.⁴⁰ Such was the improvement in relations that on 6 March Shigemitsu announced-

'The rapprochement between Japan and China was brought about as the result of the mutual discovery that there is a perfect concurrence between the Greater Asia doctrine of the late Dr. Sun Yat-sen and the Oriental doctrine of the Japanese people. In other words, Japan and China, as two good neighbours, are now returning to their normal relationship.'⁴¹

The culmination of this atmosphere of optimism came in May when Japan, acting on Shigemitsu's suggestion, raised the status of its Minister in China to that of Ambassador and opened an Embassy in Nanking.

However, this period of Sino-Japanese reconciliation did not last very long. The major challenge to the policy espoused by Shigemitsu came as one would expect from the Japanese Army, which had since the winter of 193~~4~~ been steadily trying to undermine the Gaimushō's policy towards China and expand their own influence in North China. By May it was clear that the Army were stepping up their pressure in the region, and on 30 May Shigemitsu told Kido Kōichi, the secretary to the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, that in his opinion-

'... this step against China is based on the idea of [Lt.-General] Itagaki and others who have been intending to let the military, instead of the diplomatic circles, take the lead in negotiations with the Chinese Government, just as in the case of Manchurian politics.'⁴²

Shigemitsu was proved right, when, in June, disturbances in the region provided the Army with the chance to push the Kuomintang out of Hopei and Chahar provinces under the terms of the Ho-Umezu agreement of 10 June and the Chin-Doihara agreement of 27 June respectively.⁴³ These events caused the Chinese to put pressure on Hirota to intervene with the Army, but, in a move that confirmed the growing powerlessness of the Gaimushō, the Kwantung Army refused to bow to the lacklustre pressure from the Foreign Minister.⁴⁴

The Chinese also tried circumventing the Japanese Army by stepping up the pressure on Hirota to conclude a political agreement, and on 17 June the Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Chiang Tso-pin, reiterated to the Japanese Foreign Minister China's desire for a treaty based on the abrogation of the unequal treaties and an end to the encouragement of North Chinese autonomy. This offer led to Shigemitsu calling a meeting at the Gaimushō on 27 June to discuss how Japan should respond. The subsequent conference, which was also attended by Counsellor Tani Masayuki, Kuwashima Kazue, the head of the Asian Affairs Bureau, and Morishima Gorō, the chief of the first section of the Asian Affairs Bureau, concluded that Japan was not in a position to agree to a comprehensive treaty and should opt instead for the settlement of issues one by one, so as to avoid giving the impression that Japan was presenting China with another Twenty-One Demands. It was also proposed that the talks with China should proceed on the basis of three principles, the ending of anti-Japanese activities, the *de facto* recognition of Manchukuo, and co-operation against communism. The meeting also considered how the Gaimushō could best handle the Army. Over this issue it was agreed that the best policy would be to persuade the Kwantung Army to concentrate its efforts on expanding its influence in Inner Mongolia in order to counter Soviet expansionism in the region, and thus downgrade the priority given to the autonomy drive in North China south of the Great Wall.⁴⁵ In putting forward this policy Shigemitsu showed his continued opposition to the Army, but also displayed a realization that they could not simply be ignored and that it was necessary to humour some of their demands.

The problem was, however, that the Army was not prepared to be fobbed off, and insisted that the diplomatic line towards China should continue to reflect their own interests. Their disagreement with the 'soft' policy put forward by Shigemitsu and his supporters led to three months of debate over the correct response to the Chinese, and in the end the Gaimushō was forced to make a number of compromises. The three principles which Shigemitsu had seen as shaping Sino-Japanese relations were now changed into preconditions for China to honour before any treaty could be signed, and the stress on mutual co-operation in the Gaimushō's original draft was severely diluted. In addition the Army rejected a proposal from the Navy for a declaration promising non-intervention in China's internal affairs. The result of

these deliberations was the formation of what became known as Hirota's Three Principles, which were approved by the Japanese Cabinet on 4 October 1935 and passed to the Chinese Ambassador in Tokyo by Hirota three days later. At first, despite the unwelcome additions and revisions made by the Army, the Three Principles proved acceptable to China as the basis for further talks, but progress was soon thwarted not only by the actions of the Japanese Army, but also by the intervention of Britain.⁴⁶

The unwelcome arrival of the British at this juncture was an indirect result of the policy that Japan had pursued towards Britain since the end of the Manchurian Crisis. On a general level the Japanese Government had become all too aware after its departure from the League of Nations in March 1933 that Japan was in danger of being thrust into isolation, and it was therefore thought necessary to rebuild relations with the Western powers and avoid, in particular, the appearance of an Anglo-Saxon anti-Japanese front. This was, however, in practice a difficult undertaking; the United States, though largely inactive in the region, insisted on adhering strictly to a policy of moral condemnation of Japan's actions in China, while relations with Britain were stalled over three vital areas of concern, naval disarmament, Japanese trade with the British Empire, and China. The first of these was largely the preserve of the Imperial Japanese Navy, but in the other two areas the Gaimushō was dominant and sought to push Britain into agreements that would satisfy Japanese ambitions.⁴⁷

In regard to the British presence in China the basis of Japanese policy was to bring Britain around to accepting the legitimacy of Japan's claim for regional dominance and to get recognition of Manchukuo, thus ensuring that Britain's interest in the region would be predominantly an economic one. Shigemitsu was instrumental in this policy, and in 1934, in an effort to forward a *rapprochement*, he encouraged the idea of a visit to Japan and Manchukuo by the Barnby Mission, a group of British industrialists sponsored by the Federation of British Industry, who wished to assess the possibility of investment in Manchukuo by British companies.⁴⁸ The Japanese willingness to encourage the idea of this venture appeared on the surface to be economic, but in fact the real motivation was political and

designed to cultivate an awareness in Britain of the benefits that could be derived from co-operation in China with Japan. This was clearly demonstrated when the industrialists arrived in Tokyo in late September as Shigemitsu took advantage of their presence to hold a number of talks with Arthur Edwardes, who as financial adviser in London to the Manchukuo Government had unofficially accompanied the Mission to Japan, the topic being the need for greater Anglo-Japanese co-operation in China.⁴⁹

Edwardes was an important figure because he provided a direct link to Sir Warren Fisher, the Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, who was a key figure in the group in Britain pushing for an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*. It appears that Edwardes took with him to Japan instructions from Fisher to sound out the chances for a non-aggression pact, and certainly on his return to London he briefed Fisher fully on the pro-British sentiments of Shigemitsu and the other senior officials he met.⁵⁰ Edwardes's report was also backed up by hints to British officials in London from Matsudaira Tsuneo, the Japanese Ambassador to Britain, of Japan's interest in a new understanding. On 14 November 1934 Shigemitsu told Baron Harada-

'... the Ministry is trying to bring about a rapprochement between Japan and Britain. It would not come right out and make an alliance, but it was going to form something like a Four-Power Pact.... These plans ... were of the utmost secrecy and are not even discussed at Cabinet meetings.'⁵¹

Knowledge of Japan's apparent enthusiasm for an understanding did not, however, mean that Fisher was willing to co-operate with the Gaimushō's two main aims in its policy towards Britain of a security pact in the Pacific and a British political retreat from China. Instead it led him towards a plan for Anglo-Japanese co-operation as equals in China, and specifically to construct in the winter of 1934/5 an idea for the revival of control by the China Consortium over China's finances; a proposal that eventually culminated in the Leith-Ross Mission.⁵²

Fisher was encouraged to proceed with his plans by a growing number of friendly overtures from Japan that carried on into the New Year. On 7 January 1935 Sir Robert Clive wrote of a conversation he had had with Shigemitsu, whom he described as an 'outspoken realist with very little sentiment in his make-up', in which the latter had said that it appeared

that Japan and Britain were coming together after years of estrangement.⁵³ When informed of the plans circulating in the Treasury, however, Clive quickly realised that the Treasury's perception of Japanese policy was misplaced, and warned the Foreign Office that -

'The British initiative in proposing consultations about the financial situation in China runs counter to the Japanese sponsored claim to take the lead in matters concerning China. This claim they have so far not ventured officially but there is no question that the present Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Amau and other senior members of the Japanese Foreign Office consider such a claim absolutely justified.'⁵⁴

This accurate assessment of Shigemitsu's policy failed, however, to have any effect on the Treasury, who continued to construct a grand scheme in which the financial reconstruction of China would be linked to a pledge by Nanking to give *de jure* recognition to Manchukuo, and thereby restore stability to the region.

The result of the Treasury's policy was that in September 1935 the Financial Adviser to the British Government, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, arrived in Tokyo to explain the British proposals to the Japanese, only to find that his welcome was somewhat muted, in considerable contrast to the reception given to the Barnby Mission a year before. The Japanese reaction to the British plans was to view them as an ill-timed and dangerous intervention in the region, and an attempt to re-establish Britain's position in China, just as Clive had predicted. In two meetings between Shigemitsu and Leith-Ross on 10 and 18 September the latter found little enthusiasm for either the proposal over Manchukuo or a loan to China and it appeared that the British plan was to be stillborn.⁵⁵ This did not mean that the Gaimushō had changed its mind on the importance of improving relations with Britain, for on 30 October Hirota told Baron Harada-

'... it is our desire to find an opportunity to join hands with Great Britain through our relationship with China. Therefore, because it would be bad if Japan and China were opposing each other, it is our intention to better this relationship and then approach Britain.'⁵⁶

Hirota planned to achieve the first step in this policy by developing economic co-operation with Japan and in October he welcomed a Chinese economic mission to Japan.⁵⁷

Any chance of achieving such a goal was, however, destroyed by Leith-Ross's activities. After his setback in Japan Leith-Ross travelled on to China, where he held discussions about finance with the Kuomintang Government and proceeded to advise them on the setting up of their new currency, the *fapi*, which was launched on 3 November.⁵⁸ This move constituted an even greater threat to the Gaimushō's policy than the original British proposals, as the construction of a strong Chinese currency had the potential to strengthen greatly Nanking's ability to resist Japan. This action therefore led to the Gaimushō to warn the British of the damage that was being done to the stability of the region. On 28 November, as rumours spread of a British loan being planned to support the new currency, Shigemitsu told the British Counsellor in Tokyo, A.F.H. Wiggin, that-

'Japanese Government recognised that he [Leith-Ross] was a well-known public figure in Great Britain and a technical expert of highest qualifications and indisputable integrity. But for these very reasons his political exploitation had been too good a chance for the anti-Japanese clique at Nanking to miss and his latest movements and utterances left no doubt that he was now involved in the thick of Chinese party politics.'⁵⁹

As well as harming Japan's intention to increase its economic ties with China, the British intervention was also unfortunate in that it acted as a further stimulus to the aggressive designs of the Army. In November, partly spurred on by the currency reform, the Kwantung Army escalated its autonomy drive in North China, despite Shigemitsu's earlier attempt to divert their attentions to Inner Mongolia. On 18 November, Major-General Doihara Kenji started the process by issuing an ultimatum to the Chinese military leader in the region, Sung Che-yuan, either to declare Hopei province autonomous by 20 November or to face invasion by the Kwantung Army.⁶⁰ This abrupt demand was a dreadful mistake, as it staked Japanese prestige on the achievement of autonomy; this was a matter of some embarrassment in Tokyo as it was believed that if China managed to resist successfully the Japanese demands it would give the impression that Japan was weak and act as a spur to the anti-Japanese movement. This fear forced the Gaimushō to come out in support of the Army's autonomy plans and to exert pressure on the Chinese to make concessions. On 19 November in a talk with Harada, Shigemitsu exclaimed in a state of frustration-

'I would like to have the Army make an autonomous statement today. I would like to send the Kwantung Army into Shanhaikuan and Hopei to put a scare into them [the Chinese] ... I would like to have everything done the way the Army wants before the Emperor returns.'⁶¹

The problem was made even worse when Sung, with encouragement from Chiang Kai-shek, unexpectedly turned down Doihara's ultimatum, which led to the Kwantung Army increasing the pressure by arranging on 25 November for the formation of the East Hopei Anti-Communist Autonomous Council. This move, however, could not hide the fact that Doihara had failed, and to rescue the situation the Gaimushō put forward a policy of pushing Nanking to accept 'mild' autonomy for North China. This plan was acceptable to Chiang Kai-shek and the supporters of a policy of non-resistance to Japan, and on 12 December the Hopei-Chahar Political Council was set up in Peking led by Sung.⁶² Before this event occurred Shigemitsu expressed his hope to Harada that the situation could soon be settled and noted-

'After the recent serious failure of the Japanese Garrison in North China, I wish that the Army could be withdrawn in a way that would save its existing prestige.... In viewing our internal policy, a rather strong policy should be maintained, while gradually neutralizing the crisis so as not to make the Japanese Garrison in North China feel desperate on account of their recent failure on the one hand, and so maintain the favourable relationship with North China, which is to be given proper self-government on the other hand.'⁶³

This comment qualified the outburst he made to Harada on 19 November and made clear that his apparent support for the Army on that date had been due to the danger that Chinese resistance to Doihara's demands would compromise entirely Japan's policy towards China.

The Gaimushō was therefore forced by the Army to assimilate the North China autonomy drive into its policy towards China; a development which was clearly demonstrated at a meeting of the departmental heads on 8 January 1936. In this discussion Shigemitsu put forward the view that it should be explained to the Chinese that Japan had vital interests in North China and that if this contention was challenged by Nanking the Japanese response should be to link the issue to Chinese recognition of Manchukuo. There was

a recognition in the meeting that any chance for a comprehensive settlement based on the Three Principles had receded, but there remained hope that talks could carry on in the spirit of the Japanese guidelines.⁶⁴ This trace of optimism was soon dashed as the Japanese Army's actions, which had exacerbated rather than diminished anti-Japanese sentiment in China, led on 22 January 1936 to a Chinese announcement that Hirota's Three Principles were too vague a base on which to begin talks.⁶⁵

The pre-eminent position that the Army had established for itself in China policy was not only unfortunate in that it undermined the Gaimushō's policy towards Nanking, but also because it caused further difficulties for Japan with the Western powers. This was particularly important in the winter of 1935/6 because Japan, under pressure from the Navy, was on the verge of walking out of the Naval conference in London in January 1936 and needed to avoid further international criticism. Fearing diplomatic isolation, Hirota and Shigemitsu had already in December 1935 tried to placate Britain and the United States with a renewed proposal for a Non-Aggression Pact, and after this had been rejected turned instead to the idea of reversing their previous negative stance towards Leith-Ross. On 19 February Shigemitsu told Clive that the British Financial Adviser would be very welcome to visit Japan before his return to Britain from China, and stressed that pro-British sentiment in Japan had risen recently as the removal of the naval issue had calmed the Navy.⁶⁶

Shigemitsu was, however, only too well aware that no improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations could be achieved while the Army was acting as a virtually free agent in North China, and he was faced with the difficult task of somehow reconciling their activities with the Gaimushō's policy and providing a legitimate defence for the establishment of autonomy in the region. In a meeting with Sir Robert Clive on 14 January, he attempted to provide an explanation which the British Ambassador described to the Foreign Office in the following manner-

'Mr. Shigemitsu did not really attempt to defend the aggressive methods of the military and admitted that the latter had caused much embarrassment to his department. He did insist, however, that the autonomy movement was genuine in the sense that the Northern Chinese had never liked the

Kuomintang, that they watched the practical independence of Canton with envy and wished themselves to have the same sort of independence of the Nanking Government. Naturally the Japanese were not adverse to this. They were bound to be suspicious of communism and the infiltration of Soviet propaganda, and to encourage the autonomy of Hopei and Chahar which could act as a buffer against the spread of Soviet doctrines into Manchukuo was only sound policy.'⁶⁷

This argument became the standard line for Japanese diplomats in justifying the North China policy and was aimed at playing on the anti-Soviet sentiments of the Conservative Party in Britain, and thus underlining that the containment of communism provided a further motive for Britain to move closer to Japan. The Gaimushō had begun to construct a "defence against communism" policy in the autumn of 1935 as a response to the build-up of Soviet forces in the Maritime Provinces and the Comintern's call at its Seventh Congress in July 1935 for a 'united front' policy to resist fascism.⁶⁸ The establishment of this anti-Soviet line was not only important in Japanese overtures to Britain but also meant that, when Hirota and Shigemitsu learnt in the winter of 1936 of the talks that Major-General Ōshima Hiroshi, the Japanese Military Attaché in Berlin, was holding ~~talks~~ with Hitler's adviser on foreign policy, Joachim von Ribbentrop, about co-operation against the Soviet Union, they raised no serious objections, and agreed to the drafting of an anti-Comintern pact, although they hoped that responsibility for the talks be transferred from Ōshima to the Ambassador to Germany, Mushakōji Kintomo.⁶⁹ Certainly Shigemitsu had a marked antipathy towards the Soviet Union, and on 20 March, as calls for a 'united front' in China gained momentum, he told Harada about his fears of Soviet expansionism, stating-

'Russia has taken energetic steps to encourage the Chinese Communists to resist Japan. We may reasonably assume that China will rely on Russia increasingly as time goes by. Japan has never taken China seriously.... If we treat China too harshly, it will only swing China that much closer to Russia. There is sufficient reason to believe that 'Stir Up China' is a slogan that has been used by Russia to oppose Japan.'⁷⁰

The policy of "defence against communism" also had the advantage that it had the broad approval of the Army, but despite this tensions between Shigemitsu and the military were growing markedly. This was largely due to his continued opposition to the Army's independent policy in China. The bitter nature of this dispute was revealed in a conversation that Shigemitsu held with the British Naval Attaché in Tokyo, Captain Guy Vivian on 13 February. In this talk the Vice-Minister talked of his dislike of recent events in Japan and Vivian later reported to his Ambassador that-

'I have never known Mr. Shigemitsu so expansive or to speak with such conviction as he did on this occasion making no secret of his disgust at the part the Army and Navy is taking in trying to control national policy.'⁷¹

In forwarding Vivian's record of the conversation to London Clive noted in addition to the Naval Attaché's observations that there were rumours circulating in Tokyo that the tensions between the Army and the Vice-Minister were becoming so serious that the latter might soon resign.⁷²

The Army's distrust of Shigemitsu was not long in coming into the open. After the failed coup of 26 February 1936 and the subsequent elevation of Hirota to the position of Prime Minister, the new Foreign Minister, Arita Hachirō, decided to replace Shigemitsu as Vice-Minister with Horinouchi Kensuke. The problem then was what to do with Shigemitsu; Hirota had for some time been considering sending him to China as Ambassador, but when this was suggested in April 1936 it was met with implacable opposition from the Army. The latter did not wish to see the independently minded Shigemitsu in such a position, desiring instead to have promoted to the post the more malleable Kawagoe Shigeru, who as Consul-General in Tientsin had acquiesced in the autonomy for North China policy. After this disappointment Hirota and Arita considered elevating Shigemitsu to the House of Peers, but the list of officials awaiting this honour was so long that this too was considered impractical. The only alternative left was to assign Shigemitsu to a first-class Ambassadorial post overseas; the favoured choice for Hirota and Arita was to send him to Moscow, but while this decision was pondered Shigemitsu found himself without any formal post.⁷³

Following the disappointments of the spring Shigemitsu took a well-earned rest over the summer months. His thinking during this period ranged over many of the issues facing Japan, and in a letter to Arthur Edwardes on 11 July he stated that he had in particular been dwelling on the problems in Anglo-Japanese relations. One of his chief concerns in this area was the mutual antagonism that had arisen in London and Tokyo over policy towards China, and he warned that-

'These charges and counter-charges, however unjust and baseless, indicate the existence of an unwholesome atmosphere created by misunderstanding and mistrust.'⁷⁴

Another field in which he saw the potential for trouble was in commercial relations, where Japan felt that its trade was being discriminated against by the existence of the Imperial Preference policy. Shigemitsu noted to Edwardes-

'The Japanese are extremely irritated under the pressure of British policy against the legitimate expansion of their trade, which is of vital necessity to their national existence and growth, and which, despite the alarm so loudly sounded, constitutes only 3 or 4 per cent of world trade. Here our grievances are justified, I believe, to a large extent.'⁷⁵

His solution to these problems was to argue that the two countries should start a series of general conversations so as to build up an atmosphere where the more intractable individual questions could be solved.

To some degree Shigemitsu in this letter was predicting the position that his predecessor as Ambassador to Britain, Yoshida Shigeru, was to take in talks in London over the next year. Shigemitsu was, however, to have little to do with this series of negotiations, for his next post was to be Ambassador to the Soviet Union. He found himself in this position because, in August 1936, Arita offered him a choice between going to the Soviet Union or Germany, and he had chosen the former on the grounds that he was interested in studying the Bolsheviks at close quarters.⁷⁶ This was, of course, a very challenging post to take as Russo-Japanese relations had continued to be strained in the summer of 1936, with a number of border incidents adding to the generally tense atmosphere.⁷⁷ The tone of his time in Moscow was, indeed, set from the very day of his arrival, 25 November

1936, which coincided inauspiciously with the signing in Berlin of the Anti-Comintern Pact.

During the next two years Shigemitsu was faced with an ever increasing number of incidents to settle; in 1937 alone there were 113 separate clashes on the Soviet-Manchukuo border.⁷⁸ The most dangerous incident, occurred in 1938 due to a dispute over who held sovereignty of Changkufeng, a hill on the Korean-Soviet border. This once again drew Shigemitsu into a controversy.⁷⁹ The Ambassador first heard of this incident while travelling in Sweden in July, and rushed immediately back to Moscow to see if a diplomatic solution could be found. He held his first talk with Maxim Litvinov, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on 20 July and forwarded the demand he had received from his Foreign Minister, General Ugaki Kazushige, for immediate Russian withdrawal from the disputed hill. Litvinov, whose diplomatic manner was as brusque as Shigemitsu's, briskly dismissed the Japanese request and claimed that he had a map that proved that Changkufeng belonged to the Soviet Union, to which Shigemitsu responded by claiming, in just as forthright a manner, that the priority was to achieve a ceasefire and that the territorial disagreement could only be discussed once the fighting stopped. This led to a diplomatic impasse in Moscow and thus the focus of events reverted once more to Changkufeng.⁸⁰

On 31 July local Japanese forces took the incident into their own hands by launching an offensive to retake the hill; this immediately threatened to escalate the conflict and underlined the necessity for a quick diplomatic solution. Orders were sent from Tokyo to Shigemitsu to press Litvinov again for a ceasefire, but the Ambassador proved tardy in putting these instructions into effect as he had little information about the situation on the ground and had hoped that Litvinov would come round to his way of thinking. He finally saw Litvinov on 4 August, but the Commissar insisted on sticking to his original position, so that what should have become negotiations for peace instead descended into a game of bluff.⁸¹ Shigemitsu's diplomatic fencing with Litvinov did not, however, gain him much sympathy in Tokyo and there were fears that his lack of activity was dictated by a fear of criticism by the Japanese Army if he should appear to be appeasing the Russians. On 8 August Navy Minister, Yonai Mitsumasa,

told Baron Harada that he felt that-

'Shigemitsu has a fear of the Army: or, if not, that he just does not comprehend the characteristics of this incident; i.e., he does not grasp the fundamentals of his instructions. His method of drawing out the negotiations by utilizing "tactics" is not desirable.'⁸²

As a consequence of these doubts Shigemitsu was sent on 10 August very specific instructions for a renewed peace effort which would lead to a mutual withdrawal to the front line of 29 July and the setting up of a buffer zone along the border claimed by the Soviets. Shigemitsu immediately called on Litvinov to forward these proposals, but still met with intransigence over the issue of a Soviet withdrawal, although not over the idea of a ceasefire. In the face of this opposition and in compliance with his orders Shigemitsu backed down reluctantly from his original position and agreed to a unilateral Japanese withdrawal. In the end, however, Japan was saved from this embarrassing situation by a Soviet climbdown, and in the ceasefire agreed upon at midnight of 10/11 August both sides were allowed to remain in the positions they held at the moment fighting stopped.⁸³

Shigemitsu saw this agreement as a 'diplomatic victory' for the position he had taken since the outbreak of the fighting, and Foreign Minister Ugaki recorded in his diary that the satisfactory solution of the incident was in a large part due to the Ambassador's skilful handling of the negotiations with Litvinov.⁸⁴ The talks were, however, to have repercussions in both the long and the short term. In the former Shigemitsu's role in this affair was to be one of the chief justifications for his indictment by the Soviets for war crimes in 1946.⁸⁵ In the short term Soviet resentment of the Ambassador may have been a factor in his rapid transfer a few months after the incident from Moscow to the position of Ambassador to Britain. Whether this was an important motive for his new appointment is not entirely clear, and it does seem that there were other problems within the Gaimushō at this time that necessitated a game of diplomatic musical chairs, as Yoshida in London had come to retirement age, and Tōgō Shigenori had not proved to be a very successful Ambassador to Berlin.⁸⁶ Certainly at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial Ugaki dismissed the idea that ~~that~~

Shigemitsu's transfer had been the result of displeasure at the latter's handling of the Soviets, and he recollected that-

'The appointment of Mr. Shigemitsu to the post of Ambassador to Great Britain was made shortly prior to my resignation as Foreign Minister. At that time relations between that country and Japan were very delicate and required expert handling. It was a promotion and did not indicate any dissatisfaction with his work in Moscow. Furthermore I had heard from no one in Russia nor anywhere else that the Soviet Union did not desire him as Ambassador nor that that country was dissatisfied with his work. I knew that he had done his best to carry out the policy of the Government to remain at peace with the Soviet Union, that he had been successful and therefore recommended his promotion. More important I knew from his skilful handling of this incident of his great ability, and I believed that if this ability was transferred to London it would be beneficial to both Japan and Great Britain.'⁸⁷

Although this may have been the case as seen from Tokyo, it was undeniable that Shigemitsu had not made a very favourable impression on the Soviets. On 9 August the Soviet Ambassador to Britain, Ivan Maisky, told Sir Lancelot Oliphant, a Deputy Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office-

'... the present Japanese Ambassador in Moscow was not the person to make any negotiations easier. M. Shigemitsu when in China, had been regarded as moderate and liberal - so far as any Japanese could be described as such. Now, however, and ever since his arrival in Moscow two years ago he was a protagonist of the Japanese military party.'⁸⁸

The Soviet antipathy to Shigemitsu was certainly reciprocated by the latter, and it was clear from many of the comments that he made in London that his sojourn in Moscow had not diluted in his deep hatred of communism. Indeed Arthur Edwardes recorded in a letter to R.A. Butler in 1940-

'When H.E. [Shigemitsu] came to London direct from Moscow, I used to think the activities of the Bear were rather a bee in his bonnet, which is a somewhat zoologically mixed metaphor.'⁸⁹

The controversy caused by Shigemitsu's handling of the Changkufeng crisis was typical of this combative diplomat and makes clear that his career as an Ambassador can only be understood by recognising that he was first and

foremost a Japanese patriot whose every effort in negotiations was designed to further the interests of his country. On a broader scale this too is the lesson that emerges from his time as Minister to China and as Vice-Minister at the Gaimushō. In making such a statement one is, of course, open to the accusation that this is a very obvious comment to make and that it is indeed applicable to any diplomat of whatever nation. But that is the whole point; to show that in seeking what he thought was the best for Japan in the early to mid-1930s Shigemitsu was doing only what any diplomat would have done under extremely difficult circumstances.

The confrontational atmosphere in international relations in this period, arising from a brew of political, military and economic factors, such as the effects of the Depression and fear of the spread of communism, necessarily shaped how Shigemitsu approached what he saw as the key to Japan's destiny, which was the need to build up Japanese influence in continental Asia. It forced him to move towards a more overtly coercive policy than he had supported in the period before the Manchurian Crisis, and to support the drive to assert Japanese dominance over the region in order to break China's reliance on the West and on the Soviet Union. His approach was also influenced by the domestic circumstances of Japan in the 1930s where the Army was to all intents and purposes dominant in decision-making, and where a challenge to its authority was likely to be ignored if too weak and risked assassination if too threatening. These then were the parameters within which Shigemitsu had to operate to achieve his goals and it is no wonder in these circumstances if the policies he espoused seemed at times to be too harsh.

As well as shaping his policy towards China these influences also affected how he viewed the role of the Western powers in East Asia. In the case of Britain, though the interests of that country in China were a substantial obstacle to Japanese regional dominance, he had little wish to see a break in relations but instead strove for a new understanding between the two countries in which Britain would come to terms with the new system in East Asia and be content with holding on to its economic stake. Despite the trials and tribulations of Anglo-Japanese relations in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war he still believed that this goal was

attainable, and it was in this frame of mind that he approached his time as Ambassador in 1938. He noted later in *Japan and Her Destiny*—
'I had a pleasing vision of bringing about an understanding between the two countries under which the China problem might be solved... '90

NOTES

1. PRO FO371/57429 U8209/5/73 Sir G. Sansom to Sir. E. Dening 4 December 1946, also quoted in R. Buckley, *Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan, 1945-1952*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) p.116.
2. See M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny. My Struggle For Peace*. (Hutchinson, London, 1958) p.55, T. Yoshihashi, *Conspiracy at Mukden. The Rise of the Japanese Military*. (Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, Conn., 1963) pp.120-121, and I. Nish, 'Shigemitsu and the Shanghai Crisis, 1932.' in I. Nish (ed.), *Shigemitsu Studies*. (LSE STICERD, International Studies series, 1990/II) pp.83-84.
3. I am greatly indebted to Associate Professor Sakai Tetsuya of Hokkaido University for helping me to come to this interpretation of Shigemitsu.
4. K. Usui, 'The Role of the Foreign Ministry' in D. Borg & S. Okomoto (eds), *Pearl Harbor as History. Japanese-American Relations 1931-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1973) pp.131-132.
5. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.56.
6. I. Nish, op.cit. p.84.
7. D.A. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts Versus Japanese Bombs. The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy", 1931-32*. (Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991) pp.10-11.
8. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.58 & 62.
9. D.A. Jordan, op.cit. p.24-52.
10. PRO FO371/15488 F4724/1391/10 Sir F. Lindley to A. Henderson 8 August 1931.
11. On the Soong-Shigemitsu talks see M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.63-64, and I. Nish, op.cit. p.85. On the effect of the possible settlement of the Nakamura incident see H. Seki, 'The Manchurian Incident, 1931.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Japan Erupts. The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Incident, 1928-1932*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1984) p.225.

12. T. Yoshihashi, *Conspiracy at Mukden*. pp.185-186.
13. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.64.
14. D.A. Jordan, op.cit. p.112.
15. T. Shimada, 'The Extension of Hostilities, 1931-1932.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), op.cit. p.306, and D.A. Jordan, op.cit. pp.190-191.
16. I. Nish, op.cit. p.86.
17. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.75, and I. Nish, op.cit. p.87.
18. Baron Kido Kōichi diary, entry for 21 January 1932. (State Department, Washington D.C. 1977)
19. Mainichi Shimbun 31 January 1932, IMTFE Exhibit 3297.
20. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.77.
21. For an account of the Shanghai hostilities see T. Shimada, op.cit. pp.306-316. On Shigemitsu's pressure to end the fighting see I. Nish, op.cit. pp.88-90.
22. Quoted in I. Nish, op.cit. p.91.
23. J. Godfrey, *The Naval Memoirs of Admiral J. Godfrey*. Godfrey Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, GDFY 1/6 p.143.
24. For various accounts of the events of late April/early May 1932 see M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.78-79, I. Nish, op.cit. p.92-95, and T. Shimada, op.cit. p.318.
25. A. Coox, 'Shigemitsu Mamoru. The Diplomacy of Crisis.' in R.D. Burns & E.M. Bennett (eds.), *Diplomats in Crisis, United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1918-1941*. (American Biographical Centre, Santa Barbara, Cal. 1974) p.254.
26. R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.XIV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34494.
27. Ibid. pp.34495-34496 and pp.34485-34489 respectively.
28. PRO FO371/17150 F4320/39/23 T. Snow to Sir J. Simon 17 May 1933.
29. See in particular K. Usui, op.cit. pp.135-137.
30. K. Usui, 'Japanese Approaches to China in the 1930s: Two Alternatives.' in A. Iriye & W. Cohen (eds.), *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia 1931-1949*. (Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, Del., 1990) p.101.
31. This paragraph is a synthesis of various ideas expressed by Shigemitsu during his period as Vice-Minister which will be developed in greater

detail below. Again I am indebted in the formulation of this interpretation to Sakai Tetsuya.

32. On the issue of loans see P. Coble, *Facing Japan. Chinese Politics and Japanese Imperialism, 1931-1937*. (Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1991) pp.155-159, and C. Hosoya, 'The United States and East Asia in the mid-1930s: The Cotton and Wheat Loan' in A. Iriye & W. Cohen, op.cit. pp.73-89.
33. On the Amau Statement see T. Shimada, 'Designs on North China, 1933-1937.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The China Quagmire. Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent, 1933-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1983) pp.79-91, and J. ^B Crowley, *Japan's Quest For Autonomy. National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938*. (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1966) pp.196-198.
34. K. Usui, 'The Role of the Foreign Ministry.' p.136.
35. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 27 April 1934. (State Department, Washington, 1977)
36. For details see P. Coble, op.cit. pp.166-174.
37. See J. ^B Crowley, 'Military Foreign Policies ' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Japan's Foreign Policy. A Research Guide*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1974) pp.63-64, and K. Usui, 'The Role of the Foreign Ministry' pp.136-137.
38. Ibid.
39. J. ^B Crowley, *Japan's Quest For Autonomy*. p.201.
40. See T. Shimada, 'Designs on North China.' pp.91-92, and P. Coble, op.cit. pp.187-189.
41. P. Coble, op.cit. p.192.
42. Baron Kido Kōichi diary, entry for 30 May 1935.
43. For the events of June 1935 see T. Shimada, 'Designs on North China.' pp.102-122, and P. Coble, op.cit. pp.202-212.
44. See P. Coble, op.cit. p.203.
45. For two records of this meeting see J. ^B Crowley, *Japan's Quest For Autonomy*. pp.218-220, and K. Usui, 'The Role of the Foreign Ministry.' p.137.
46. On the formation of the 'Three Principles' see T. Shimada, 'Designs on North China.' pp.128-132, and J. ^B Crowley, *Japan's Quest For Autonomy*. pp.220-231.
47. For discussion of the naval limitation talks see chapter two.

48. The origins of the Barnby Mission are somewhat shrouded in mystery and it is unclear whether the idea was initiated by the Federation of British Industry or by the Japanese Government. Evidence in the private papers of H.A. Gwynne, the editor of Morning Post, suggests collaboration between Gwynne and Arthur Edwardes, the Adviser in London to the Manchukuo Government, as early as the winter of 1934 in encouraging British trade in Manchukuo. Letters from Gwynne to Edwardes also refer to 'Our Friend', a senior figure in Whitehall who wished for a *rapprochement* with Japan, it seems likely that this was Sir Warren Fisher, the Permanent Secretary at the Treasury. See H.A. Gwynne to A. Edwardes 26 February and 20 March 1934, in Gwynne Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Gwynne 18.
49. See *Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP) 1919-1939 Second Series Vol. XX Far Eastern Affairs May 20, 1933 - November 5, 1936*. No.170 F6523/164/10 Sir R. Clive to Sir J. Simon 2 November 1934 p.310 footnote 3. On the subject of Arthur Edwardes see S. Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise. British China Policy, 1933-1937*. (Manchester Univ. Press, Manchester, 1975) pp.74-77.
50. Ibid.
51. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 14 November 1934.
52. On the development of the Treasury's ideas into the Leith-Ross Mission see A. Trotter, *Britain and East Asia 1933-1937*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1975) pp.132-147, and V. Rothwell, 'The Mission of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross to the Far East 1935-1936.' in *Historical Journal*, 1975. Vol.18 No.1 pp.147-169.
53. PRO FO371/19359 F1090/483/23 Sir R. Clive to Sir J. Simon 7 January 1935.
54. PRO FO371/19313 F3044/553/10 Sir R. Clive to Sir J. Simon 13 April 1935.
55. *DBFP 2/XX* No.343 F5853/6/10 Sir R. Clive to Foreign Office 11 September 1935 pp.596-597, and No.345 F6006/6/10 Sir R. Clive to Sir S. Hoare 18 September 1935 pp.599-600.
- 56 ~~57~~. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 30 October 1935.
- 57 ~~58~~. See P. Coble, op.cit. p.262.
- 58 ~~59~~. On the setting up of the *fapi* see Wang Xi, 'A Test of the Open Door Policy: America's Silver Policy and Its Effects on East Asia, 1934-1937.' in A. Iriye & W. Cohen, op.cit. pp.50-57.
- 59 ~~60~~. *DBFP 2/XX* No.413 F7530/7144/10 A. Wiggin to Sir H. Hoare 28 November 1935 p.697.
60. See P. Coble, op.cit. pp.267-269.
61. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 28 November 1935.

63. On the setting up of the Hopei-Chahar Political Council see T. Shimada, 'Designs on North China.' pp.156-161, and P. Coble, op.cit. pp.272-274.
64. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 13 December 1935.
64. See J.^{B.} Crowley, *Japan's Quest For Autonomy*. pp.239-240.
65. See P. Coble, op.cit. p.280.
66. PRO FO371/20216 F987/1/10 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 19 February 1936.
67. PRO FO371/20227 F209/34/23 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 14 January 1936.
68. See T. Sakai, 'Soviet-Japanese Relations and the Outbreak of War Between Japan and the United States.' Unpublished conference paper 1991, pp.7-9.
69. On Shigemitsu's approval of the Ōshima/Ribbentrop talks see T. Ōhata, 'The Anti-Comintern Pact, 1935-1939.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Deterrent Diplomacy. Japan, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1935-1940*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1976) pp.27-28.
70. Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 28 March 1936.
71. PRO FO371/20282 F1487/204/23 Capt. G. Vivian to Sir R. Clive 13 February 1936.
72. Ibid. Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 15 February 1936.
73. Most of this paragraph is based on a conversation between Arita and Harada on 20 April 1936 related in Saionji/Harada diary, entry for 22 April 1936. But see also P. Coble, op.cit. p.298.
74. M. Shigemitsu to A. Edwardes 11 July 1936, in Gwynne Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Gwynne 18. I am indebted to Professor Nish for bringing this letter to my attention.
75. Ibid.
76. A. Coox, op.cit. p.254.
77. Ibid, p.255.
78. Ibid
79. The best short account of this episode remains A. Coox, op.cit., but see also the same author's, *The Anatomy of a Small War. The Soviet-Japanese Struggle for Changkufeng/Khasan 1938*. (Greenwood Press, London, 1977)
80. A. Coox, 'Shigemitsu Mamoru.' pp.256-257.
81. Ibid, p.258.
82. Ibid, p.260.

83. Ibid, pp.261-264.
84. Ibid, pp.265-266.
85. Ibid, p.251.
86. On Yoshida see J. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath. Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience 1878-1954*. (Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1979) p.213. On Tōgō see N. Hagihara, 'Togo as Ambassador to Berlin, 1938.' in I. Nish (ed.), *German-Japanese Relations in the 1930s*. (LSE STICERD, International Studies series, 1986/3) pp.6-8.
87. R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Vol.X*. (Garland, New York, 1981) pp.23870-23871.
88. PRO FO371/22146 F8755/607/10 I. Maisky/Sir L. Oliphant Conversation 9 August 1938.
89. A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 24 July 1940, in Lord Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB E3/5.
90. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.182.

CHAPTER TWO

'A COMMITTEE SORT OF MAN'

'I forgot to tell you that the Clives have left and been replaced by a strange couple; he is experienced as a committee sort of man, but seems to have no idea what people are really like, let alone oriental ones.'

Katherine Sansom to her son 17 November 1937¹

Much of the controversy over Sir Robert Craigie's role in Anglo-Japanese relations has been generated by the belief among hostile contemporaries that his appointment as Ambassador in 1937 had more to do with his political links than with his suitability for the post. To his critics, and in particular to those who were Far Eastern experts, he was a 'Chamberlain man', assigned to conciliate the Japanese and keep the region quiet while Britain pursued a policy of active appeasement in Europe. The fact that Craigie had never previously served in Japan or even held a post in the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office only helped to heighten suspicions that he was no more than a Whitehall mandarin imposed on the Tokyo Embassy to do the Prime Minister's bidding. This image of Craigie is, however, misleading and reveals more about the prejudices of his antagonists than about the facts behind his appointment. The true position was that he had been near the centre of policy-making towards East Asia for a number of years and appeared in the spring of 1937 to be the logical candidate for the post.

Craigie's chief claim to attention arose from his involvement in the naval talks that took place between Britain, the United States and Japan in the years 1921-1937. From a post-war perspective it is easy to underestimate the importance of this series of negotiations as they have been largely overshadowed by the drama of the crisis in Sino-Japanese relations and the drift towards the Pacific War, but during the inter-war period they were perceived as a vitally important issue and especially relevant to the issue of security in the East. Craigie's heavy involvement in these talks made

him conversant with the problems affecting relations in the Pacific and, in particular, the dilemma facing Britain of how to cope with Japan's revisionist ambitions. This practical experience was not only crucial in his being chosen as Ambassador, but also shaped his views of Japan and the prospects of improving relations with that country; it is therefore essential in any assessment of Craigie's ambassadorship to study how his involvement in the naval negotiations improved his status in the Foreign Office and how it influenced the evolution of his thinking towards the troubled debate in Whitehall over Britain's future role in East Asia.

Craigie first became involved with naval disarmament in 1928 ^{due to} ~~by~~ a decision ^{is} of the Foreign Office to hand jurisdiction of the naval limitation talks from the Central Department to ~~the~~ ^{the} American Department. The transfer of these talks followed from the fiasco of the Geneva naval conference of 1927, at which the British and American delegations had clashed fiercely over the quantitative and qualitative limitation of cruisers, and which had subsequently seriously poisoned relations between London and Washington.² With the advantage of his naval family background Craigie, who was the head of the American Department, quickly mastered the details of the talks and began to be acknowledged as the chief Foreign Office expert in this field. His first important role was in November 1928 when he acted as one of the chief protagonists in a Foreign Office campaign to persuade the Admiralty and the Cabinet of the need to assuage American feelings. His part in this affair was to draw up a memorandum for the Cabinet making clear the dangers inherent in a policy of animosity towards America.³ This brought him into conflict for the first time with Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, believing that it was necessary to take a tough line with Washington, took umbrage at Craigie's memorandum and wrote in a counterblast to the Cabinet that-

'...if the essay by Mr. Craigie on Anglo-American relations... has no object other than to inculcate meekness and caution, it need not be dealt with in detail.'⁴

He went on to state-

'I do not believe that ... the United States will either set about us in a beserk fury or markedly reduce the volume of her tourist traffic as Mr. Craigie so variously suggests.'⁵

However it was Craigie's argument that eventually swayed the Cabinet and Churchill was left licking his wounds, having lost an argument to a civil servant. It is not clear how far this affair influenced Churchill's later treatment of Craigie, but certainly Churchill was renowned as a man who bore grudges and it is difficult to believe that this did not contribute to his eventual intolerance of Craigie's cautious line in 1940 and 1941.⁶

In the subsequent easing of Anglo-American tensions Craigie played an important part, and in April 1929 he received from the American Ambassador in Geneva, Hugh Gibson, the 'yardstick' proposal that helped to settle the dispute over cruisers. In autumn 1929 he was present at the Rapidan summit between the new Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and President Herbert Hoover, where the ground was laid for an Anglo-American deal over naval issues, and in 1930 he was an adviser to the British delegation at the London Naval Conference. This gathering saw the culmination of the new atmosphere of Anglo-American co-operation and led to the signing of the Three Power Treaty that established a 10-10-6.9 ratio in cruisers for Britain, the United States, and Japan respectively. By this time Craigie had become more or less irreplaceable due to his ability to grasp every issue involved in the talks, and as MacDonald's right hand man he exerted a key influence on government naval limitation policy. In 1931 he further increased his prestige by taking a major part in what eventually proved to be an abortive naval compromise between France and Italy, and from 1932 was a frequent adviser to the British delegation at the Geneva Disarmament Conference.⁷

The peak of Craigie's influence came with the London Naval Conference of 1935; an event which was also significant because it provided him with an opportunity to become directly involved with Anglo-Japanese relations, though he was only to approach the latter with the aim of facilitating a naval agreement.⁸ The new conference was convened under the terms of the 1930 London Naval Treaty, which had laid down that, if the Disarmament Conference in Geneva failed to produce a new agreement on naval limitation, the three leading naval powers should meet to frame a new treaty in 1935. Preparations for the next round of talks began at the Foreign Office in January 1934 against a background of growing international rivalry, which



saw in Europe grave concern about the ambitions of a resurgent Germany and in East Asia forebodings over the rise of Japanese militarism and the seizure of Manchuria. This instability in the international system meant that the conclusion of a new treaty was made even more desirable so as to avoid a general naval race which would only heighten tensions further, but at the same time the pervasive atmosphere of distrust argued against the possibility that any agreement would emerge. For Britain above all other states there was a great need for naval limitation to continue, as Britain would suffer most from an arms race which would reveal the Royal Navy's increasing inability to defend the far-flung Empire.⁹

The chances of an agreement were undermined not only by the poisonous atmosphere of international relations, but also by the strong likelihood that the positions of the United States, Japan and Britain in the forthcoming conversations would be mutually incompatible. The Imperial Japanese Navy, which in 1930 had strongly resisted the implementation of the London Naval Treaty, was determined to end the ratio system for both capital ships and cruisers, which they saw as permanently assigning them to an inferior position *vis-à-vis* the Anglo-Saxon powers.¹⁰ In turn the United States and Britain were determined to avoid any formula that would allow Japan practical parity, although Britain was willing to explore the possibility of equality in principle. Division between Britain and the United States rested on the perennial problem of cruiser numbers, on which Washington opposed the Royal Navy's desire for more ships which the latter considered vital for the maintenance of Imperial security. Faced with these gulfs of opinion it was difficult to see how an agreement could be brought about that would satisfy all sides.

However, in his initial memorandum in January 1934 Craigie expressed guarded optimism about the future talks and noted that-

'If we can clear our minds in advance as to what precisely should be our objectives and what the procedure to attain them, the battle will be half won. I use the word " battle " advisedly for every effort will be made in the next two years by other naval powers, far less dependent than we are on our naval defences, to diminish the relative preponderance of British sea-power. We shall need all our resources of skill and diplomacy if we are to

defeat these efforts and at the same time to bring about agreement at the 1935 conference.'¹¹

His proposals were first that Britain should push the United States to accept an increase in cruiser numbers and an end to the naval holiday on building capital ships so that the Royal Navy would be better able to perform its functions, and second that Britain should calm Japan's sensibilities by agreeing to a declaration on equality of status while still in practice limiting Japan to 70% of the British fleet. These suggestions were forwarded to the Admiralty and to the Cabinet Office, where they drew a pessimistic response from Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary and Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, who noted in a letter to Craigie that-

'... the outlook for the 1935 Conference is extremely gloomy, and I rather incline to the view that you are a bit optimistic in thinking that the Japanese will accept 70%. It is an ingenious solution, but I am afraid the lives of the Japanese negotiators would be at risk if they accepted it!'¹²

Craigie's plans were amalgamated with those of the Admiralty in a memorandum of 23 March 1934, which was to act as a discussion document for the Cabinet Naval Conference Committee that first met on 16 April.¹³ ~~The~~ The meetings of this body did not, however, give any quick approval to the proposals that Craigie had helped to draft, but instead revealed that no consensus existed among the interested government ministries, of whom the Foreign Office, the Admiralty and the Treasury were the most prominent. The discrepancies were largely due to the relation of naval limitation to the issue of British rearmament. In February 1934, the Defence Requirements Committee (DRC), which had been set up to look into the question of how Britain could make good its military deficiencies and which of Germany and Japan should be considered to be the main threat, made its report..¹⁴ The Committee, which consisted of Sir Maurice Hankey, Sir Warren Fisher, Sir Robert Vansittart (now the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office), and the three Chiefs of Staff, was agreed that Germany constituted the greater menace, but failed to agree on a unified approach to the problem of how Britain should treat Japan, which in turn affected the formulation of a negotiating position for the naval talks.

The Admiralty and Hankey believed, despite the DRC Report, that the greatest and most immediate threat to British security came from Japan and therefore pushed for naval expansion so that British interests in the Far East could be safeguarded and Japan dealt with from a position of strength. This led the Admiralty to oppose any suggestion of parity for Japan and to support a push for a ceiling of seventy cruisers. In private senior naval officers such as the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Ernle Chatfield, went further and argued that quantitative limitation should cease altogether and that instead states should be allowed to build as many vessels as they needed, the only limitations being in the shape of qualitative restrictions, a policy which would allow Britain to contain the Japanese menace. Allied to this the Admiralty were keen to improve relations with Japan on the diplomatic front as closer ties might deter the Japanese from pushing for naval equality by reducing tensions in East Asia, although such a breakthrough, if it occurred, was not seen as negating the argument for naval expansion.¹⁵

The Treasury, as represented by Sir Warren Fisher and Neville Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, agreed with the need to seek a *rapprochement* with Japan, but for different motives. They felt that, having agreed that Germany was the main threat, the strains caused by the Depression on Britain's financial position argued in favour of only a limited rearmament programme directed against the Third Reich, and that the Japanese threat should be neutralized by diplomatic means. This meant that, in contrast to the Admiralty, they believed that the naval talks should be used for the purpose of helping to pave a path to an eventual settlement with Japan by agreeing to parity in principle or even in practice, which would in turn have the effect of making the Admiralty's plans unnecessary.¹⁶ The Treasury's desire for improved relations with Japan was underlined by their conviction that there were no real issues dividing Britain and Japan, and that relations had deteriorated only because the Foreign Office had consistently, since the time of the Washington Conference of 1922, let an excessive concern for keeping in line with the United States shape its East Asian policy. In this sense they held that Britain had been acting in America's interests rather than its own, a view that Fisher expounded in an addendum to the DRC Report.

'Good relations between ourselves and the Japanese are the last thing the USA desire. With the development of her commercial and other ambitions the United States - while shirking responsibility - regard Asia as an excellent object of exploitation by ourselves, and view Japan as a serious impediment; and what from the American point of view could be more satisfactory than that Britain should pick America's Asiatic chestnuts out of the fire and get embroiled with Japan.'¹⁷

The Foreign Office also recognized the need to ease relations with Japan, but was more inclined than the Treasury and Admiralty to believe that this would not be an easy task due to the wide range of issues that separated the two countries, such as the disputes over commercial relations and the continued problems over China. It was, however, the problem of American disapproval of *rapprochement* with Japan that provoked the ^{most} bitterest division with other ministries. The Foreign Office's view on this issue, over which Craigie as head of the American Department had some influence, was that, while it was clear that too close a tie to Washington could prejudice any chances of reaching a naval agreement with Japan, it was also held that Britain could not afford to alienate the United States. There were a number of reasons for this: first, one of the key restraints on Japan would be removed if the United States were to react to such a move by a further drift towards isolationism; second, if Washington were to refuse to sign a new naval agreement it would lead to just the kind of arms race that Britain wished to avoid; third, American alienation would be disastrous for commercial relations; and, fourth, Britain could not afford to jeopardize its chances of receiving American financial and military support in any forthcoming conflict in Europe. The result was that, though the Foreign Office was wary of antagonizing Japan by forming a common front with the United States, it also recognized that there were limits to Britain's freedom of action *vis-à-vis* Japan.¹⁸

The battle over policy towards Japan and the drawing up of a negotiating position for the naval talks raged throughout the spring and summer of 1934, with the three ministries all struggling to make their views prevail. This was an exasperating time for Craigie, as the disputes not only delayed the completion of his instructions but also involved, as part of the

political manoeuvring, criticism of his previous efforts. In particular, he reacted fiercely to a waspish memorandum from Sir Warren Fisher of 19 April 1934, that criticized the Foreign Office treatment of Japan and made reference to the inadequacies of the 1930 London Naval Treaty, which was categorized as being designed to meet American needs instead of protecting British interests. Craigie's response was to draft an equally forthright riposte, whose tone was so harsh that his superior Sir Robert Vansittart was forced to rewrite it.¹⁹ Craigie's original draft vigorously defended the previous naval treaties, and strongly contradicted the Treasury assumption that Britain should turn its back on the United States by arguing, in one of the few passages retained by Vansittart, that-

'...it is reasonable to suppose that Japan's present rulers would be less likely to embark on any policy of aggression and adventure if they knew there was a good general understanding between the United Kingdom and the United States than if they saw Anglo-American relations deteriorating to the point at which they were, say in 1920.'²⁰

Craigie's task of developing a policy for the new naval conference was not undermined only by the Treasury, but also by a series of preparatory talks held in June 1934 with an American delegation led by Norman Davis. These conversations revealed that the gulf over cruiser numbers was as wide as ever, and that the United States was opposed to any scheme which would give Japan equality whether in practice or in principle. This disappointment led Craigie to the conclusion that, unless President Roosevelt could be influenced to be more sympathetic to Britain's needs, it was very unlikely that agreement could be reached with Washington, and he therefore suggested that he should travel to Washington himself to attempt to ease relations, a task he had previously undertaken in spring 1928. However this proposal met with little support from other officials involved in the naval negotiations and was quickly forgotten.²¹

The setback to the Admiralty and Foreign Office position caused by the unsatisfactory talks with the Americans increased the Treasury's ammunition, and Chamberlain's case received a further boost in July with news of a report from the British Ambassador in Tokyo, Sir Robert Clive, that the Japanese Foreign Minister, Hirota Kōki, was toying with the idea

of a non-aggression pact with Britain.²² This not only encouraged the pro-Japanese lobby to redouble their efforts, but also brought the Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, closer to their camp. On 20 August Simon wrote to Vansittart to ask how feasible it would be to seek a non-aggression pact and, on the naval side, to enquire whether the problem of Japan's concern about equality could be side-stepped by accepting the principle of parity allied to a voluntary declaration of the limits to which Japan would build.²³

Craigie was one of the officials Vansittart asked to comment on the Foreign Secretary's proposals, and he expressed a guarded optimism about their utility. In particular he was keen to develop Simon's idea of a voluntary declaration from its vague roots into a practical proposal, and noted in this context that-

'Our task, which should not pass the wit of man, is to help the more moderate elements in Japan to 'save face' in this matter and so overcome the extremist elements who want no naval treaty at all.'²⁴

He proceeded to argue that this could be achieved by linking an individual state's voluntary declaration to its naval needs, and to protect against any state building in excess of its declared intention through the use of an escalator clause and by making the declaration a binding treaty obligation. This was a careful piece of planning designed to provide a practical basis for the furtherance of naval limitation but still cautious enough to avoid compromising British security. Away from the narrow concerns of naval policy Craigie also responded to the wider issue of a non-aggression pact with Japan, though he still saw this in terms of assisting the naval talks. His suggestion in this field was that a bilateral agreement reiterating the terms of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, that is renouncing the right to aggressive war, would be useful as a means of giving Japan a guarantee of its security, and that this in turn would encourage the Japanese to compromise over their fleet, although he also noted that-

'This would, in practice, be mere camouflage - but heavy applications of political camouflage may be necessary if we are to prevent naval limitation from going by the board next year.'²⁵

Craigie's sympathetic response to Simon's proposals was not an attitude shared by either Vansittart or the head of the Far Eastern Department, Charles Orde, who both displayed a greater wariness of Japan and a recognition that any political agreement would have to deal with the thorny problem of Anglo-Japanese differences over China.²⁶ The disagreements between Craigie and his colleagues were not, however, so great as to push the former into the Treasury camp, even though on the surface his views appeared to dovetail with those of Chamberlain. This was because Craigie's response to Simon's enquiries was influenced by his belief that the signing of a new naval limitation treaty was essential to Britain's security and that any ideas that could break the potential deadlock in the talks should be pursued, whereas the Treasury viewed Simon's proposals not through the perspective of saving the naval talks but rather through the need to win over Japan at almost any price. Craigie saw the latter as a highly dangerous policy that would only succeed in alienating the United States and therefore undermine rather than strengthen the future of naval limitation. Craigie's opposition to the Treasury line is particularly interesting in the light of the accusation that he was later seen as a 'Chamberlain man'; it is certainly clear that at this time he had not moved into the Treasury camp, and until the end of 1934 he continued to disagree with Chamberlain and Fisher.²⁷

The perceived threat the Treasury line posed to the naval talks led Craigie to co-operate with his Foreign Office colleagues in trying to curb Chamberlain's enthusiasm. His contribution to this campaign was specifically concerned with raising objections in connection with the implications for the naval talks. In particular he was called to respond to the Chancellor's view of the naval declaration policy, which was that-
'... each of us shall be free to build in future what numbers of each kind of ship we like, subject to such limitations of size and armament as we may agree upon from time to time. And for the purposes of a closer understanding and appreciation of each other's policy let us agree that each year we will communicate to each other the main outlines ... of our programme for the next two years.'²⁸

At first glance this appears to be in line with Craigie's suggestions to Simon, but there were crucial differences; first, Chamberlain was vague

about American involvement, second, he did not insist on the safety net of linking the voluntary declaration to naval needs, and, third, he envisaged the declarations applying only to a two year period, whereas Craigie preferred them to run over six years. Craigie therefore strongly disapproved of Chamberlain's proposals, which he saw as dangerously diluting Foreign Office policy, and he wrote in a report for Simon that-

'The Chancellor would substitute for the existing naval treaties a naval arrangement with Japan for the periodical exchange of naval building programmes. Viewed from this angle the Chancellor's proposal appears to be destructive of further naval limitation and to involve the taking of certain grave risks.'²⁹

Craigie also expressed in this memorandum serious reservations about the Treasury's attitude towards a political agreement with Japan. His understanding was that any treaty between Britain and Japan would be mirrored by one between America and Japan and he saw the Treasury's policy of largely ignoring Washington as disastrous in terms of both the naval talks and the general tenor of Anglo-American relations; he noted that-

'...the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Japan might serve a useful purpose if it is designed to facilitate the maintenance of the existing Anglo-Japanese ratio, to pave the way for a similar American-Japanese Pact and to promote the chance of concluding a multi-lateral naval limitation treaty. If, however, the conclusion of such a pact is to be the signal for a reduction of our relative naval strength and for the abandonment of the naval treaties, then the proposal is fraught with danger to our position and our prestige as a Great Power and ultimately to our security.'³⁰

However, Craigie's objection to the Treasury line was not simply because he felt that it was misguided; he also believed that, in the face of the imminent arrival of the American and Japanese delegations in October for a further round of preliminary talks, Britain could ill-afford the delays caused by Chamberlain and Fisher to the finalizing of its negotiating position. On 7 September, at the height of the debate and with Chamberlain refusing to append his signature to the Naval Conference Committee's report, an exasperated Craigie minuted-

'... are we going to steer for ... Anglo-American cooperation ... or are we

going to line up with Japan (in other words "throw in the sponge" in the Far East) and so make further Anglo-American co-operation impossible? Unless a much clearer policy is formulated by the Cabinet before we meet the Japanese and have further talks with the Americans, it seems pretty clear that we shall fall between two stools. This is an undignified position and exposes the Foreign Office to far more devastating criticism than would a firm seat even on the wrong stool. The fact that a faulty or indecisive policy may have been forced on us by interference and blustering of other Government Departments will unfortunately do nothing to mitigate the acerbity of future attacks on the Foreign Office.'³¹

This concern for the need to settle Britain's policy led Craigie to draft two papers with the Admiralty for circulation to the Naval Conference Committee with the aim of stalling further Treasury pressure and clarifying British policy. The first, dated 3 October, dealt with the progress that had been made up to that point in talks with the other naval powers, and noted in particular Japanese reluctance to connect political questions with the naval conversations.³² The second undated memorandum referred specifically to the issue of Anglo-Japanese naval talks and the likelihood that the Japanese proposals would be unacceptable, and came to the conclusion that it was extremely probable that Britain would have to put forward the idea of voluntary declarations.³³ These memoranda were for consideration at a meeting of the Cabinet's Naval Conference Committee on 16 October, and by this date the Foreign Office received further ammunition in the form of discouraging reports from Tokyo about Japan's desire for a political agreement.³⁴ The result was that at the meeting it was agreed to postpone all talk of a political agreement with Japan until progress had been made in the naval talks, and that if in the latter there was deadlock between the Japanese and American positions, then Craigie's plan for voluntary declarations would be offered as a compromise.³⁵

This outcome was largely due to the stance taken by MacDonald and Simon, but they owed many of the arguments they used to Craigie, and this helped to raise Craigie's prestige even higher. Simon, in particular, was very impressed with his chief naval expert, whose views mirrored his to a much greater extent than those expressed by the Far Eastern Department, and he

wrote to Vansittart on 23 October describing Craigie as 'the cement which keeps the bricks together'.³⁶ Vansittart was, in turn, very pleased to see this tribute to one of his juniors and wrote back enthusiastically to Simon lauding Craigie as-

'... one of the most honest-to-God workers and you can always rely on him to have every case at his finger-tips. I think you know that I feel your team would be strengthened, if promotion could be found for him in the office. I should greatly miss his energy + reliability if we had to let him go abroad. But I doubt if we can keep him much longer where he is - unpromoted.'³⁷

The naval negotiations finally began in late October and soon, as expected, revealed deep divisions between Japan and the United States.³⁸ The former had come to the talks with a proposal that there should be a common upper limit of total tonnage for all naval powers, and that within that limit states should be able to build as they wished. This was clearly designed as a means of allowing the Japanese to gain parity with the United States and Britain, and was therefore unacceptable to Washington and London. The American position differed little from the proposals they had made to the British earlier in the year and showed no willingness to compromise over the ratios either in practice or in principle. Once these negotiating stances had been clarified, the problem was to find a means of keeping the talks afloat and to reconcile the glaring differences of opinion between the delegations. Craigie noted in a memorandum on 27 October-

'The United States representatives may be expected to adopt an uncompromising attitude ... We on the other hand will presumably say we believe the Japanese are not bluffing when they say they would rather denounce the Washington Treaty ... and that a better course is to handle the Japanese representatives with patience and to see whether, without compromising the naval security of any Power, some method cannot be found of meeting the Japanese on the point of prestige.'³⁹

The problem was that to build the ground for a compromise Britain had to play to two disparate audiences; on one side there was the need to reaffirm to the Americans Britain's opposition to parity for Japan, while on the other the need to try to meet Japan's demands by agreeing to equality in principle, putting forward the building declaration proposals,

and investigating the chances of a political pact. This was a desperate, over-complex and contradictory policy which stood little chance of success and was very likely to end up by pleasing nobody, but the only alternative was to bring the whole edifice of naval limitation crashing down, which Craigie and his Cabinet sponsors, MacDonald and Simon, had no intention of allowing.

This policy, however, met with criticism from the Treasury and the Admiralty; the former deemed that it was the Americans rather than the Japanese who had brought the talks to an impasse. Fisher, whom Chamberlain had insisted should be an adviser to the British delegation, believed that Craigie's cautious attempt to find a compromise was the result of too great a concern for keeping Washington in the talks, and that Britain should instead concentrate all its efforts on coming to terms with Japan. In one letter to Chamberlain, he observed-

'Mr Craigie's activities continue the familiar proceeding of cursing in common (with the Americans) the wicked Japanese. Admiral Chatfield, though a man of exquisite restraint, allowed himself to refer to the latter part of that paper (NCM (35)26) "as a piece of damned impertinence" on the part of Mr Craigie. I told him that I had anticipated him by suggesting to you on Saturday that the time was near for the formal appointment of Mr Craigie as secretary of the American delegation.'⁴⁰

His feelings on the matter ran so high that he wrote rather tastelessly to Craigie on 21 November that-

'I see no reason why my two sons or the scores of thousands in that generation should be murdered (and in vain) in a few years time. And that is what will happen if we allow our "policy" to be dictated by Mr. Norman Davis.'⁴¹

The problem as far as the Admiralty was concerned was not so much that Britain was sticking too close to the United States, but that as it was obvious that there could be no agreement over quantitative disarmament, Britain should not waste any more time trying to find a compromise but concentrate on qualitative limitation. The Vice-Chief of Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral Little, noted simply that Craigie's efforts were-

'...simply making a fetish of a quantitative treaty at all costs in opposition to common sense.'⁴²

The irony was that at the same time that Craigie was being accused of possessing too pro-American an attitude, reports were coming from the British Ambassador in Washington, Sir Ronald Lindsay, stating that the State Department saw him as 'unhelpful'.⁴³ This accusation arose from a particular incident where it appeared that Craigie had been deliberately misinforming Davis about the extent of the British talks with the Japanese, a suspicion which tied in with the general dissatisfaction in Washington with Britain's willingness to compromise rather than following the American preference for breaking off the talks due to Japan's impossible demands, and with the American fear that Britain was still planning a political agreement with Japan. It transpired that Davis had misinterpreted the British position, but the incident remains as a symbol of the troubled Anglo-American relationship at this juncture and also reveals how Craigie was at the centre of the tortuous diplomacy undertaken to avoid the collapse of naval limitation.

Unfortunately, despite all the twists and turns of British policy, there was from the first very little chance of reaching an agreement. The Far Eastern Department had in fact been right all along in disparaging the hopes of the Treasury, and indeed of Craigie, that a deal could be made, because as early as September 1934 the Japanese Navy General Staff had forced the Okada Cabinet to agree that nothing less than the common upper limit plan would suffice and that if it was rejected the denunciation of the Washington Treaty should follow at the end of December.⁴⁴ Inevitably, considering this obstacle, the talks failed to reach any settlement and on 29 December the Japanese went ahead with abrogation.⁴⁵ This move did not, however, mean that the mood in London was one of total pessimism for the future, as the head of the Japanese delegation, Rear-Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, had shown some sympathy with the British proposals and had promised that, on his return to Japan, he would present to the naval authorities the proposal for voluntary declarations.⁴⁶ The belief in the Treasury, and shared by Craigie, that this would lead to some tangible improvement in the Japanese position only went to show that there still remained a disturbing naïvety about the situation.

While waiting for Yamamoto to make his report to his superiors in Japan, the naval talks turned away from concentration on Pacific issues to a consideration of the position in Europe, a development which led eventually to the signing of an Anglo-German Naval Agreement on 18 June 1935. Craigie played a major part in these negotiations, acting in the absence of the Foreign Secretary as the head of the British delegation in talks which gave him the dubious privilege of negotiating with Ribbentrop. The latter made clear from the outset that Germany desired to build up to 35% of the tonnage of the British fleet, and that there was no room for compromise. The fear that a British refusal could lead to Germany's building to an even greater ratio, allied to concern about a possible German-Japanese understanding, caused Craigie and the Admiralty to advise the Cabinet reluctantly to agree to Hitler's demand, although they recognized that to do so would continue the idea of ratios and therefore prejudice the chances of a future general agreement on the exchange of naval construction declarations.⁴⁷

Craigie's handling of these talks further boosted his reputation as a consummate negotiator, and helped to cement his links to the active appeasers within the Cabinet. These contacts were additionally fostered by the development of co-operation between the Treasury and Craigie in seeking a means of drawing closer to Japan. The coming together of the two parties who had sniped at each other with such venom in the autumn of 1934 was the result of a change of perceptions, largely on the Treasury side. By the end of 1934 Chamberlain and his advisers appeared to recognise that a return to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was simply not feasible and that the United States could not be ignored.⁴⁸ This brought the Treasury more into line with Craigie's original position, and laid the basis in January 1935 for co-operation in a further attempt to improve relations with Japan. As for Craigie, his enthusiasm for a further approach to Japan was influenced by the belief that Yamamoto's task of convincing the Imperial Japanese Navy would be made considerably easier if Britain made a serious effort to improve relations in the political and economic fields. Talks with the Japanese Ambassador to London, Matsudaira Tsuneo, helped to convince Craigie that Foreign Minister Hirota would be receptive to some kind of political pact, and he noted after one such conversation that-

'As our objective is to be appeasement in the Far East, the matters which I would like to see covered (by a consultative pact) are those falling within the purview of the Nine-Power Treaty and also any other questions relating to the regions of the Pacific calculated to disturb the relations between the three countries (Britain, Japan and the United States).'49

The opportunity for a renewed diplomatic effort was, as shown previously, provided by the disastrous financial conditions affecting China at the end of 1934. Craigie sympathized with the Treasury's plans for co-operation with Japan in aiding China, as they held the promise of improving the atmosphere in Anglo-Japanese relations and therefore the chances of concessions in the naval talks, and he played an important role in persuading the Foreign Office to agree to proceed with these proposals. His main contribution came in late January when he furthered the Treasury's proposals by explaining them to those he referred to as 'the pundits of the Far Eastern Department'.50 Craigie after some effort overcame Orde's initial caution, which caused Fisher to note to Chamberlain that-

'Craigie's afternoon outing with this singularly unpromising material must have been a masterpiece of cajolery or coercion, or both, for he has induced the Far Eastern department to agree that ... the present abortive loan should be taken as an occasion for getting together with the Japanese, and, of course, the Americans, and possibly others.'51

Following this he was also involved in February in the drafting of a Foreign Office memorandum on the need for an understanding with Japan, and persuaded the Far Eastern Department to recognize that-

'... the chief aim of British policy in the Far East at the present moment should be to endeavour to bring about a general detente because there is just a chance that such a detente might make it possible to reach agreement in the naval negotiations.'52

After this his involvement declined, which was perhaps fortunate because once it became clear that the Leith-Ross mission had only succeeded in damaging relations with Japan, the whole issue became an area of bitter dispute between the Foreign Office and the Treasury.53

The lack of progress in improving relations with Japan was mirrored by the absence of any sign from Tokyo that Yamamoto had been able to influence the

Navy to compromise. By July 1935 Craigie and the Admiralty had begun to press for a naval conference to be called in the autumn on the grounds that, with quantitative limitation seemingly in its death-throes, it was necessary for qualitative limits to be set so that guidelines for the construction of new ships for the Royal Navy would exist. Delays were, however, caused by the need to hold talks with the French, and it was not until October that a decision to hold the conference was finally made.⁵⁴ By this time the situation in Japan had become marginally more hopeful due to the imminent retirement of Admiral Katō Kanji, one of the chief opponents of naval limitation, and reports that the Gaimushō was pushing the Navy very hard over the need to compromise. This led Craigie to propose that Japanese acceptance of quantitative limitation could be eased by reducing the initial declaration of building programmes to apply to a period of two years rather than six, and to note rather optimistically in a memorandum that-

'Many competent observers forecast that during the next two years moderating influences are likely to make themselves increasingly felt in the conduct of Japan's foreign policy, with the result that the Cabinet would be in a position to exercise better control over the extremists at the Japanese Ministry of Marine.'⁵⁵

The Second London Naval Conference finally opened on 9 December 1935 and soon revealed that Craigie's hopes for a more moderate Japanese negotiating position were not justified, as the Japanese delegation led by a Navy hardliner, Admiral Nagano Osami, stuck rigidly to the previous demand for a common upper limit.⁵⁶ This lack of compromise was mirrored by the attitude of the United States, who remained as determined as ever to resist the Japanese claim to parity. As the talks once again sank into stalemate, it became clear that there were only two means of making progress; either through Japan's agreement to Britain's new proposals for the declaration of building programmes, or by a renewed attempt to secure a political agreement. Britain's attempt to push through the former soon floundered on the grounds that the Japanese delegation saw it as merely a way of continuing the ratio system under a different guise. The only option left was the well-worn path of attempting to reach a wider political understanding.

The problem with this approach was that the tensions in North China in the autumn of 1935 had strengthened the resolve of those in the Foreign Office who believed that Anglo-Japanese differences were irreconcilable. This process was under-pinned by the arrival of Anthony Eden as the new Foreign Secretary halfway through the Conference. Eden, in contrast to his predecessors, Simon and Hoare, was not at all sympathetic to Japan but was very aware of the need for an improved relationship with the United States.⁵⁷ This meant that when on 17 December, three days before the Conference broke for its Christmas adjournment, Clive reported from Tokyo that Hirota had told him, that if no naval agreement emerged, then it might be necessary to stabilize relations in the Pacific by arranging a political pact between Japan, Britain and the United States, the reaction in the Foreign Office was largely frosty. Even Craigie's initial response to this news was unenthusiastic and he noted that-

'An agreement in the political field would lose much of its value to us if it did not serve to bring Japan into a naval treaty. If no agreement results, this can only be because of the uncompromising attitude of Japan and this would surely be a poor basis on which to build a political agreement.'⁵⁸

This did not mean, however, that Craigie had given up the idea of reaching some kind of understanding, and his interest was stimulated by a further report from Clive on 27 December, which included the statement-

'I have no doubt that the Japanese Government would welcome some political understanding with us and if possible Americans which would justify reduction in their naval expenditure.'⁵⁹

This telegram spurred Craigie into writing a lengthy minute on the course and prospects of the naval conference which he circulated to Vansittart and Eden. Craigie presented a pessimistic picture of the progress made up to that point, but observed that-

'... we have for some time been considering whether any form of political understanding between the United States, Japan and ourselves would ease this naval difficulty. So far no very hopeful method of approach to a political *detente* has been discovered, but I am not sure that ~~that~~ our earlier examination of the political aspect has been sufficiently exhaustive.'⁶⁰

Craigie followed up by drafting a telegram to Clive to try to clarify Hirota's position and to enquire about the likelihood of a Sino-Japanese non-aggression pact being negotiated. This telegram was sent to Tokyo on 4 January 1936 and led to a speedy and disheartening response from Clive, who stated that he felt Hirota was merely thinking out loud and that the Navy remained firmly opposed to the Gaimushō interfering in naval policy.⁶¹

Craigie's hopes were also dashed by the attitude of the United States. On 6 January Craigie raised the idea of a tripartite agreement with Norman Davis, the head of the American delegation, but Davis showed little interest and instead concentrated on the necessity of ensuring that, if the Conference were to break up, then it would be Japan who would be seen to be at fault.⁶² American indifference was further evident when Craigie attended a meeting between Eden and the American Under-Secretary of State, William Phillips, on 8 January, at which the latter made clear that even a simple consultative pact would not be worth pursuing.⁶³ The final nail in the coffin came from Sir Ronald Lindsay, the British Ambassador in Washington, who wrote to Eden on 13 January that-

'My conclusion is that United States Government would scrutinise any suggestion for a political pact in the Far East with care amounting to suspicion especially if it tended to make any political concession to Japan.'⁶⁴

Craigie's lone attempt to search for a political agreement was thus doomed to failure and did not gather any support from his superiors, as Eden was far more concerned to curry favour with Washington than with Tokyo.

As Craigie pushed for a political agreement the naval talks built up to their inevitable climax. On 6 January the conference reconvened with a meeting between the British and Japanese delegations, which repeated the same tired arguments and revealed that Japan had decided that if the common upper limit was not accepted then it would be forced to walk out of the conference. On 15 January Admiral Nagano presented the Japanese case for the last time, and after a short debate a vote was taken by the five naval Powers which led to the common upper limit being rejected by four votes to one. The next day Japan announced its departure from the conference. Despite this setback the conference did not break up but continued to meet

to discuss a system of limitation by voluntary declarations and qualitative restrictions.⁶⁵ These talks eventually led to an agreement on 28 March between Britain, the United States and France, which formalised the declaration of building programmes on an annual basis, and introduced a system of qualitative limitations that included the stipulations that battleships were not to exceed 35,000 tons and were not to be armed with guns above a calibre of 14 inches.⁶⁶ The new treaty was, however, only due to come into operation on 1 January 1937, and it was therefore hoped that in the interim other powers, and in particular the Soviet Union, Germany and Japan, could be persuaded to accede either formally or informally to the treaty's terms.

The agreement of the last two powers was considered to be especially important as their refusal to abide by the terms threatened to unleash a new naval race which would lead to a general worsening of the tensions that were already undermining international peace, and help to push Germany and Japan closer together. There was increasing evidence that the latter was already in progress with rumours circulating in early January 1936 that a Pact had been signed by the two countries; a report which, though untrue, raised fears in Whitehall.⁶⁷ This development underlined the need to continue discussing naval issues with Japan and to keep an interest in the idea of a political pact, and as early as 18 January Craigie noted that- 'The danger of a policy of complete inactivity lies in the present tendency to a rapprochement between Japan and Germany - if rumour speaks true this is already more than a tendency. If on top of Japan's withdrawal, we allow ourselves to be influenced by the present French demand that no attempt should be made to bring Germany into this Conference at all ... we shall be almost inviting those two powers to come to an understanding...'⁶⁸

This concern, added to his conviction that naval limitation was a necessary goal in itself, led Craigie into a determined effort to draw these two states into agreeing to comply with the terms of the Second London Naval Agreement.

Craigie's conviction that the continuation of naval limitation could help to blunt the revisionism of the 'have-not' nations was not, however, shared by many of his colleagues within the Foreign Office, and differences were

particularly apparent when dealing with Germany. Talks with the Germans over qualitative limitation began even before the signing of the eventual naval treaty, and an agreement had virtually been reached when on 7 March 1936 Hitler advanced his forces into the demilitarized Rhineland. Craigie, despite this unilateral German abrogation of the Locarno Treaty, pushed for the continuation of the naval talks and was supported by the Admiralty, but faced vociferous opposition from other senior members of the Foreign Office. The head of the Central Department, Ralph Wigram, briefly minuted in response to Craigie's plea-

'I sincerely hope we shall suspend these negotiations. I cannot imagine anything more likely to add fuel to the present fire than their continuance.'⁶⁹

Vansittart more moderately recommended that they should be postponed at least until the crisis had died down, while acknowledging that this would be a disappointment to Craigie. The latter, however, did not agree with this judgement, and in typical fashion wrote a cutting reply to the apparent criticisms of his efforts-

'There can be no question of personal disappointment, for I am perfectly accustomed to this sort of thing! But, in view of the intended ^{ed} expansion of our naval strength, I believe the sacrifice of this (the 3 Power) naval treaty will have more serious consequences for this country than the writers of the above minutes may perhaps realise.'⁷⁰

Craigie failed to persuade his colleagues, who had the support of Eden, to change their minds, and the result was that the talks were only re-convened in May, by which time it appeared that the German position had hardened as they were now demanding to build five A-Class cruisers rather than the three that they had been prepared to agree to in March. This reopened the internal Foreign Office dispute, with Craigie naturally complaining that he had been right in the first place; this led the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lord Stanhope, to counter that-

'Had he [Craigie] kept himself ... more closely in touch with the German situation he would have been able to realise there are bigger fish to be considered than the building or non-building of 2 Class A cruisers.'⁷¹

This round of talks, at which Craigie was brought once again into contact with Ribbentrop, proved to be more difficult than those of the previous

year due to German demands to maintain parity with the French and Soviet navies. An agreement was finally signed on 17 July 1937, the same day as the Anglo-Soviet naval treaty. To some observers these efforts to keep alive the spirit of naval disarmament in Europe appeared a fruitless task, but Craigie consistently maintained his belief in the necessity of his diplomacy as part of the process of ensuring peace. He noted optimistically in June 1936 that-

'If one detects a deterioration in the Ribbentrop attitude between June 1935 and this June, this is, I venture to think, not a reason for giving up Germany in despair but for redoubling our efforts for a settlement in Western Europe, while it may still be achieved.'⁷²

This comment which conjures up the image of days spent on intricate talks building towards a seemingly unattainable compromise stands as a typical example of Craigie's attitude towards negotiations and sheds light on the reputation he acquired for building 'houses out of straw'.

Craigie's most difficult task, however, was not dealing with Germany, but rather reconciling Japan to the terms of the Second London Naval Agreement. He was convinced that Japan would eventually be willing to come into line since its refusal to abide by the Treaty's terms could lead the United States to increase decisively its fleet in the Pacific thereby provoking a naval race in the Pacific which Japan could not win. The problem for Craigie was to find a method of approach which would allow Japan to compromise without losing face, but with the failure of his last effort to investigate the chances of a political agreement it was not easy to see how this could be achieved.

The chances that such an approach would be successful were not helped by the continuing problem of the attitude of the United States, which remained consistently opposed to any compromise with Japan. The most direct manifestation of this was the American insistence in early 1936 that, in addition to the naval treaty there should be an exchange of letters reaffirming Anglo-American parity, a move which could only antagonize the Japanese. The American attitude was summed up in a conversation between Craigie and Norman Davis on 4 March 1936, when Davis responded to Craigie's concern for the effect of such a move on Japan by stating that-

'... no amount of honeyed words would bring Japan into the treaty; the only argument that would have weight with their realistic statesmen was that England and the United States intended to work closely together in naval matters and to allow no misunderstandings to arise between us.'⁷³

Britain was not in any position to resist such American pressure, as the deterioration of the European situation during 1936 made it ever more necessary not to jeopardize the relationship with Washington, and Britain was forced into the position of having to respond enthusiastically to any initiatives emanating from the Roosevelt administration no matter how bizarre. This policy was not accepted simply by Eden, who consistently showed a desire to co-operate with the United States, but even by the far more sceptical Vansittart.⁷⁴ Craigie, in his capacity as supervisor of the American Department, was well aware of the advantages which would accrue from better relations, and he noted on 21 May, after the American Secretary Henry Morgenthau had approached Sir Ronald Lindsay about financial co-operation, that-

'It seems to me ordinary common sense that, with the situation in Europe as bad as it is, we should maintain with the United States as good relations as are possible, having regard to present isolationist sentiment in that country.'⁷⁵

The result of this concern for American opinion was that Britain was forced to continue to toe a line acceptable to Washington in East Asia.

These obstacles meant that, apart from routine soundings of the Japanese position, Craigie's policy for bringing Japan into line rested on negotiating treaties with the European nations and hoping that Japan would then come into line to avoid being isolated or blamed for the collapse of the system. The result was that it was not until October 1936 that Craigie made an official approach to the new Japanese Ambassador in London, Yoshida Shigeru, about the need for an agreement over 14 inch guns before March 1937. By the autumn of 1936, however, the naval issue had once again, due to Yoshida's efforts to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive agreement, become an element in a possible Anglo-Japanese understanding, and in the Ambassador's first draft memorandum presented to Chamberlain in October, one of his proposals was for the reconvening of the naval conference.⁷⁶ This was not what Craigie desired but he did see some hope in Yoshida's

proposals, and when in December Clive recommended that talk of an understanding be postponed, Craigie opposed this view by noting that-

'My belief is that if we now return a reply to Mr. Yoshida on the lines proposed, this will just tip the balance in favour of a more reasonable Jap. attitude towards the naval question.'⁷⁷

Yoshida's hopes for an improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations were not, however, shared by the Imperial Japanese Navy and the official negative reply to the enquiry about whether Japan would commit itself to the 14 inch gun eventually arrived in March 1937, while Craigie was on holiday in America.⁷⁸

With this anticlimax Craigie's efforts over the previous three years to continue to involve Japan in the naval limitation process effectively came to an end; all his 'resources of skill and diplomacy' had failed to bring about the desired conclusion and the stage was set for a new era of naval competition in the Pacific. He had battled in these years against impossible odds, and had shown the tenacity and flexibility that would later serve him well in his negotiations in Tokyo. As one historian has noted-

'Craigie handled virtually all the day-to-day communication on arms control matters between the two Governments..., and his presence and experience gave continuity and coherence to successive conferences and negotiations.'⁷⁹

The fundamental problem that had defeated his efforts was the difficulty of trying to square the interests of three main naval Powers with their very different positions in the international system. In connection with this it is interesting to note that in a conversation with one of the Japanese delegates to the 1935 Conference following the Japanese walkout, Craigie stated that-

'...it was well known to both countries that, were it not for other countries, we could probably reach a naval understanding without much difficulty...'⁸⁰

Despite this sad end to his endeavours Craigie did not feel that his efforts had been wasted and in his memoirs 'Behind the Japanese Mask' he defended the 1936 London Naval Treaty stating that it 'functioned satisfactorily' until it was broken by the Germans in 1939. He also wrote

that he believed that the Treaty was a good basis for future attempts at arms limitation as it tackled one of the key factors in naval rivalry - suspicion.⁸¹

Although Craigie had finally been unable to win Japan over to the 1936 Naval Treaty, his work from 1934 had raised him to a position of considerable seniority in the Foreign Office, so that in January 1935 he had been promoted to Assistant Under-Secretary and in June 1936 had received a KCMG. It was, however, by no means automatic that having reached these heights he should be made Ambassador to Japan, one of the Foreign Office's senior foreign postings. The decision to appoint him to this post can largely be seen as a reflection of the fact that by 1936 he was the senior member of the Foreign Office with the greatest experience of negotiating with the Japanese. He had developed good contacts with a number of important Japanese figures of whom Matsudaira Tsuneo, who was now the Minister of the Imperial Household, and Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, the Navy Vice-Minister, were the most important. Also acting to Craigie's advantage was his great skill in handling tricky negotiations, a quality which could serve him well in Tokyo. It was therefore not entirely surprising when it was announced in the Times on 13 March 1937 that he was to replace Sir Robert Clive as Ambassador to Japan, although in doing so he was promoted over the heads of some of his colleagues such as Sir Lancelot Oliphant.⁸² This news did not ~~it~~ provoke much comment, although Clive wrote to Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, the Ambassador to Nanking, stating that he felt that it was a shame that Sir Hughe, himself, had not been appointed, as 'your year in China would have been invaluable.'⁸³ The most interesting reaction, however, came from Ribbentrop, Craigie's former opponent over the negotiating table, who wrote in a memorandum for Hitler in January 1938-

'The Foreign Office in the summer sent its most able official, Sir Robert Craigie to Japan. In order to be able to protect the heart of the British Empire, England will in my opinion at the proper time do everything she can to reestablish good relations with Italy and Japan...'⁸⁴

It is not entirely clear, however, to what extent Craigie's appointment can be explained by his obvious sympathy for a policy of moderation towards

Japan. Certainly the decision to send him to Tokyo, which was taken in January 1937, occurred at a time when support in government circles for a new attempt to come to terms with Japan was rapidly increasing and had spread beyond the usual coterie in the Treasury into the Services and the Foreign Office.⁸⁵ This was only partly a response to the efforts of Yoshida and rather more to do with, first, the conclusion of Leith-Ross's report on East Asia which recommended that Britain should seek to improve trade relations with Japan and protect British economic interests in China, and, second, a growing awareness in the face of the ever worsening relations with Germany and Italy that, if Britain did not ease its relations with Japan, there was the threat that Japan could take advantage of Britain's weak defences in East Asia, while war raged in Europe.

This strategic motive for easing relations with Japan was given an enormous boost in the autumn of 1936 by the news of the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact by Germany and Japan on 25 November 1936.⁸⁶ Although on the surface this was simply an agreement to exchange information about Comintern activities, it also included a supplementary protocol where both signatories agreed to remain strictly neutral should the other signatory be attacked by the Soviet Union and to not sign any political treaties with the Soviet Union.⁸⁷ These latter clauses were intended to be kept secret by Germany and Japan, but, due to the successful breaking by the British Government Code and Cypher School of the Japanese diplomatic code, the Foreign Office was very quickly made aware of these terms.⁸⁸ Knowledge of this protocol made it clear that the two revisionist states were coming together in a political and possibly military combination which could menace Britain just as easily it could the Soviet Union. This situation led Vansittart to prepare in December 1936 a long memorandum entitled 'The World Situation and British Rearmament' in which he urged the need for Britain to speed up its rearmament to contain the German threat, and to buy time by arranging a colonial deal with Germany, an idea that had been turned down earlier in the year by the Committee of Imperial Defence.⁸⁹ He also noted in this paper the problems raised by Japan and wrote-

'What the agreement clearly does ... is to introduce Japan into the orbit of European affairs at a particularly delicate and dangerous phase, and to increase the probability that, in given circumstances, Germany and Japan

will now act together. The Japanese Ambassador in London has recently said that if we cannot find an alternative policy in which Japan could co-operate with us ... those who favour an even closer relationship between Japan and Germany will have their way. He added that he regarded such tendencies as highly dangerous for his country. They are also dangerous for ours.'90

Vansittart's observations generated a good deal of interest and one of those who subsequently minuted his opinions was Craigie. Unfortunately the latter's comments did not include any reflections on Japan, although elsewhere he made his views clear by responding to Clive's lack of enthusiasm for the Eden-Yoshida talks by noting that-

'... to rebuff our friends in Japan just at the moment when there is much searching of the Japanese heart as to the wisdom of the recent agreement with Germany would be to play the German game.'91

Craigie's reflections on Vansittart's memorandum are important, however, on another scale for they provide an understanding of his view of the world situation. His general approach was to concur with the views of his superior, although he made clear that he did not see a clash with Germany as inevitable but noted rather that-

'... it is the "dynamic of events" which makes the situation so intensely dangerous and the fact that so many of the world's autocrats appear to be ill-balanced, impulsive and jumpy.'92

He went on to express specifically his agreement with Vansittart over the colonial question, and wrote, in a passage which throws a good deal of light on his later insistence that the Foreign Office pursue a policy of compromise with Japan, that-

'The recent decision of the CID Committee on this subject is one which, I fear, the country will have cause to rue in the years ahead of us. But a colonial settlement should only be part of a general political settlement in which Germany will declare herself satisfied once for all so far as territorial expansion is concerned. What puts us wrong not only with Germany but with the whole world is the slogan, when applied to mandates, of "what we have we hold".'93

Vansittart's comments on Japan hit a sympathetic chord with Admiral Chatfield, who in his notes on Vansittart's paper on 5 January 1937, wrote at length of the prospect of developing an understanding with Japan. He deprecated the proposal in some quarters that there could ever be a return to the days of the alliance, because of the dominance of the military party in Japan, but stated that he did believe that-

'... even some tacit agreement which would support the diplomatic side of Japan and form some curb on any aggressive action against China or against our own possessions would be of the greatest value, because it would give us greater security in the east for a time... An understanding with Japan ... is therefore the first essential and, difficult as it admittedly is, should not be unobtainable if we make it not a weak aim but a decided policy. Having secured our Eastern Empire against our first commitment, we should be in a stronger position to sit on the fence in Europe.'⁹⁴

Following on from this Chatfield used his influence to persuade his fellow Chiefs of Staff to support a *rapprochement*, and in February 1937 their review of imperial defence noted that-

'From the military aspect ... we warmly support the efforts of our diplomacy to adjust the differences between Japan and ourselves ... Any agreement with Japan would enormously strengthen the Empire but at the present time the probability of the conclusion of such an agreement is remote.'⁹⁵

The doubts about whether an agreement was possible were due largely to the impression that Japan still intended to dominate China, and that Yoshida did not have any approval from the Gaimushō for the soundings he was making and also due to the problems thrown up by the Keelung incident where two British sailors had been beaten up by Japanese police on Formosa.⁹⁶ These difficulties, however, began to evaporate in the spring of 1937 when changes within Japan appeared to promise a more moderate line towards China. In particular the choice of Satō Naotake, the former Ambassador to France, as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Hayashi cabinet augured well for a more conciliatory tone to Japanese policy.⁹⁷ The easing of tensions in China was also matched by an apparently less rigid mood in Washington, with Roosevelt in April 1937 presenting to Eden through Davis a proposal for the neutralization of the Pacific.⁹⁸ By May 1937 even Eden, who had

never been noted for his patience with Japan, reported to the Defence Plans (Policy) Sub-Committee that-

'The objective he had in mind ... was an agreement which, while falling short of an alliance, nevertheless rested on a community of interests as regards the joint policy of England and Japan towards China. There appeared to be the signs of the dawn of a new era in the relations between China and Japan since Japan was apparently modifying her views in regard to the right way of dealing with China.'⁹⁹

Craigie was, not surprisingly, sympathetic to this drive towards an understanding with Japan and in the spring and summer of 1937 before his departure for Japan he made clear his hopes for the future on a number of occasions. For example in response to the Admiralty's proposal in April for 'A New Standard of Naval Strength' to deal with the increasing threat to British maritime interests, Craigie noted that the Admiralty seemed to be too cautious about the chances of *rapprochement* with Japan, and he noted in terms similar to Eden that-

'... it is possible to conceive of an agreement with Japan which, falling short of an alliance, would nevertheless rest on a real reciprocity of interests, based in turn on a new era in Sino-Japanese relations.'¹⁰⁰

In stating this view Craigie was not, however, just showing blind faith in Japan, for at the same time he argued the need to negotiate from a position of strength by stating-

'Dealing as we are with a militarist element in Japan whose worship of force is second only to the militant Nazis, we shall produce the maximum effect on the Japanese mind only if we can leave the Japanese Government in no doubt as to our determination to restore our armaments to their former relative position in the world balance.'¹⁰¹

This was an important qualification to put on the procedure of reaching an understanding and demonstrates that Craigie was not approaching his new post with the views of a naïve Japanophile, but rather that, in line with the views of Vansittart and Chatfield, he saw Japan in terms of the world situation.

Craigie also commented on the idea of an expanded Four Power Pact presented by Prime Minister Joseph Lyons of Australia in May 1937 at the Imperial

Conference in London, and in this context noted his belief that, before proceeding with a multinational approach, it was wiser to concentrate on simply improving Anglo-Japanese relations and assisting the favourable trend in Sino-Japanese relations.¹⁰² In another episode Craigie's hopes were encouraged further by a meeting on 2 June with Yoshida who handed him a draft reply to a British proposal for negotiations that seemed to offer real promise for the future.¹⁰³ This atmosphere thus bred a sense of hope for what could be achieved in Tokyo, and when he recalled his feelings at this time in *Behind the Japanese Mask*, Craigie wrote-

'... I was not convinced that an Anglo-Japanese war was inevitable. On the contrary, I believed that the moderate elements, despite the ground they had lost in previous years, were still capable of delaying, if not preventing, Japan's plunge into a major war. I also believed that, with Germany and Italy arming to the teeth and intent on world conquest, it would be folly for Britain to take on Japan simultaneously...'¹⁰⁴

By the time Craigie departed for Japan in late July, however, the optimism for the future was beginning to disperse. On 7 July Chinese and Japanese forces clashed at Lukouchiao west of Peking and the fighting soon began to spread as neither side was, for reasons of prestige, willing to compromise in the name of peace. On 6 August Lord Chatfield wrote to the Commander in Chief China Fleet, Vice-Admiral Little, about his fears for the future-

'It is very unfortunate that this China-Japanese affair has broken out at this time because we were all hoping here that we were going to make real friends with the Japanese once more and it has always been the China situation that has stood in the way, so I do hope that war will not come after all, but at present it looks very like it.'¹⁰⁵

Three days later two Japanese sentries were shot at Shanghai and with the start of fighting in China's largest city all chances for peace were lost. From that moment Craigie's task in Tokyo was to change, even before he had arrived, from being the Ambassador to negotiate a new understanding with Japan to being a diplomat whose job was to try to avoid the outbreak of war between the two countries.

NOTES

1. Letter from Katherine Sansom to Michael Gordon 17 November 1937, in K. Sansom (ed.), *Sir George Sansom and Japan. A Memoir*. (Diplomatic Press, Tallahassee, Fla. 1972) p.96.
2. For more details on this subject, see B. McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government and the United States 1924-1929, Attitudes and Diplomacy*. (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984) pp.55-103 and C. Hall, *Britain, America, and Arms Control 1921-37* (Macmillan, London, 1987) pp. 59-87.
3. *Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP) 1919-1939 Series 1A Vol.V. European and Security Questions 1928* No.490 CP344(28) R. Craigie memorandum 12 November 1928, enclosure in Lord Cushenden 14 November 1928 pp.857-875.
4. 'Anglo-American Relations' W. Churchill memorandum 19 November 1928 in M. Gilbert (ed.), *Winston Churchill Companion vol. 5* (Heinemann, London, 1979) p.1380.
5. Ibid. See also on the Churchill-Craigie clash, D.C. Watt, *Succeeding John Bull. America in Britain's Place 1900-1975*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1984) p.59, and B. McKercher, *op.cit.* pp.175-176
6. Churchill's propensity to bear grudges seems to have affected two other figures relevant to this study. In 1937 he clashed with Sir Maurice Hankey, which may have contributed to the latter's demotion in 1941, and also in 1941 Churchill took exception to Admiral Tom Phillips' criticisms of the Greek campaign and soon after Phillips left his post as Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff to take control of the Eastern Fleet at Singapore.
7. On the 1930 Naval Conference and the naval talks in the years following see C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.88-115.
8. On the subject of the 1935 Naval Conference see S. Pelz, *Race To Pearl Harbor. The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II*. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1974) pp.1-164, and C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.143-170.
9. For the problems facing the Royal Navy in this period see P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. (Allen Lane, London, 1976) pp.315-343.
10. For the problems in Japan over the London Naval Treaty see T. Kobayashi, 'The London Naval Treaty, 1930' in J.W. Morley (ed), *Japan Erupts. The London Naval Conference and the Manchurian Incident 1928-1932*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1984) pp.11-117.
11. PRO FO371/17596 A1977/1938/45 R. Craigie memorandum 9 January 1934.
12. PRO CAB21/404 Sir M. Hankey to R. Craigie 31 January 1934.

13. PRO CAB29/148 NCM(35) 1 'Preparation for the 1935 Naval Conference' Admiral Sir E. Chatfield/Sir R. Vansittart memorandum 23 March 1934.
14. See D.C. Watt, *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Evolution of British Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Longman, London 1965) pp.85-87, S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.104-105, and C. Hall, op.cit. pp.146-150.
15. G.A.H. Gordon, *British Seapower and Procurement Between the Wars. A Reappraisal of Rearmament*. (Macmillan, London, 1988) pp.123-127, and S. Roskill, *British Naval Policy Between the Wars Vol. 2 The Period of Reluctant Armament* (Collins, London, 1976) pp.166-174 & 184-188.
16. For the Treasury view see G.C. Peden, *British Rearmament and the Treasury 1932-1939* (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1979) pp.109-110, 113-117, A. Trotter, *Britain and East Asia 1933-1937* (Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, 1975) pp.55-60, D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.89-91, S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.106-110.
17. CAB16/109 DRC19 Note by Sir W. Fisher as addendum to DRC Report 17 February 1934. On Sir Warren Fisher and rearmament, see G.C. Peden, op.cit. pp.52-59, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. p.85 & pp.100-116.
18. On the Foreign Office's opinion of the United States see A. Trotter, op.cit. p.57 & p.93.
19. *DBFP Second Series Vol. XIII. Naval Policy and Defence Requirements July 1934-March 1936*. Appendix 1 Sir W. Fisher memorandum 19 April 1934 pp.924-930.
20. PRO FO371/17597 A4114/1938/45 Sir R. Vansittart to Sir W. Fisher undated draft letter May 1934.
21. *DBFP 2/XIII No. 4 A6484/1938/45 R. Craigie minute 7 August 1934* pp.11-13. For discussion of the talks with the United States see A. Trotter, op.cit. pp.92-94, C. Hall op.cit. pp.151-154, S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.118-122, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.87-92.
22. *DBFP Second Series Vol. XX. Far Eastern Affairs November 6, 1933-July 27, 1936*. No.150 F4798/373/23 Sir R. Clive to Sir J. Simon 5 July 1934 pp.262-265.
23. *DBFP 2/XIII No.8 A7695/1938/45 Sir J. Simon to Sir R. Vansittart* pp.15-16. C. Hall op.cit. p.161 and p.268 footnote 85, argues that the subsequent Foreign Office minutes on the possibility of an Anglo-Japanese Pact were the result of an earlier enquiry by the acting Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, but from Vansittart's call for minutes it appears that in fact this letter from Simon was more important as a stimulus.
24. Ibid, No.8 Appendix 1 R. Craigie note 23 August 1934 p.17. Also quoted in S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.129-130.
25. Ibid, p.18.

26. For Orde's and Vansittart's comments see *Ibid*, No.8 Appendix II pp.19-20 and p.17 footnote 4 respectively.
27. On Craigie and the Treasury, see Trotter *op.cit.* p.98 which implies that Craigie and Chamberlain held vaguely similar views over naval policy towards Japan, and C. Hall, *op.cit.* p.161, who describes Craigie's position more precisely.
28. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.14 F6189/591/23 N. Chamberlain draft memorandum 'The Naval Conference and Relations with Japan' 1 September 1934, enclosure in N. Chamberlain to Sir J. Simon 1 September 1934, p.28. For the internal disputes of September/October 1934, see C. Hall, *op.cit.* 161-162, A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.98-105, and S. Pelz, *op.cit.* pp.129-132.
29. FO371/18184 F6191/591/23 R. Craigie memorandum 3 October 1934.
30. *Ibid.*
31. FO371/17599 A7186/1938/45 R. Craigie minute 7 September 1934. Also quoted in C. Hall, *op.cit.* p.162.
32. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.24 NCM(35)18 Admiralty/Foreign Office memorandum 3 October 1934 pp.44-50.
33. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.28 NCM(35)19 Admiralty/Foreign Office undated memorandum pp.56-61.
34. *DBFP 2/XX* No.269 F5996/591/23 Sir R. Clive to Sir J. Simon 5 October 1934 p.209.
35. CAB29/147 NCM(35) Cabinet Naval Conference (1935) Committee 6th meeting 16 October 1934. See also C. Hall, *op.cit.* p.163, A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.105-106, and S. Pelz, *op.cit.* p.131.
36. Sir J. Simon to Sir R. Vansittart 23 October 1934, in Viscount Simon Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Simon 79.
37. Sir R. Vansittart to Sir J. Simon 30 October 1934, in Ms. Simon 79.
38. For the details of the talks see C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.163-170 and Pelz, *op.cit.* pp.134-151.
39. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.36. A9052/1938/45 R. Craigie note 27 October 1934 p.71.
40. Sir W. Fisher to N. Chamberlain 12 November 1934, in Chatfield Papers, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, 3/2. Also quoted in S. Roskill, *op.cit.* p.296, who believes that Fisher was guilty of exaggerating Chatfield's hostility to Craigie. It is noticeable that in Chatfield's memoirs, *It Might Happen Again* (Heinemann, London, 1947) he favourably notes of Craigie that he '...proved a most valuable, as he was a most able and courageous, fellow fighter.' p.65.

41. Sir W. Fisher to R. Craigie 21 November 1934, in Chatfield Papers 3/2.
42. Vice Admiral Sir C. Little undated minute on record of Director of Plans Capt. E. King/R. Craigie conversation 2 November 1934 in Chatfield Papers 3/2. Admiral Chatfield, too, was firmly of the opinion that the negotiations ought to aim for qualitative disarmament, see S. Pelz, *op.cit.* p.139.
43. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.58 A9264/1938/45 Sir R. Lindsay to Sir J. Simon 15 November 1934 p.112. For the tense Anglo-American relations at this time, see D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* pp.94-99, C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.164-166, and S. Pelz, *op.cit.* pp.140-144.
44. For Japanese attitudes towards the naval talks, see I. Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy, 1869-1942. Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977) pp.203-207, S. Pelz, *op.cit.* pp. 53-63, 132-134, 149-151, and A. Trotter, *op.cit.* p.98 .
45. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.99 A33/22/45 T. Matsudaira/R. Craigie conversation 29 December 1934.
46. For Yamamoto's positive attitude towards the British proposals see *DBFP 2/XIII* No.98 A51/22/45 NC(J) 10th Meeting 28 December 1934.
47. See D.C. Watt, 'The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935. An Interim Judgement.' in *Journal of Modern History* 1956 Vol.28 pp.155-175, H.H. Hall, 'The Foreign Policy Making Process in Britain 1934-1935 and the Origins of the Anglo-German Naval Agreements'. *Historical Journal* 1976 Vol.19 No.2 p.477-500, and C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.173-180.
48. Chamberlain's change of heart evolved slowly from October 1934 as it became clear that the Japanese were not as keen for an agreement as he had first thought; he was also influenced by the dispute with Japan over the Manchukuo oil monopoly see N. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain 27 October 1934, in Chamberlain Papers, Birmingham University Library, NC 18/1/873. The first clear change of heart came when he told Lord Lothian in late November that he no longer believed in Japan's good intentions. See D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* p.98, and C. Hall, *op.cit.* pp.166-168.
49. PRO F0371/18732 A2968/22/45 R. Craigie minute 10 April 1935.
50. *DBFP 2/XX* No.223 T172/1831 Sir W. Fisher to N. Chamberlain note 21 January 1935 p.405. See also A. Trotter, *op.cit.* p.172.
51. *Ibid.*
52. PRO F0371/19313 F1017/6/10 Sir J. Pratt minute 14 February 1935.
53. For the arguments between the Treasury and the Foreign Office over the Leith Ross Mission, see V. Rothwell, 'The Mission of Sir Frederick Leith Ross to the Far East 1935-1936', in *Historical Journal* 1975 Vol.18 No.1 pp.147-169, and A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.165-167.

54. C. Hall, op.cit. pp.180-183, and S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.154-155.
55. DBFP 2/XIII No.522 A8758/22/45 Admiralty/Foreign Office memorandum 11 October 1935 p.668.
56. On the Second London Naval Conference of 1935/36 see C. Hall, op.cit. pp.184-186, S. Pelz, op.cit pp.159-164, A. Trotter, op.cit pp.171-177.
57. On Eden and Japan, see the diary entry of Captain Malcolm Kennedy, a Government Code and Cypher School official and Japanophile, on 21 January 1936 where he notes that Nagai Matsuzo, the top civilian in the Japanese delegation had told a mutual acquaintance that- 'he was disappointed with Eden, who seemed to have very little interest in, or understanding of, the Far East in relation to Japan.' Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University Library, Diary 4/30.
58. PRO FO371/18743 A10617/22/45 R. Craigie minute 20 December 1935 on Sir R. Clive to Sir S.Hoare 17 December 1935, .
59. DBFP 2/XIII No.593 A10893/22/45 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 27 December 1935 p.748.
60. DBFP 2/XIII No.594 A164/4/45 R. Craigie minute 29 December 1935 p.750. See also A. Trotter, op.cit. pp.172-175 in which Craigie is characterised as being naïve in his hope that an agreement could be reached, particularly in contrast with those in the Far Eastern Department who had a more specialized knowledge of Japan. Craigie's assessment of the need for an agreement needs, however, to be seen as a reflection of his desire to save the naval talks. It is worth noting in support of Craigie, that his belief that improved ties with Japan were necessary in relation to wider issues than those simply concerning the Far East was a view shared by the War Office, who in January pressed the Cabinet over the matter of a *rapprochement*. See CAB24/259 CP12(36) 'The Importance of Anglo-Japanese Friendship' Sir A. Duff Cooper memorandum 17 January 1936.
61. DBFP 2/XIII No.598 A126/4/45 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 6 January 1936 p.753.
62. DBFP 2/XIII No.600 A278/4/45 N. Davis/R. Craigie conversation 5 January 1936 pp.755-756.
63. DBFP 2/XIII No.615 A126/4/45 W. Phillips/A. Eden conversation 8 January 1936 pp.768-770.
64. DBFP 2/XIII No.614 A415/4/45 Sir R. Lindsay to A. Eden 13 January 1936. See also A. Trotter op.cit. pp.175-176, and S. Pelz, op.cit. pp.163-164.
65. DBFP 2/XIII No.622 A183/4/45 Admiral O. Nagano to Viscount Monsell 15 January 1936 p.780.
66. The terms of the Second London Naval Treaty are included as Appendix 2 of C. Hall op.cit pp.226-230.

67. The rumour of a Japanese-German agreement is mentioned in *DBFP 2/XX* No.455 F674/303/23 V. Lawford note 24 January pp.764-767 and PRO FO371/19804 A415/4/45 and was supported by a report in the *Morning Post* on 19 January 1936 that a Pact had been signed on 4 January. This is interesting because in the diary of Captain Malcolm Kennedy there is a reference on 5 January 1936 to his working hard on material connected with the Naval Conference, presumably decrypts of telegrams to and from the Japanese Delegation. If such material was being decrypted then it may be that hints of the talks that had begun in Berlin were also discovered, although it is by no means clear from the presently available evidence what Britain was reading of Japanese diplomatic codes at this time. For the Kennedy reference, see J. Ferris, 'From Broadway House to Bletchley Park: The Diary of Captain Malcolm Kennedy, 1934-1946', in *Intelligence and National Security* 1989 Vol. 4 No.3, p.432 and footnote 40 p.447.
68. PRO FO371/19804 A415/4/45 R. Craigie minute 18 January 1936.
69. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.705 A2571/4/45 Footnote 4 R. Wigram minute 12 March 1936 on R. Craigie Memorandum 12 March 1936 p.904. For Wigram's opposition to appeasement, see W.S. Churchill, *The Second World War. The Gathering Storm*. (Cassell & Co., London, 1948) p.178.
70. *Ibid*, Footnote 4, R. Craigie minute 14 March 1936.
71. PRO FO371/19838 A4708/4671/45 Lord Stanhope minute 21 May 1936.
72. PRO FO371/19838 A4773/4671/45 R. Craigie minute 11 June 1936.
73. *DBFP 2/XIII* No.699 A2021/4/45 R. Craigie/N. Davis conversation 4 March 1936 p.895
74. Vansittart's conversion to responding to rather than simply dismissing Roosevelt's initiatives came late in 1936 with an offer from Washington proposing an exchange on information on industrial mobilization, see PRO FO371/19842 A9153/8480/45 Sir R. Vansittart minute 18 November 1936 on Sir R. Lindsay to Sir R. Vansittart 10 November 1936. More information on the growing Anglo-American links can be seen in R.A. Harrison, 'A Presidential Demarche: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Personal Diplomacy and Great Britain', 1936-37, in *Diplomatic History*, 1981 Vol.5 No.3 pp.245-272.
75. PRO FO371/19831 A4276/223/45 R. Craigie minute 21 May 1936.
76. There are a number of texts that deal with the Eden-Yoshida talks of 1936-37, see, in particular, I. Nish, 'Ambassador at Large. Yoshida and His Mission to Britain 1932-7', in S. Henny & J.P. Lehmann (eds.), *Themes and Theories in Modern Japanese History. Essays in Honour of Richard Storry*. (Faber & Faber, London, 1988) pp.194-212, J. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath. Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience 1878-1954*. (Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1979) pp.123-126 & pp.141-188, C. Hosoya, 'Britain and the United States in Japan's View of the International System, 1919-1937.' in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-*

Japanese Alienation 1919-1952. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982), and A. Trotter, op.cit pp.191-198.

77. *DBFP Second Series Vol.XXI Far Eastern Affairs November 6, 1936-July 27 1938*. No.37 Footnote 5 F7963/89/23 Sir R. Craigie minute 24 December 1936 on Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 24 December 1936.
78. PRO FO371/20646 A2333/6/45 Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 27 March 1937.
79. C. Hall, op.cit. p.210.
80. *DBFP 2/XIII No.633 A854/4/45 M. Nagai/Viscount Monsell conversation 23 January 1936* p.797.
81. Sir R. Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask* (Hutchinson, London, 1946) pp.16-18.
82. For details of Oliphant's distress over his being passed over see PRO FO800/396 FO/38/5 Sir L. Oliphant to Sir A. Cadogan 30 October 1938.
83. Sir R. Clive to Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen 14 April 1937 in Knatchbull-Hugessen Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, KNAT2/46.
84. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945 Series D Vol.1*. No.93 J. von Ribbentrop memorandum 2 January 1938 p.164. I am indebted to Dr. Brian McKercher for bringing this memorandum to my attention.
85. An indication that the decision to send Craigie to Tokyo was taken in January 1937 can be seen in Cadogan's diary, where he records that he is ^{to} take over the departments which Craigie had previously supervised, see [^]diary entry for 14 January 1937 in Cadogan Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, CAD 1/6.
86. On the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact see T. Ōhata, 'The Anti-Comintern Pact 1935-1939.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Deterrent Diplomacy. Japan, Germany and the Soviet Union, 1935-1940*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1976) pp.35-37 and C. Boyd, *The Extraordinary Ambassador: General Hiroshi Ōshima and Diplomacy in the Third Reich*. (Univ. Press of America, Washington DC, 1980) pp.42-47.
87. The text of the treaty is reproduced in J.W. Morley (ed.), op.cit. pp.261-264.
88. Decrypts of the text of the terms of the supplementary protocol can be seen in PRO WO208/859 as BJ 067109 25 November 1936 and BJ 067161 4 December 1936. The above dates refer to the time that the Japanese telegrams were sent and not the date of decryption. There is evidence, however, that full decryption had taken place by late December 1936, as Orde noted then that 'we have had full information of the contents of the German-Japanese agreement'. See FO371/20278 F7781/2258/61 C. Orde minute 28 December 1936.
89. PRO FO371/20467 W18355/18355/50 'The World Situation and British Rearmament' Sir R. Vansittart memorandum 31 December 1936. Despite

being dated for the end of the year the memorandum was in fact circulated to the relevant departments in the Foreign Office on 16 December.

90. Ibid.
91. PRO FO371/20279 F7963/89/23 Sir R. Craigie minute 24 December 1936 on Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 24 December 1936.
92. PRO FO371/19787 A9996/9996/51 Sir R. Craigie minute 22 December 1936 on Sir R. Vansittart Memorandum 16 December 1936.
93. Ibid.
94. Admiral Sir E. Chatfield Notes 5 January 1937 on Sir R. Vansittart memorandum in Chatfield Papers, 3/1
95. PRO CAB24/268 CP73(37) Sir T. Inskip memorandum. 'Imperial Conference. Review of Imperial Defence' 26 February 1937.
96. See A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.
97. On Satō see K. Usui, 'Japanese Approaches to China in the 1930s: Two Alternatives.' in A. Iriye & W. Cohen (eds.), *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia 1931-1949*. (Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, Del., 1990) pp.103-107, and C. Hosoya, *op.cit.* pp.22-23.
98. See R.A. Harrison, 'A Neutralization Pact for the Pacific: Roosevelt and Anglo-American Cooperation, 1934-1937', in *Pacific Historical Review* 1988 Vol. LVII No.1 pp.47-72, and S.O. Agbi, 'The British Foreign office and the Roosevelt-Huggessen Bid to Stabilize Asia and the Pacific in 1937,' in *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 1978 Vol.26 No.1 pp.85-95.
99. PRO CAB16/181 DP(P) 2nd meeting 11 May 1937. See also A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.201-202.
100. PRO FO371/20649 A5459/6/45 Sir R. Craigie minute 6 May 1937 on 'The New Naval Standard' Admiralty memorandum 29 April 1937.
101. Ibid.
102. See PRO FO371/21025 F3281/597/61 Sir R. Craigie minute 3 June 1937 on J. Lyons memorandum for Committee of Imperial Defence 22 May 1937. See also I. Nish, 'Japan in Britain's View of the International System, 1919-1937.' in I. Nish (ed), *op.cit.* pp.48-49, and A. Trotter, *op.cit.* pp.199-201.
103. *DBFP* 2/XXI No.88 F3416/28/23 Sir R. Craigie/S. Yoshida conversation 2 June 1937 pp.134-135. See also J. Dower, *op.cit.* pp.167-170.
104. Sir R. Craigie, *op.cit.* p.18.

105. Admiral Sir E. Chatfield to Admiral Sir C. Little 6 August 1937
in Chatfield Papers CHT 4/8. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *Great Britain
and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East
Asia 1937-1941.* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) p.20.

CHAPTER THREE

'A FIRST-CLASS AMBASSADOR'

'The one redeeming feature is that we now have a first-class ambassador in Tokyo in the person of Craigie and that the J[apanese] themselves ... have great faith in him. Poor Craigie, however, is having a trying time and is desperately worried as shown very clearly by what he says in his cables to the F.O.'

Captain Malcolm Kennedy, Diary Entry For 29 October 1937¹

Sir Robert Craigie arrived in Yokohama to take up his post as Ambassador to Japan on 3 September 1937 after a month's journey from Britain via Canada. During this period the situation in China had markedly deteriorated and a growing rift had developed between London and Tokyo as Britain blamed Japan for the continuing escalation of the conflict and Japan accused Britain of encouraging Chinese resistance and thus hindering the Japanese war effort. The high tide of optimism that had been reached in the early summer had clearly ebbed away, but despite this threat to the possibility of achieving a *rapprochement* Craigie still held to his conviction that his prime task was to foster better Anglo-Japanese relations. He therefore arrived in Japan determined to achieve an understanding with Japan which would ease British concerns about East Asia and allow for greater flexibility in Britain's diplomacy with the Dictators in Europe.

In this task of neutralizing the Japanese threat it was obvious that, as a figure relatively inexperienced in the intricacies of Japanese politics, Craigie would have to rely to a considerable degree on the personnel of the Embassy in Tokyo, who had developed over many years an understanding of the Japanese system of government and had links with those in the political, military and commercial circles that Craigie needed to win over. The problem for the Ambassador was, however, that he found on his arrival that the majority of senior figures in the Embassy were deeply sceptical about the chances of a successful *rapprochement* as it seemed to them that there

were too many issues over which Britain and Japan held diametrically opposed opinions. This group was centred around many of the leading characters in the Embassy, including the Naval Attaché, Captain Bernard Rawlings, the Counsellor, James Dodds, and the Commercial Counsellor, Sir George Sansom.²

Sansom was the most influential in this group; he had been connected with Japan as a member of the Consular Service since 1904, had become renowned as a cultural historian of Japan, and was held in the highest esteem by the Foreign Office as an expert on Japanese politics. Such was his standing that when, in 1937, it was reported that he would shortly be retiring the Foreign Office debated how he could be kept on, Vansittart noted-

'My own view has been for some time that Sir G.Sansom shd be the next ambassador. He has carried several in his day, & shd end by having his own day. He is one of the most distinguished men in Asia, and it wd therefore ill become our service that we cd do nothing more for such outstanding merit than a Counsellorship.'³

Since 1934 Sansom had been lamenting the change of mood in Japan, and had been a key influence on the Foreign Office's reservations about the prospects of any understanding with that country. During the debate over policy with the Treasury in 1934 Sansom wrote to Sir Edward Crowe, the Comptroller-General of the Department for Overseas Trade,-

'I feel as I have always felt for these people ... But this is not the Japan you know. The same people are not in charge. No doubt the pendulum will swing back, but until it is at rest, this is not a country to make bargains with, unless they are very favourable, very explicit and very easily enforced.'⁴

Such was the power of his argument and his prestige that the Foreign Office made his opinions known to the Cabinet in January 1935, in an effort to counter the Treasury's demand for improved relations with Japan.⁵ After 1934 his pessimism deepened with each passing year, so that by 1937 he had become convinced that there was no longer any moderate lobby of note in Japan to which Britain could appeal. These were not, however, sentiments shared by Craigie, with his belief that a new understanding could be reached with Japan. The result was that Sansom, who was used to acting as the principal adviser to previous Ambassadors, was to find himself frozen

out by Craigie, a situation which was exacerbated further by a clash of personalities that developed between the austere Ambassador and his cultured Counsellor. The animosity between the two developed to such an extent that Sansom later recorded himself as stating to Cadogan in 1940 on being ordered back to Tokyo-

'I'm not going back to Japan. I hate your ambassador there. He's a fool.'⁶

Craigie found a more agreeable accomplice in the pursuit of improved relations away from the group that had developed around Sansom, in the person of the Military Attaché, Major-General F.S.G. Piggott. Like Sansom, Piggott had originally been assigned to Japan in 1904, having been chosen as one of the first of the British Army's Language Officers. He had already served one term of office as Military Attaché between 1922 and 1926 before being asked by the War Office in 1935 to return once again to Tokyo.⁷ His appointment for a second term was unusual; it was not standard practice to send such a senior officer as a Military Attaché, but it was felt that to revive mutual trust Piggott, with his experience and extensive contacts, would be the best man available. The Foreign Office from the first expressed its reservations at this proposal, as Piggott was renowned as a Japanophile of the most extreme tendency who, unlike Sansom, refused to accept that Japan had changed. Sir Robert Clive in particular was highly doubtful about the appointment, and reported from Tokyo-

'My own impression confirmed by others who know General Piggott is that in regard to Anglo-Japanese relations his feelings outrun his sense of realities and that his Judgement is warped. ... It might be embarrassing therefore to have on my staff an officer on whose judgement I could not rely and with whom I might differ on broad questions of policy.'⁸

These doubts were communicated to the War Office, who, though understanding the misgivings of the Foreign Office, pointed out that they could think of no alternative.

Piggott was convinced from the time of hearing of his appointment that his principal mission was to lay the basis for a *rapprochement* with Japan, and this belief was underpinned by his familiarity with the desperate concern within the War Office in 1936 for an easing of tensions in East Asia. On

28 July, shortly after his arrival, he wrote to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Cyril Deverell-

'Of the many British officers who were sent to Japan in 1903 and 1904 ... I am now the last survivor still serving. For that reason ..., in addition to the instructions received from Sir Archie [Field Marshall Sir A. Montgomery-Massingberd] and [General Sir John] Dill, I am striving to the utmost of my ability to restore in some measure "mutual trust and confidence".'⁹

In Japan, however, Piggott found that his efforts met with little sympathy from the rest of the Embassy and when, in his first major report of 17 September, he wrote that sentiment within the Japanese Army was still favourable to Britain, Sansom's riposte was to observe-

'There are many people in Japan who would like to be friends with us, but each country wants what the other cannot give. This is not to say that we should abandon hope of clearing up certain outstanding issues: but a comprehensive arrangement ... is likely to be extremely difficult, because our interests are, fundamentally, opposed at almost every point.'¹⁰

This view was heartily endorsed by the Far Eastern Department, who very early on began to disparage Piggott's reports and refer to his more effusive flights of fancy as 'Piggottry.'

Piggott was also hindered in his efforts by the War Office, who were concerned that the Military Attaché's ardour cut across the more cautious policy favoured by the Foreign Office and that his unstinting search for better relations was pursued to the detriment of the reports on the state of the Japanese Army needed by M.I.2c, the military intelligence branch that dealt with East Asia. As early as 29 June 1936 he refused a request from M.I.2c that he set up a covert intelligence network in Japan by arguing-

'... my usefulness here will largely depend ... on my being trusted by the Japanese military authorities. Their natural reticence and suspicion, coupled with some latent resentment, can only be overcome by the most sincere and painstaking efforts spread over many months ... the results are yet to seek, and I do not want to prejudice them.'¹¹

The consequence of such thinking was that for the next year Piggott's

reports on the Japanese Army remained inadequate for military intelligence purposes.

By August 1937 M.I.2c were so frustrated at the lack of information that they demanded that something be done to remedy the situation. This led the Section's head, Colonel Dennys, to write to Major-General Haining, the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, on 10 August-

'When General Piggott took up his post ... he was convinced that his primary task was the promotion of better relations between the Japanese and British Armies, and therefore between the respective governments of these two countries. From the M.I.2 point of view this is a wrong appreciation of an MA's duties. ... This aspect of his work is of considerable value in the present state of Anglo-Japanese relations ... but it absorbs his time and energy to the exclusion ... of the detailed information required by M.I.2.'¹²

The Section realized that it was dangerous politically to recall Piggott, as this would confuse and possibly antagonize the Japanese, and suggested instead that he be provided with an assistant. Haining, who was not amused at Piggott's behaviour, and in particular the latter's habit of writing directly to Field Marshal Devereux, agreed with this proposal, and it was decided to appoint Colonel George Wards as an Assistant Military Attaché. In relating this decision to Piggott, Haining pointedly observed-

'... now with an assistant you will be able to devote more attention to ... your primary task - the collection of military intelligence.'¹³

Piggott's isolation within the Embassy changed with Craigie's arrival. The two men had met previously at the Washington Conference of 1921 and had carried on a passing acquaintance in London in the years after, which meant that, in contrast to the relationship between Craigie and Sansom, a spark of friendship already existed.¹⁴ This personal link was underpinned by their mutual belief in the need for better Anglo-Japanese relations, and each saw in the other a means of achieving this common aim. For Craigie, Piggott provided an expertise about the psychology of the Japanese and a wide range of high-powered contacts in the Army; for Piggott, Craigie was an Ambassador willing to indulge his intrigues in the search for 'mutual trust and confidence'. Piggott was certainly delighted at his good fortune

and wrote to Field Marshal Devereil on 23 October 1937 that-

'While the situation generally as regards Anglo-Japanese relations looks so bad, there is still one silver lining, namely, the arrival of Sir Robert Craigie. I am sure you will be pleased to know that he is making a particular effort to get in touch with the Army. ... [T]here is no doubt at all that his reputation with the Japanese as a man of wide sympathy, and quiet wisdom and understanding, is growing rapidly.'¹⁵

This was, however, a dangerous relationship for Craigie to rely upon if his intention was to seek a full Anglo-Japanese understanding, as Piggott's utility as an adviser was undermined by two crucial faults. The first was that he was out of touch with current trends in the Japanese Army. This was ably demonstrated by a minute that Piggott wrote in response to an assertion in 1938 by another official that the Japanese Army was anti-British, in which he commented-

'At present the only safe guide to the future development of the pro- and anti-British factions in the Army, is the undoubted fact, I repeat fact, that the heads of the army (Generals Sugiyama, Tada, Umezu, Homma ... Hata, Ikeda etc.) wish to restore and strengthen friendship with Great Britain.'¹⁶

The problem with this judgement was that it presumed that the senior officers named above, who were all old acquaintances of Piggott from the the period of the alliance and men of the same age group, were representative of Army opinion. The reality was that power rested with the younger men, such as Generals Tojo, Itagaki, Ōshima, Ishiwara and Muto, who had risen to prominence in the 1930s and demonstrated very little concern for Britain's welfare, and these were figures whom Piggott barely knew.¹⁷ His second weakness was that he was too desperate to be conciliatory towards the Japanese, which led to him giving a false impression of Britain's desire for an understanding, and also to his inability to recognize when his contacts were exaggerating the mood of the Army in a deliberate effort to pressurize the British into making concessions.¹⁸

These faults were certainly serious and were obvious to many of those who came into contact with the Military Attaché; for example the *Times* writer Peter Fleming noted wickedly in July 1938 after visiting Japan-

'Tokyo was amusing, though the only real belly-laughs were evoked by Piggott. He really is a preposterous and fatal man and should be removed at once, notwithstanding the new Japanese law which forbids the export of national treasures.'¹⁹

Later on in the same year Edmund Hall-Patch, the Financial Adviser to the Tokyo and Shanghai embassies, noted in a more sober analysis-

'... he [Piggott] is ... looming too large as an interpreter of Japanese motives to the Ambassador, and as an exponent of our point of view to many Japanese who think his influence is greater than it really is. ... I do not place great faith in him in either capacity. Not that he is actuated by base motives: far from it, but he genuinely believes that the Japanese are people of much the same stamp as ourselves... In other times: in other circumstances his: "get together boys" and his heartiness with the Japanese might be valuable. But not now.'²⁰

The problem for Craigie was that these assessments reflected badly on him too, and many of his observations on Anglo-Japanese relations were summarily dismissed after it was deemed that they were based upon wildly over-optimistic forecasts from his Military Attaché; this was a grave drawback on his effectiveness as an Ambassador.

Apart from the necessity of reaching sympathetic Japanese to assist in bringing about better relations, Craigie also realized that much would depend on winning over the United States. In this respect it was essential for him to develop a close relationship with the American Ambassador, Joseph Grew, who had been Washington's representative in Japan since 1932, and unlike many of the senior American ambassadorial appointees he was a career diplomat rather than a politician. To a noticeable degree his experience as Ambassador in Japan in the period 1937 to 1941 was to mirror that of Craigie; he was to have a number of serious clashes with the State Department and harboured the feeling that his perceptions of Japan's actions and intentions were all too often ignored.²¹ The similarity of his fate to that of Craigie can be attributed to a large degree to the opinions they held in common, such as the belief that there was a moderate constituency in Japan that could be appealed to, and the conviction that if any efforts were to be made to coerce Japan then the Anglo-Saxon powers should realize that they could lead to all-out war; these were views that

were frequently not shared by their superiors. Close co-operation between the two Ambassadors began immediately on Craigie's arrival, and the latter was quick to emphasize his belief that Anglo-American friendship was an essential prerequisite in the task of bringing Japan back into the international fold.²² As early as 30 September Grew wrote to Hugh Wilson, the Assistant Secretary of State, who knew Craigie from the naval talks- 'My initial impressions of him here are very favourable and so far as can see now he wants to cooperate to the limit.'²³

However, Craigie did not have any respite on his arrival in Japan in which to finalize his plans for a peace offensive: instead he was thrown straight into a crisis. On 26 August, in an incident which further strained the already frayed relations between Britain and Japan, news had reached Whitehall from the Consulate-General in Shanghai that the Ambassador to China, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, had been gravely wounded in a Japanese air attack on his car as he travelled to the city from Nanking. That an attack had been made on a car clearly marked with the Union Jack was bad enough, but what aggravated the situation even more was that the Gaimushō had refused to apologize for the incident until the Japanese Navy had made a full investigation, and had even postulated to Dodds, who was in charge of the Embassy until Craigie's arrival, that the attack had been carried out by Chinese aircraft with false markings.²⁴ The subsequent failure to find a solution to the crisis meant that, by the time of Craigie's arrival, ministers in London were seriously contemplating that, if no satisfactory apology had been given by 8 September, the date of the next Cabinet meeting, the new Ambassador should be withdrawn from Japan before he had presented his credentials to the Emperor.²⁵

Not surprisingly Craigie was unenthusiastic about this plan, and to avert its implementation he was forced immediately to seek a solution to the crisis. He brought to the subsequent negotiations with the Japanese government the same tenacity that he had displayed in the naval talks although, as he later admitted to Grew, he was careful to tone down his instructions from London as he realized that too severe a line would only hamper any solution.²⁶ As a compromise he formulated the idea of an interim reply from the Gaimushō, and on 5 September discussed this proposal

with the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Horinouchi Kensuke, and Navy Vice-Minister, Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku. They agreed that Japan should express regret that Knatchbull-Hugessen had been attacked and also state that Japanese air units would be instructed to act with greater discretion, and the next day a reply on these lines was handed over.²⁷ Despite this solution the crisis still remained, as on one side the Foreign Office continued to demand a full apology and on the other the Japanese Navy quibbled over the details of the British account of the incident in an attempt to prove that they were not culpable. It was only on 20 September that the matter was finally settled, when Craigie, on receiving a note stressing Japan's 'deep regret' and promising 'suitable steps' if the guilty parties were firmly established, informed the Foreign Office that these were the best terms that could be expected. Reluctantly Eden gave way, which led Malcolm Kennedy to record in his diary-

'That an amicable settlement has been reached is undoubtedly due largely to Craigie to whom Eden + Co. shd. feel truly grateful for rescuing them from the consequences of their own unfortunate mishandling of the affair.'²⁸

The Knatchbull-Hugessen incident brought home to Craigie how difficult it was going to be to improve relations, and matters were not helped by warnings from Piggott that the Japanese were beginning to perceive Britain as the chief critic of their activities in China. In these circumstances Craigie was, not surprisingly, aghast to hear in early October that the Archbishop of Canterbury had agreed to speak at an anti-Japanese meeting at the Royal Albert Hall. After a stormy interview with Horinouchi, in which the latter had complained vehemently about this outrage, Craigie urged the Foreign Office to persuade the Archbishop to cancel his appearance, and stated that-

'... what now appears to be happening in England is ... the reverse of salutary and may in the long run have serious consequences for ourselves ... United States opinion, though critical of Japan, appears from here to be far less vocal than in Great Britain and less inclined to advocate strong measures. ... Thus we bear the brunt of growing resentment untempered by any apprehension that words will be followed by deeds. There can I fear be little doubt that a continuance of this state will discourage moderate elements here, pushing this country further into German-Italian

camp and tend to prolong hostilities in China.'²⁹

In addition to his concern over the open expression in Britain of anti-Japanese feeling, Craigie was also disturbed by the Chinese appeal to the League of Nations; this he argued, because of Japan's antipathy towards that organization, threatened to make a peace settlement more difficult to attain. He believed that Britain would do best to turn its back on the League and instead unilaterally make an offer of good offices to Japan. He was encouraged in this by an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hirota Kōki, on 15 September, when the latter assured him that Japan's peace terms would be very reasonable. Two days later Craigie learnt from a reliable source that these terms consisted of a neutral zone to the south of Peking and Tientsin, an assurance of a friendly regime in north China, economic concessions, an end to the Chinese causing problems with Manchukuo, and co-operation against communism. which was a remarkably moderate package. Even when further demands, the right to station five thousand troops in north China, an autonomous Inner Mongolia, the *de facto* recognition of Manchukuo, and the lowering of Chinese import duties, were communicated through the same channel a few days later, the terms still appeared reasonable considering the scale of the Japanese victory in north China.³⁰ On 25 September Craigie therefore pressed the Foreign Office to act on these proposals, noting that-

'... good offices of a single power, carried out with the utmost secrecy in so far as concerns Japan is the only medium at the moment and Great Britain is the only power that could undertake so delicate, if ungrateful, a task with any hope of success. That hope lessens with every passing week.'³¹

The Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, was impressed with this analysis of the situation, and on 27 September persuaded a rather reluctant Eden to forward the Japanese proposals to the Chinese. The result was that on 29 September the Far Eastern Department instructed the British Counsellor in Nanking to inform the Chinese authorities of the Japanese terms, which were promptly dismissed by Chiang Kai-shek on 4 October as unacceptable.³²

In attempting to pursue this policy of achieving peace through the acceptance of Japanese formulas, Craigie was running in the face of opinion in the Foreign Office. The latter, as a result of Japan's previous record

of aggression in East Asia, tended to see the renewed outbreak of war in China as a direct result of Japanese machinations, and consequently held little faith in Japan's declarations of its peaceful intentions. In addition there was the realization within the Foreign Office that for Britain to pursue a line in any way favourable to Japan would harm relations with the United States, not only in East Asia but also in Europe. The similarities of the present conflict to the Manchurian Crisis raised the prospect of another Simon-Stimson incident if Britain took the line of least resistance. A strong line, however, promised the possibility of improving relations with Washington; a prospect which particularly appealed to Anthony Eden, who, as previously in the case of the Second London Naval Conference, had little sympathy or understanding of Japan and a noticeable inclination to toe the American line.³³

On 6 October a move was made in the direction of an international settlement of the crisis when an Advisory Committee, which had been set up by the League to seek a settlement made its report. It decided that a conference of the signatories of the Nine Power Treaty be convened to hear the Chinese and Japanese cases, and recommended in the interim that League members should do nothing to hinder the Chinese war effort. This move followed a speech by Roosevelt the day before, in which he had postulated the need to 'quarantine' aggressor nations. These two events encouraged Eden to believe that there was a possibility that the United States would do more than just criticize Japanese policy and consequently he ordered the Foreign Office to begin investigating the possibility of economic sanctions against Japan. On 13 October, as a result of the deliberations on sanctions, an inter-departmental meeting was convened which decided to call on the Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War (the ATB Committee) for a full report on the potential effect of such action.³⁴

Meanwhile Craigie was given the task of trying to persuade the Japanese that it was in their interests to attend the conference, which was due to be held in Brussels, and throughout October he pushed Foreign Minister Hirota on this matter to no avail. He quite understood Japan's reluctance, and warned London that for the Japanese the convening of the Brussels Conference raised the image of a repeat of the League's condemnation of

Japan in February 1933 and of a possible move by the West to use coercion to make peace. He therefore advised the Foreign Office that, if the conference were to achieve any kind of success, it ought to keep its judgements on the rights and wrongs of the war to a minimum and instead nominate a single power to mediate, and on 30 October he noted-

'If the door is to be left open to such mediation it seems important that conference should adhere strictly to its mandate of attempting to promote peace by agreement and avoid any expression of opinion on origins of conflict or responsibilities involved. The greater the appearance of impartiality the better the chance of ultimate successful mediation.'³⁵

Craigie's opinion had little impact on Eden as he pursued the mirage of Anglo-American co-operation, but it did affect Chamberlain, who already had grave doubts about the wisdom of the anti-Japanese line being pursued by the Foreign Office. As early as a Cabinet meeting on 6 October he had made clear his complete opposition to any policy of sanctions by stating-

'He could not imagine anything more suicidal than to pick a quarrel with Japan at the present moment when the European situation had become so serious. If this country were to become involved in the Far East the temptation to the Dictator States to take action in Eastern Europe or Spain, might be irresistible.'³⁶

Influenced by Craigie he took this line further in Cabinet meetings on 13 and 20 October by arguing that the Nine Power Conference ought to see its primary object as 'appeasement'.³⁷ In this assessment he had the support of the Chiefs of Staff, who also feared the implications of a war in the East. In a memorandum of 23 September Admiral Chatfield poured cold water on a proposal from the Cabinet Committee on British Shipping in the Far East that two battleships should be sent to Singapore, observing that-

'... the division of our limited force of capital ships between Eastern and Western hemispheres, far from acting as a deterrent to Japan might even present a temptation ... in offering ... at least a possibility of defeating the divided British forces...'³⁸

This was followed on 4 October by a letter from the Admiralty to the Foreign Office, pointing out that, even if the League as a whole were to take action against Japan, this in essence meant Britain would be acting unilaterally as it was the League's only significant naval power.³⁹

Eden was not willing to let the caution of others undermine his policy, and although he held out little hope for the Conference itself he still hoped that it would lead to closer relations with the United States. The Conference finally began on 3 November with Eden leading the British delegation. At first it appeared that Eden's optimism was going to pay off, as the chief American delegate, Norman Davis, hinted that a failure by Japan to accept the conference's recommendations could lead the United States to agree on the need for sanctions. Eden, tantalized^a by this prospect, tried to draw Davis out and intimated that Britain would be agreeable to sanctions if Washington concurred. In doing so Eden was going beyond the policy that had been agreed in Cabinet, but little harm was done as Davis too was considerably overstepping his brief by giving such an impression, and was quickly ordered to retract his vague promises by Washington.⁴⁰ Despite this setback Eden still hoped that some good could come of the Conference, and at a Cabinet meeting he attended on 17 November, during a lull in the talks at Brussels, he argued for approval of a tough final communiqué from the Conference which would uphold the policy of non-recognition and call for the banning of credits to Japan.⁴¹

Eden's recommendations were, however rejected by the Cabinet for a variety of reasons. The initial criticism came in the ATB Committee's report of 5 November 1937 which concluded that the introduction of sanctions on Japanese exports would take between one or two years to have any serious effect on Japan's war effort.⁴² This setback was followed by a meeting of the Committee on British Shipping in the Far East on 9 November at which it was decided (in Eden's absence) to reject a scheme which he had supported for the assembly of military aircraft for China in Hong Kong, but to approve the Foreign Office's position on allowing arms to pass to China through the colony at their present relatively insignificant trickle.⁴³ These decisions showed that there was little support amongst Eden's colleagues for a more active policy in East Asia and that caution was to be the order of the day.

The reluctance to initiate a tougher policy was to a noticeable extent influenced by the warnings emanating from Craigie, who by early November

was deeply agitated at the direction of British policy. On 4 November in a letter to Cadogan, Craigie made clear his misgivings about the Foreign Office's pursuit of an international solution to the war by writing that- 'By much of what we have had to do in recent months under the stress of British public opinion we have been throwing away our influence here by the handful. But these people would listen to us ... if they could feel that we were neither irretrievably opposed to every Japanese ambition nor determined to view in the worst possible light every Japanese activity. ...I honestly believe we can still play a great rôle in this country and in the Far East generally by co-operation with Japan which would be at once friendly and restraining, but the sands are running out and I don't know whether I shall be able to say this in three months time.'⁴⁴

Craigie's particular fear was that a British decision to agree to the international pillorying of Japan would only lead to an attempt by the latter to overcome its diplomatic isolation by increasing its ties with the Axis powers; a concern which was justified on 6 November when Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact.

The drift of Japan towards the Axis was also worrying in that it raised the possibility that if Britain did not offer to help mediate the Sino-Japanese war it could find that this role was instead taken by Germany, which would then be able to increase its influence in East Asia. This galvanized Craigie into urging once again on 13 November the need for Britain to offer its good offices, and he noted in defence of his plea that-

'What I fear principally is the loss of our prestige throughout the Far East if conclusion of Pact with Italy were to be followed by a successful German mediation. Moreover some concrete action on our part is necessary if we are to stop the present drift here towards Germany and Italy. Even to China we shall be of little use as a friend if our influence here sinks to zero.'⁴⁵

Craigie's telegram found a receptive audience in Chamberlain, and influenced the latter to respond to Eden's calls for a tough line at the Cabinet meeting of 17 November by suggesting instead that Britain and the United States should jointly try to mediate.⁴⁶ This proposal was encouraged further by reports from Joseph Grew who told Craigie that Hirota had indicated to him that Japan was ready for peace. However the stumbling

block remained the Americans, who while unwilling to co-operate with Britain in coercing Japan were also opposed to acting as a messenger of peace terms which they interpreted as infringing the Nine Power Treaty. As a result Washington displayed little sympathy for the proposal, and when on 19 November Horinouchi told Craigie that Japan preferred to pursue its own course there was little reason to press the Japanese further.⁴⁷

The recalcitrance of the Japanese began to affect Craigie at this point. The apparent insincerity over asking for British mediation, allied to clear hints that Germany instead had taken on this role, led Craigie to shift his policy from purely emphasizing the positive potential of joint offices to exploring the prospect of coercing Japan. On 20 November he wrote to Eden- 'Nothing ... can be relied on to stop these people and bring the Militarists to their senses except the imposition of sanctions (with full American co-operation) and the unhesitating acceptance of all of the risks of war thereby entailed. Adoption of such a course now might save us infinite difficulties later.'⁴⁸

In pursuit of this stricter line, Craigie went further and argued on 6 December that Britain, in co-operation with America and France, could put pressure on Japan by denying the latter credits until a reasonable peace settlement had been reached.⁴⁹ These forthright views seemed to suggest a sea change in Craigie's outlook, but in fact his recommendations were heavily qualified by his stipulation that any attempt to apply pressure on Japan could only be attempted in close co-operation with the United States and in the realization that such a policy could lead to war. In a letter to Cadogan on 2 December that is a summary of the attitude which directed his thinking for much of his time in Tokyo, he expanded on this qualification-

'Above all we must get right out of our heads that these people will be deflected by admonitions or curses; if deeds are not possible, then let us try different tactics. Strangely enough, the one thing these people (with some notable exceptions) want is our friendship. Leave the door wide open to this (on the promise of good behaviour) and you will enable us to do a lot here. Close the door (or act so that the Japanese believe the door is closed) and this country will go completely to the devil, with the ready assistance of Mussolini & Hitler.'⁵⁰

Craigie's belief that Britain should not take a hard line with Japan if it was not prepared for war and if it did not have the direct backing of the United States was an important influence on his reaction to the next crisis that emerged in Anglo-Japanese relations. The first incident in this chain of events occurred on 5 December when a small group of British merchant ships were attacked by Japanese aircraft at Wuhu; this was followed a week later by artillery fire on two British gunboats, HMS *Ladybird* and HMS *Bee*, and the dive-bombing and sinking of an American gunboat USS *Panay*.⁵¹ Even though it seemed clear that the assaults were not sanctioned at a high level, these events had all the makings of a very serious crisis. Craigie was, as George Sansom's wife Katherine recorded, 'mad as hell' over the attacks and promptly made official protests to the Gaimushō, but he also remained cautious about British retaliation.⁵² An important reason for this was that the United States, on hearing of the attack on the *Panay* decided to make a unilateral protest to Hirota rather than waiting to make a joint *démarche* with Britain. This appeared to show a lack of inclination to co-operate on Washington's part which convinced Craigie that if Britain attempted to use force it would be acting alone, and he subsequently wrote to Vansittart on 14 December that-

'In a tense situation such as the present and after long campaign of vilification, war with Great Britain would ... not be unwelcome to the thinking masses and to extremist leaders, however much it would be deplored by wiser heads. I venture therefore to express the earnest hope that we shall issue no warnings that we are not prepared to make good. Everything seems to depend on the attitude of the United States, and judging from the tone of the note today, this will be compounded of righteous indignation rather than forceful persuasion.'⁵³

Within two days, however, it became apparent that he had done the United States a great discourtesy by stating that they were not prepared to take action. On 16 December Roosevelt in a talk with Lindsay responded to a British proposal for a naval demonstration directed against Japan by suggesting that secret naval staff talks be held between an American naval officer and the Admiralty in London, and that they should prepare the ground for an Anglo-American blockade of Japan.⁵⁴ The Foreign Office

recognized the latter part of the proposal to be a 'fantastic chimaera', but believed that the President's attitude meant that he was at least ready for joint action and that he could therefore be directed towards a more practical form of demonstrating opposition to Japan's policies.⁵⁵ Consequently Eden's reply to Lindsay's telegram emphasized the need to thank Roosevelt for his suggestions and to agree to the visit of an American naval officer to London for talks.⁵⁶

Craigie was only told of these diplomatic manoeuvrings on 3 January. His reaction was to register some concern at the turn of events and in a telegram of 5 January to Cadogan he noted-

'While I feel reasonably sure that resolute Anglo-American action would produce desired effect without war we can never be certain of this in dealing with a nation in which a compound of mysticism and nationalism is apt to distort reason even among responsible leaders.'⁵⁷

The motive for this warning was to ensure that the Foreign Office realized before any action was taken that naval action could lead to war. Craigie was, however, aware that to express such concerns to the Americans would be counter-productive and only encourage their natural caution, and therefore when he met Grew on 7 January 1938 he tried to persuade his American counterpart that joint action would have a salutary effect. Grew's account of the conversation recorded that-

'I said this would of course mean war but Sir Robert did not agree; he thought that we could well take a leaf out of Japan's book by taking these measures without a declaration of war and in any case he believed that a mere show of force at Singapore and Hawaii by our two countries would be quite sufficient to bring results without further measures.'⁵⁸

However the optimism in London over the display of solidarity by the Anglo-Saxon powers soon proved to be groundless. On 7 January Cadogan, in response to reports from Shanghai of Japanese assaults on British policemen, sent a telegram to Lindsay asking him to enquire whether the United States would now be prepared to order naval preparations just short of mobilization.⁵⁹ The American response was received on 10 January 1938, when Lindsay was told by Sumner Welles, the Under-Secretary of State, that Roosevelt would be prepared to dry-dock the Pacific Fleet to prepare it for

action and bring its already scheduled manoeuvres at Hawaii forward to the second week in February, but only if Britain announced that it was making preparations for the Royal Navy to be sent to Singapore.⁶⁰ This came as something of a disappointment to the Foreign Office, as it showed that the United States was already lagging behind the British and helped to underline the need for caution; an impression which was also encouraged by the absence of Eden who was on holiday in the Riviera. In this mood fears that the movement of the fleet would lead only to problems in Europe gained the upper hand; as Cadogan put it on 11 January in a note for Chamberlain-
'... it certainly has to be remembered that if the fleet were to sail in three or four weeks, that might be just at the time when we are trying to come to terms with Mussolini, who might choose to think that he was in a stronger position for dealing with us if the fleet were removed from home waters and the Mediterranean.'⁶¹

The British response therefore was to state that before proceeding with a naval demonstration the Foreign Office would attempt to gain an apology from the Gaimushō. With this the brief possibility of joint action began to slip away, a process not helped by the simultaneous rejection by Chamberlain of Roosevelt's plan for a 'world conference'.⁶²

Though the events of December and early January eventually failed to lead to the exertion of strong British pressure on Japan, they did provide a catalyst for examining how the Foreign Office could provide China with greater assistance. The logic behind this development was the belief that, if Japan emerged victorious from the war, this would mark the death-knell of British commercial interests in China and that, since Britain was not in a position to obstruct such a development by coercing Japan, the next best thing was to ensure that Chinese resistance to Japan continued. This anti-Japanese argument was set out in detail in a memorandum by Sir John Pratt on 24 January who argued, along similar lines to Sansom, that-

'There is ... only one ground on which alliances, ententes or a common policy can be based and that is community of interest ... Great Britain desires to see a prosperous and united China. To Japan this is as great a nightmare as a Europe united under one sovereignty would be to British statesmen.'⁶³

The need for more open support for China was also made clear by events in

East Asia, as December had seen the fall of Nanking and mid-January witnessed the decision by the Kono government to withdraw recognition of the Nationalist Government in China and to cease all peace efforts. This kind of thinking did not, however, attract Craigie's support. He was still convinced that, if joint action with the United States was impossible, Britain should remain strictly neutral in the Sino-Japanese war, since a policy of backing China would only lead to tensions which Britain could ill afford in the light of the European situation and encourage Japan to move closer to the Axis powers. Even in the smaller scale context of defending Britain's stake in East Asia he believed that his policy was correct; he held that the events of December and January proved that China could not win the war with Japan, and felt that if Britain were to back the losing side a victorious Japan would inevitably seek to eliminate the British stake in East Asia. On 9 February Craigie made clear his views to the Foreign Office when he wrote-

'As I have more than once ventured to urge, British interests (strategic as well as economic) stand to suffer most from a prolongation of this struggle. ... My conclusions are that it would be most unwise from our own point of view to take any step calculated to encourage Chiang Kai-shek to prolong resistance ... and that we should watch carefully for any sign that nationalist Government might be prepared to make peace on terms which leave China temporarily weakened, it is true, but capable of ultimate resuscitation.'⁶⁴

The contrasting views of the Ambassador and the Far Eastern Department meant that the stage was set for a year in which they were to clash repeatedly over policy towards East Asia. A number of arenas were to emerge for this contest, including disputes over the allocation of Chinese Customs revenues, the conduct of British authorities in China, the wisdom of giving loans to China, and whether anything could be gained from negotiations with Japan. These issues largely became excuses for each side to push their own East Asian policy on the Chamberlain Government with varying degrees of success.

One area in which Craigie did manage to persuade the Foreign Office to agree to a policy designed to conciliate the Japanese was over the issue of the future of the Chinese Maritime Customs (CMC). The question of how the

revenue raised by the CMC was to be distributed in wartime had been a major problem from the start of hostilities. It was obvious that the Japanese had no intention of allowing money raised in ports in occupied territory to go to the Nationalists, who would use it to finance their war effort. The danger was that the Japanese would simply seize the revenue for themselves: this represented a threat not just to the Nationalists but also to foreign countries such as Britain who relied on the Customs revenue for the servicing of China's foreign debts.

Tensions first arose over this issue due to Japanese demands at Tientsin in north China in September 1937. In the subsequent negotiations, however, Britain's main obstacle turned out to be not the Japanese but the Chinese, who were vehemently against any compromise, but as this was an area which concerned key British interests these objections were ignored. In a revealing telegram of 8 October to Robert Howe, the Counsellor in Nanking, who was pressing for an easing of the pressure on the Chinese to compromise, the Foreign Office noted, ironically considering their policy over China in other areas, that-

'Preservation of Customs machinery is so important that I fear we must risk some resentment if further pressure is necessary ... It is one thing to stand up for a principle if it is attainable but quite another to do so if it is hopeless and only leads to the evils which the principle is supposed to prevent. The Chinese should realise that the substance is more important than the shadow.'⁶⁵

A local agreement in which it was decided that the revenues were to be paid into the Yokohama Specie Bank was eventually reached on 27 October after Craigie had exerted pressure for moderation in Tokyo.⁶⁶

This was only to prove a short lull in the storm, as on 16 November the Japanese raised the even more controversial issue of the Customs revenue at Shanghai. The uncompromising attitude taken by the Japanese authorities at Shanghai, along with the many other tensions in that city caused by the war, threatened escalation into a major incident, and this led the Foreign Office to agree on 21 December to a suggestion from Howe that the talks be transferred to Tokyo.⁶⁷ When the negotiations began in the New Year it soon became apparent that the major obstacle was the United States, which

although opposed to the Japanese plan to deposit all CMC revenues in the Yokohama Specie Bank, was not prepared to agree to the British alternative of placing them with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. To Craigie this was further evidence of Washington's vacillating policy in East Asia, and in advising the Foreign Office to continue talks unilaterally, he noted-
'... if Japanese authorities find that they can virtually dictate a settlement, with the interested Powers reduced to lodging a vain protest, ... they will be encouraged to treat our rights and interests with even scantier respect in other fields.'⁶⁸

This did not, however, mean that Craigie was proposing to take an unequivocal line over this issue, but rather that he was attempting to assert and protect Britain's interest in this matter, so as to preclude a unilateral Japanese solution. This meant that he did not restrict himself only to backing the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank proposal but was willing to agree to deposition in the Japanese bank if certain conditions were met, mainly that the revenue would still be used to service China's foreign debts. The latter proposition in the end became the basis for the agreement signed by Craigie on 3 May 1938 after three months of tortuous negotiations in Tokyo.⁶⁹ The eventual settlement was greeted with little enthusiasm in the United States or China as the British action, although a reaction to a real problem, hinted at acceptance of the principle that Japan had the right to police China's affairs. To some observers it has appeared as the first act of appeasement by Britain in East Asia; Craigie however, considered it to be a demonstration of how British interests in China could be protected by the skilful use of compromise.⁷⁰

As indicated above, another issue that aggravated Anglo-Japanese relations was the rising tension in the International Concession at Shanghai between the Japanese Army and the British authorities. Ever since the initial outbreak of hostilities in the city in August 1937 there had been tensions between the two sides, the British complaining that the Japanese were using the conflict to discriminate against their commercial interests, the Japanese accusing the British of hindering their war effort. The climate of crisis was further exacerbated by a number of incidents, such as the aforementioned beating of the two policemen in December 1937 and the

frequent Japanese infringements of the British sector of the Settlement. As early as December 1937 Major-General Piggott had commented on the deteriorating conditions in the city, and in particular the tension between the British garrison led by Major-General A. Telfer-Smollett and the Japanese forces led by General Hata Shunroku, and suggested that a liaison officer conversant in Japanese should be appointed to ease the situation. This proposal was, however, summarily dismissed by Major-General Haining in the War Office who reported to Field Marshall Deverell that-

'You will remember that our Military Attaché in Tokyo is so intensely Japanese as to be quite impervious to any suggestion that the Japanese have done anything either to start this trouble or make it worse.'⁷¹

The result was that no brake was applied to the growing mutual antagonism at Shanghai, which continued to gain momentum in 1938.⁷² Craigie, who believed that the tensions were largely the result of the British authorities' failure to act in a strictly neutral manner, became so alarmed by the late spring that he, with the concurrence of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, the new Ambassador to China, proposed on 18 May 1938 that Piggott be sent to the city to see what could be done to improve relations. The War Office now acquiesced, and the Foreign Office also concurred with little confidence that anything substantial would be achieved.⁷³

Piggott arrived in Shanghai on 30 May and promptly set to work by holding a number of talks with General Hata and arranging for him to meet Telfer-Smollett and Clark Kerr. In addition he set up social gatherings where it was possible for officials from the two sides to meet their counterparts in a convivial atmosphere, to such a degree that one MP complained in the House of Commons of the 'fraternization' between the two sides.⁷⁴ The effect was, however, that Piggott's visit did lead to the lowering of tensions in the city. Despite this apparent success the Far Eastern Department continued to mock Piggott's efforts, and noted in their minutes that they still believed that any respite would be merely temporary and that little had been achieved. When Piggott returned to Japan and tried in a conversation with the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, General Ugaki Kazushige, to argue that the battle-weary division stationed at Shanghai should be relieved, Nigel Ronald of the Department noted caustically-

'General Ugaki no doubt had a good giggle when this meeting was over.'⁷⁵

It was therefore with some chagrin that they learnt in early August that the division at Shanghai had indeed been sent back to Japan and demobilized.⁷⁶

This visit was as much a triumph for Craigie as for Piggott, as it seemed to justify the former's opinion that Britain could gain much by avoiding tensions with Japan and pursuing a strictly neutral policy towards the Sino-Japanese war. The same argument was to shape Craigie's response to another issue which was to occupy much thought in Whitehall during 1938, which was the debate over whether Britain should grant or guarantee a loan to China. The issue of a loan to China was first raised by the Chinese Minister of Finance, H.H. Kung, in a visit to Europe in the late spring of 1937, when he proposed that Britain provide a £20 million loan to support the stability of the Chinese currency, an idea which initially met with a favourable British response. The situation changed, however, when the Sino-Japanese war broke out, as the Foreign Office then decided in the face of Treasury objections that a loan would be too controversial.⁷⁷ The proposal for some degree of financial support re-emerged in January 1938, when Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the economic adviser to the Cabinet, suggested, in line with the League of Nations recommendation that members should assist China and after prompting by Kung, that a loan should be given. The Foreign Office now reversed its previous policy and supported the principle of a loan as a useful means of fulfilling its aim of encouraging Chinese resistance.⁷⁸

The problem then was to decide who should provide the money for China; should the Government itself be the lending body, or should the Treasury merely provide security for a loan to Chiang Kai-shek's regime to be raised in the City by a consortium led by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank? The Chinese themselves eventually offered a solution by suggesting that a Government loan be secured by linking it to Chinese exports of wolfram and antimony, two metals which were crucial to the manufacture of munitions. On hearing of this plan many ministers, including Chamberlain, Lord Halifax (Eden's successor as Foreign Secretary) and Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressed an interest, as this appeared to be a scheme that would, while supporting China, also play the useful role of barring

German access to these vital commodities.⁷⁹ Events began to move in earnest in late April, when Chiang Kai-shek pressed Clark Kerr to appeal for greater aid from Britain, and on 9 May Halifax wrote to Simon that-

'We are embarking on an expenditure of two milliards of pounds in preparations for war. Here, for an infinitesimal fraction of that sum, we may be able, at no risk to ourselves, to preserve our vital interests in the Far East.'⁸⁰

The view that no risk was involved was not, however, accepted by Craigie in Tokyo. His major complaint was that, in the absence of any American support for the idea, the loan was of a blatantly political nature and would compromise Britain's neutrality in the China war, with the obvious corollary that it would further worsen Anglo-Japanese relations. In addition, he felt that the loan would, in any case, be a waste of useful assets because China was doomed to defeat. On 6 May he made his first objection to the loan proposal by telling the Foreign Office that-

'I am not in a position to estimate whether the gains to be anticipated from such a policy would outweigh its dangers but it would be unwise to under-estimate the risks of serious complications ensuing with this country were a "political" loan of this character to be granted to China.'⁸¹

Four days later he took a more extreme position, warning that there could be an 'overwhelming outburst of fury against Great Britain' if the loan was made, and arguing that the decision to agree to a loan had to be seen on more than an East Asian scale-

'... whereas in a World War the attitude of China would not be a determining factor, the reverse is true of Japan. Any breach in our relationship with Japan which is of such a character as to bring her irrevocably under German domination is bound sooner or later to act upon our defensive position in Europe.'⁸²

Craigie's fears had little impact on the Foreign Office or on Leith-Ross, and the latter casually dismissed Craigie's arguments in a letter of 12 May to N.E. Young of the Treasury by noting that-

'The Japanese themselves are constantly angling for loans and though they would be annoyed that we should give credits to China, the hope that something of the kind could be done for them would ... counterbalance this

indignation that we should do it for China.'⁸³

The Treasury, however, were impressed by Craigie's warnings, and began to move away from their earlier enthusiasm for the loan project to opposition to the proposals. Therefore at a meeting of the Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee on 1 June Craigie's 10 May telegram became the centrepiece of an argument between the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with Halifax, on the advice of the Far Eastern Department, dismissing the Ambassador's contentions that China would lose the war and that Japan would be provoked to war by the loan, while Simon reported that he and his advisers were in full agreement with Craigie. The meeting ended without any definite conclusion, although it appeared that the policy of caution was in the ascendant.⁸⁴

Just as it appeared that the Foreign Office was on a losing wicket, a new proposal arrived from Cyril Rogers, a Treasury official on loan to the Chinese Government, who suggested a reversion to Kung's idea of a £20 million currency loan.⁸⁵ This idea, unsurprisingly, met with support from the Foreign Office and Leith Ross, and the former proceeded to enquire into Craigie's views on the new suggestion. His opposition this time was less rigid than before, for although he affirmed that a currency loan would be seen by Japan as an 'unfriendly act', he calculated that opinion would not be as outraged as it might have been over a directly political loan. One reason for this judgement was that he had received information from some sources that indicated that Japan itself was opposed to a collapse of China's currency; he therefore concluded that, if it could be assured that the money given to China would not be used for military funding, the loan could go forward as Japanese objections would not be too vociferous.⁸⁶ The Treasury carefully noted the proviso to Craigie's qualified support, and in a letter in late June Simon noted to Halifax that-

'In the view of the Treasury and the Bank of England it is quite impossible to devise any such safeguards as Sir R. Craigie suggests for it is perfectly clear that China must actually in practice use any money she gets to prosecute the war.'⁸⁷

The divide between the Treasury and the Foreign Office was therefore still considerable, and at an informal meeting on 28 June between Chamberlain,

Halifax and Simon it was decided to put the issue before a full Cabinet meeting on 1 July.⁸⁸ The Treasury memorandum for this next meeting continued to reflect strongly Craigie's arguments, and again quoted heavily from his 10 May telegram. In contrast, the Foreign Office, in an effort to refute the Ambassador's case, argued that Britain's global strategic position would in fact be weakened if a loan were not given-

'... if China is not able to maintain an organized resistance, we may soon find ourselves face to face with a Japan flushed with success, allied with the "Have-not" Powers in Europe and with her hands free to pursue her expansionist ambitions in the South Seas and throughout Asia.'⁸⁹

In the subsequent discussion at the Cabinet meeting a final decision was postponed until the American Ambassador and Craigie were consulted. It was clear, however, that the Foreign Office was losing ground largely due to the growing international tensions, for as Chamberlain stressed-

'If we were to become embroiled in the Far East, Germany might seize the opportunity to do something in Czechoslovakia or Italy in Libya.'⁹⁰

The issue was next discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 13 July, by which time it had been established that no parallel American action could be expected and that Craigie still felt that caution was the best option, and as a result Halifax acquiesced in a decision not to go forward with any loan.⁹¹

The dropping of the loan proposal was a notable triumph for Craigie, as it had been his opinions which were consistently cited by the Treasury and others to defeat the Foreign Office initiative. It seems likely that he was helped in his case against the loan by the fact that both Chamberlain and Simon were already well acquainted with him and had come to place trust in his judgement. For example, Chamberlain as recently as late April had referred to Craigie in a letter to H.A. Gwynne as 'a very valuable servant in one of our key positions'.⁹² Another factor in his favour was that the senior politicians, to a greater extent than the Far Eastern Department, were sympathetic to the need, which Craigie emphasized, to see the issue of a loan in a global context, and in particular to calculate its potential repercussions on relations between the Axis powers and Japan. Craigie's objections to the loan were not, however, completely based on grand strategic calculations; they were also rooted in his belief in the summer

of 1938 that he was on the verge of opening a valuable round of talks with the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, General Ugaki.

Elements within the Japanese Government had begun to look favourably on the idea of improving relations with Britain from February 1938, when it was realized that reconciliation could result in pressure from London on the Chinese to agree to a peace settlement. These sentiments were further encouraged by reports from Yoshida Shigeru to the Gaimushō that the Chamberlain Cabinet was keen to see the end of the war in China.⁹³ In May Konoé made changes to his Cabinet which opened the way for improvements in relations with Britain and for new attempts to achieve peace with China by appointing Ikeda Seihin as Finance Minister and General Ugaki Kazushige as Foreign Minister. Ugaki, a former Army Minister, had since October 1937 been a Cabinet Councillor, and had opposed the decision in January 1938 to refuse to negotiate with Chiang Kai-shek and argued for closer ties with Britain. He was therefore well suited to the task set before him, and on 8 July, under his guidance, a formal decision was made at a Five Minister Conference to improve Anglo-Japanese relations, and thus began the Craigie-Ugaki talks that were to run from July through to September.⁹⁴

Craigie from the first saw Ugaki's appointment as an asset, an attitude which was certainly encouraged by Piggott, and on 7 June he wrote to Robert Howe, who had recently returned from China to take up the post of head of the Far Eastern Department, that-

'The great point about Ugaki is that he is a strong and fearless personality and that, if we can succeed in making him understand our point of view, he is likely to stand up to the extreme military elements in a way his predecessor never dared to do.'⁹⁵

Craigie's foremost concern was to use Ugaki's appointment to ensure greater respect for British interests in China and to persuade the Gaimushō to be more receptive to British claims for compensation arising from the war. He believed that this was an area of policy where it would be wise to tread carefully and not, as the Foreign Office wished, to rest all of Britain's complaints on the grounds that Japan was failing to honour the Nine Power Treaty. On 18 June he noted to the Foreign Office that if their policy was adopted-

'... our representations in connection with British rights and interest ... will gradually lose their effect and the possibility of successful negotiation on non-Chinese issues will progressively diminish. The main result would be to strengthen the totalitarian triangle and to add to the sum of our embarrassments not only in China but elsewhere.'⁹⁶

Instead he pushed for a policy of compromise, particularly in north China where the British position was at its weakest.

Within a month this policy changed to become a broader appeal for the need to seek a more substantial improvement of Anglo-Japanese relations. In a long telegram on 14 July, which was a response to a Foreign Office rejection of his case for negotiating ~~medi~~^{modus} *operandi* with the Japanese, Craigie expanded on this idea by noting that-

'... the prospect of a re-established friendship ... would afford the best hope visible today of weaning Japan from her foolish policy of armed imperialism. Of the cynic who denies that any such hope exists, I would enquire whether the alternative of constant bickering and impotent condemnation is not likely to leave China for years in a state of unrest and economic distress. I maintain that such a hope in fact exists; that a test of its strength involves no risks; and that, given encouragement from our side Japan's recent experiences in China may tend to hasten rather than to retard its fruition.'⁹⁷

Underlying these ideas was his frustration at the role he had hitherto been forced to pursue as Ambassador, which was little more than to act as a post office for complaints to the Japanese Government from British firms in China. It needs to be recognized in this context that Craigie had a great desire to make a success of his mission in Tokyo and to achieve his original aim of bringing about an Anglo-Japanese understanding. The depth of his rancour against the Foreign Office's ignoring of his opinions can be seen in a letter to Cadogan in which he reported that his wife had heard from a source that an attempt was being made to curb extremist influence; he concluded-

'You will if you are in a cynical mood no doubt be disposed to regard the above as so much additional chloroform. If so, presumably nothing I can say will shift you from that position, I merely suggest that we on the spot must be presumed to have at least some capacity to judge character -

otherwise we should presumably not be here - and that our facilities for judging whether this or that move is a genuine one are greater than are yours in London.'⁹⁸

Craigie and Ugaki were therefore, at least on the surface moving towards the same goal of improved Anglo-Japanese relations, but intended to use such an achievement for different purposes; Ugaki wished Britain to persuade China to make peace while Craigie desired to guarantee Britain's position in China and to ease the strategic position. This meant that the crucial issue for the talks was whether Britain was prepared to achieve its aims at the price of ending completely its support for China's war effort, which in essence doomed the talks from the start as this was a condition which was unacceptable not only to the Foreign Office but also to the Cabinet itself. Lord Halifax made clear to the Cabinet on 13 July his pessimism about the whole basis of the talks when he noted-

'He himself was not much impressed by Sir R. Craigie's recent telegrams as to the improved attitude of the Japanese Government towards this country, which was not likely to affect the long-range policy of Japan.'⁹⁹

These doubts were echoed in China where there was concern that Craigie was becoming too conciliatory towards Japan. One example of this was a letter Peter Fleming wrote to Clark Kerr, in which he observed-

'I wish you could get him over to Shanghai; I don't think he has the slightest ^{idea} of what China is like or what the Japanese are like in China. His line seems to be to drift in a dignified way into a position where, in a haze of benevolence, we shall be presented by the Japanese with the jackal's share in China (which the poor sap believes will be worth having) ... [T]hough he may be following what is nowadays often called by the English a 'realistic' policy, he almost entirely fails to apprehend the realities in Eastern Asia, however alive he may be to the realities in Europe.'¹⁰⁰

There was also concern that Craigie was unaware of the real sentiments driving Japan. This was the feeling of Christopher Chancellor, the head of the Reuters bureau at Shanghai, who in writing to R.A. Butler, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, in November 1938 about the growing militancy of Japan, noted-

'By virtue of my work I come into contact with many Japanese who are perhaps more representative of Japanese opinion than the Foreign Office officials and the retired generals of the old pro-British clique to whom British Embassy contacts seem to be largely confined.'¹⁰¹

Although this letter was written late in the year after the talks with Ugaki had collapsed it touches on an important point and hints again at what was seen as the damaging impact of Piggott. Both of these criticisms were shared by the Far Eastern Department, who had little time for Craigie's grand visions and instead concerned themselves with the issue of how to counteract Japan's infringement of Britain's rights. Therefore while Craigie hoped that the talks would act as a spur to a new diplomatic alignment, the Foreign Office and Clark Kerr saw them merely as a means of settling some of the myriad claims from British companies in China.

The first official conversation of the Craigie-Ugaki talks took place on 26 July. It dealt with two main issues, the first of which was the need for Japan to deal more promptly with British grievances. In this context Craigie presented five specific demands for Ugaki to consider, which included renewed access to northern Shanghai, the reopening of the Yangtse river for trade, the removal of restrictions on British-owned concerns such as cotton mills, the protection of British interests in British-owned railways, and access to Whangpoo Conservancy. Ugaki's immediate reaction was to state that the reopening of the Yangtse was not possible until Hankow had been captured, but that he would get the Gaimushō to investigate these points.¹⁰² The second major issue was the prospect of peace talks with China; Ugaki proposed that Britain should act as a mediator and explained that he had as yet made little progress in talks, for which he blamed the obstinacy of Chiang Kai-shek. Craigie for his part stuck firmly to his instructions from the Foreign Office, saying that he would forward Ugaki's request to London but expressing the opinions that the real problem was that Japan's peace terms were too harsh, and that any British help would have to be linked to the Japanese response to the five demands.¹⁰³

This talk did not augur well for any substantial improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations, indeed it only succeeded in clarifying the deep divide between the two powers. On 27 July Ugaki noted in his diary that-

'Our people cannot accept the position of the British Government as just and unbiased and that of a neutral nation. Ambassador Craigie praises Chiang Kai-shek excessively and blurs the picture of where responsibility lies for the China Incident.'¹⁰⁴

His pessimism was further exacerbated by the grave suspicions about the talks in the Army and within the Gaimushō itself, which meant that he was under great pressure not to compromise but to use the talks solely to persuade the British to withdraw support from Chiang Kai-shek and co-operate with Japan in the occupied areas.¹⁰⁵ On the British side too there was little hope of any conclusive agreement, and on 27 July Chamberlain stated in a speech to the House of Commons that the British Government had no intention of sacrificing its interests in China to Japan.¹⁰⁶ This still left the problem of how Britain should react to the Japanese request for mediation, an issue which was made all the more difficult by a simultaneous request from the Chinese for Britain and the United States to use their joint good offices.¹⁰⁷ This Chinese initiative meant that the idea that Britain could act alone as a go-between was now obsolete; Britain would have to co-operate with Washington. Craigie was not enamoured with this prospect, as he believed that any offer of good offices from two or more powers would be seen by Japan as a repeat of the Triple Intervention of 1895, an opinion which also had the backing of the American Ambassador in Tokyo, Joseph Grew.¹⁰⁸

There was little movement by either side before the second conversation took place on 17 August, and it was therefore not surprising that this talk became bogged down in mutual recrimination. Ugaki complained in particular about Chamberlain's speech, which led Craigie to respond by stating that-
'... our stock of patience had been great, but ... it was not inexhaustible. It seemed to me that Japanese authorities in China were using statements in Parliament as a pretext for continuing for a further spell of unfair and ungenerous treatment of our interests of which we have just complained.'¹⁰⁹

The lack of progress discouraged Craigie, and following the meeting he told Grew of his growing pessimism and wrote to the Foreign Office that-
'I am afraid moment is fast approaching when we must conclude that method of friendly negotiations has failed and that such other methods of pressure

as are available must be tried... '110

In the Foreign Office Ugaki's recalcitrance was seen as the result of the uncertainty over the future course of affairs in Europe, where the Sudeten crisis was reaching its climax, and it was believed that Japan would neither commit itself to an agreement with Britain nor come out in open opposition until the European situation was clearer.¹¹¹

However, Craigie had not given up hope, and on 20 August held a further talk with Ugaki which seemed to offer progress over Britain's five demands. The most important development though was that Ugaki now openly asked Craigie for British co-operation with the Japanese Army in the occupied areas of China. This approach held some appeal to Craigie who, while recognizing that Japan's definition of the word 'co-operation' was likely to be different to that of Britain, still believed that British interests could only be protected by talking out problems with the Japanese. As a result of this conversation Craigie proposed to the Foreign Office on 22 August that Britain should prepare to 'co-operate' with Japan in China.¹¹² The reaction in London to this suggestion was, not surprisingly, entirely negative, and Craigie was ordered not to refer to the word 'co-operation' in his talks with Ugaki, to proceed very cautiously and to avoid making any concessions that would compromise relations with the United States.¹¹³ Meanwhile Clark Kerr went even further and proposed that the talks should be completely suspended. Craigie was disappointed at this limitation on his freedom of action and wrote to the Foreign Office that-

'Absence of collaboration has been at root of many of our difficulties in the past and if it is to be officially encouraged will end by being fatal to our whole position in occupied China.'¹¹⁴

Craigie's renewed optimism was in any case soon belied by his next meeting with Ugaki on 8 September, after a string of cancellations, when the Foreign Minister returned to the theme that Britain should end all support for Chiang Kai-shek and again failed to meet Britain's five demands.¹¹⁵ Craigie reported shortly after to the Foreign Office-

'Up to the interview of 27th July I was hopeful of results, but ever since that date the atmosphere has changed and General Ugaki's attitude has become that of a courteous and imperturbable, but nevertheless thoroughly

stubborn council for the defence.'¹¹⁶

On 22 September a further meeting was held in a more convivial atmosphere, but once again no real progress was made.¹¹⁷ Despite the failure to achieve anything substantive in these talks Craigie still believed that it was necessary for them to continue and that to break them off could be dangerous, particularly as the European situation was so uncertain. The Foreign Office, despite the objections of Clark Kerr, agreed to this, but in fact the conversation of 22 September turned out to be the last in the series. On 29 September, in protest against the plan to establish a China Board which would take responsibility for China away from the Gaimushō, Ugaki tendered his resignation.¹¹⁸ Craigie saw the passing of Ugaki from the scene as a great tragedy, and wrote later in his memoirs that, although he had found Ugaki a 'hard bargainer' and that their conversations had entailed 'some pretty plain speaking', he also felt that some progress was being made, and in relating the story of the General's resignation noted- 'So ended the last determined attempt to curb the activities and policies of the Japanese military in China.'¹¹⁹

Thus ended the first year of Craigie's stay in Japan; it had on the whole been a frustrating period for him, for British policy was still precariously poised between assisting China and not alienating Japan and it appeared that the aims of achieving a *rapprochement* had been largely forgotten. Craigie could see that the British policy of refusing to observe the strictest neutrality in the occupied areas of China was storing up problems for the future, but his observations on this were routinely ignored by the Far Eastern Department and therefore the tensions between the Japanese Army and the British authorities in China continued to rise. Craigie could also sense the growing interest in Japan in Anglo-German antagonism and felt that Britain had to act to try to contain the threat of a further Japanese drift towards the Axis; in this too he was frustrated by the Foreign Office, and as the year progressed Britain and Japan had drifted further and further apart and the only attempt at reconciliation had come to nought.

NOTES

1. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry for 29 October 1937, Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University Library, Diary 4/31.
2. At his farewell party in January 1939 Captain Rawlings reportedly said to the American Assistant Naval Attaché, Lieutenant Edwin Layton that 'The next time I see the little yellow buggers, I hope it will be through the sights of a fourteen inch gun!' See E. Layton, R. Pineau, & J. Costello, *"And I Was There". Pearl Harbor and Midway - Breaking the Secrets.* (William Morrow, New York, 1985) p.70. For assessments of Sir George Sansom, see K. Sansom (ed.), *Sir George Sansom and Japan. A Memoir.* (Diplomatic Press, Tallahassee, Fla., 1972) and G. Daniels, 'Sir George Sansom' in Sir H. Cortazzi & G. Daniels, *Britain and Japan 1859-1991. Themes and Personalities.* (Routledge, London, 1991) pp.277-288
3. PRO FO371/21044 F5093/5093/23 Sir R. Vansittart minute 1 November 1937.
4. *Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP) 1919-1939. Second Series Vol. XX. Far Eastern Affairs May 20, 1933-November 5, 1936.* No.174 F6577/591/23 Sir G. Sansom to Sir E. Crowe 12 October 1934.
5. CAB24/253 CP 8(35) Sir John Simon note 11 January 1935 enclosing Sir G. Sansom memorandum 29 October 1934.
6. G. Daniels, op.cit. p.314 footnote 18. For further details on Sansom's animosity towards Craigie, see the letter from Katherine Sansom to Michael Gordon 17 November 1937, in K. Sansom (ed.), op.cit. p.96.
7. For Piggott's background see F.S.G. Piggott, *Broken Thread, An Autobiography,* (Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1950) Chapters I-IX. For further details, see C. Blacker, 'The Two Piggotts' in Sir H. Cortazzi & G. Daniels (eds), op.cit. pp.118-127.
8. PRO FO371/19334 F4680/4680/23 Sir R. Clive to Sir R. Vansittart 25 July 1935.
9. PRO WO106/5513 Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Field Marshal Sir C. Deverell 28 July 1936. It is worth noting that in writing such a letter Piggott was circumventing usual procedures; a Military Attaché was supposed to forward his views only to his Ambassador and to the Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence.
10. PRO FO371/20279 F7400/89/23 Sir G. Sansom note 22 September 1936, enclosure in Sir R. Clive to A. Eden 6 November 1936. See also J. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath. Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954.* (Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1979) pp.127-129.
11. PRO WO208/1214 Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Major-General R.H. Haining 29 June 1936.
12. PRO WO106/5584 Colonel L.E. Dennys to Major-General R.H. Haining 10 August 1937.

13. Ibid. Major-General R.H. Haining to Major-General F.S.G. Piggott 20 October 1937.
14. For the initial meeting between Piggott and Craigie, see F.S.G. Piggott, *op.cit.* p.138.
15. PRO WO106/5584 Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Field Marshal Sir C. Deverell 23 October 1937.
16. PRO FO262/2016 153/70/38 Major General F.S.G. Piggott minute 23 March 1938 on Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 16 March 1938
17. A good illustration of the generation gap is that Piggott was an old acquaintance of General Oshima's father, an Anglophile who strongly disagreed with his son's pro-Axis leanings, see F.S.G. Piggott, *op.cit.* pp.324-325.
18. A great deal of pressure was put on Piggott in autumn 1937 by the Japanese Director of Military Intelligence, Lt.-Gen. Homma Masaharu, who had lately been the Military Attaché in London and was an old friend. The scare stories spread by Homma certainly reached Craigie and may have influenced his fears during this period.
19. P. Fleming to Sir A. Clark Kerr 12 July 1938, in Inverchapel Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, General Correspondence 1937-8.
20. E. Hall-Patch to Sir A. Clark Kerr 18 November 1938, in Inverchapel Papers, General Correspondence 1937-8.
21. On Joseph Grew, see W. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador. Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the American Diplomatic Tradition.* (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1966).
22. J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 4 October 1937, in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3 Vol.3.
23. J. Grew to H. Wilson 30 September 1937, in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687 Vol.84/1937.
24. On the details of the attack and the subsequent diplomacy, see P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia, 1937-1941.* (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1977) pp.21-22, and B.A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1938. A Study in the Dilemmas of British Decline.* (Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, 1974) pp.40-41.
25. PRO CAB24/271 CP 208(37) 'Situation in the Far East and the Mediterranean.' Howarth note 3 September 1937. This records a ministerial meeting which discussed the proposal to withdraw Craigie. The subsequent telegram to Tokyo is printed in *DBFP, Second Series Vol.XXI Far Eastern Affairs November 6, 1936 - July 27, 1938.* No.225 F5926/5727/10 A. Eden to J. Dodds 2 September 1937 pp.284-285

26. J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 21 October 1937, in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3 Vol.3.
27. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.230 F6147/5727/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 5 September 1937 pp.289-290, and No.232 F6182/5727/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 6 September 1937 pp.291-292. On 8 September Chamberlain, despite recognizing that the interim reply did not satisfy Britain's conditions, persuaded the Cabinet not to withdraw Craigie, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.238 Cabinet conclusions 8 September 1937 pp.297-302.
28. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry for 23 September 1937, in Kennedy Papers, Diary 4/31. For the terms of the final Japanese reply, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.252 F6770/5727/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 21 September 1937 p.353.
29. PRO FO371/20956 F9318/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 3 October 1937. Craigie's protest failed to have any effect and the Archbishop spoke at the meeting on 5 October, leading to a good deal of criticism in the Japanese press.
30. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.245 F6619/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 17 September 1937 pp.325-326, and PRO FO371/20956 F6973/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 25 September 1937. See B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.56-57.
31. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.258 F6972/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 25 September 1937 p.340. For a critical view of Craigie's espousal of peace talks see S. Olu Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy in Britain. Sir Robert Craigie Versus the Foreign Office.' in *Modern Asian Studies* 1983 Vol.17 No.3 pp.497-499.
32. For the Chamberlain/Eden talk, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.263 F6972/9/10 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 27 September 1937 p.344 footnote 3. On Chiang Kai-shek's reaction to the proposals, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.285 F7479/9/10 R. Howe to A. Eden 5 October 1937 pp.368-369.
33. For Eden's concern to keep in line with the United States see his comments in *DBFP 2/XXI* No.269 Cabinet Conclusions 29 September 1938 pp.348-350, where he worried that Craigie's peace initiative might disturb Washington. See also the telegram he subsequently drafted to the United States appealing for co-operation against Japan, *DBFP 2/XXI* No.272 F7240/7240/10 A. Eden to V. Mallet 30 September 1937 p.355
34. PRO FO371/21015 F8143/6799/10 Inter-departmental meeting minutes 13 October 1937. On Roosevelt's 'Quarantine Speech', see R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1979) pp.149-152, and P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.26-28
35. PRO FO371/21016 F8143/6799/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 October 1937. See B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.67-70.
36. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.291 Cabinet conclusions 6 October 1937 p.317. Also cited in R.J. Pritchard, *Far Eastern Influences Upon British Strategy Towards the Great Powers, 1937-1939*. (Garland, New York, 1987) p.75.

37. DBFP 2/XXI No.304 Cabinet conclusions 13 October 1937 pp.390-394, and PRO CAB23/89 38(37) 20 October 1937. See B.A. Lee, op.cit. pp.67-70.
38. PRO CAB27/634 FES(37)4 'Reinforcement of British Naval Forces in the Far East', Admiral Sir E. Chatfield memorandum 23 September 1937
39. DBFP 2/XXI No.283 F7372/6799/10 S.H. Phillips to Lord Cranborne 4 October 1937 pp.364-367. See also R.J. Pritchard, op.cit. p.75
40. For more detail on talks in Brussels between Eden and Davis, see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.29-31 and B.A. Lee, op.cit. pp.71-74
41. DBFP 2/XXI No.369 Cabinet conclusions 17 November 1937 pp.500-503.
42. DBFP 2/XXI No.334 'Economic Sanctions Against Japan', Advisory Committee on Trade Questions in Time of War report 5 November 1937 pp.432-446.
43. DBFP 2/XXI No.345 British Shipping in the Far East Cabinet Committee, 2nd meeting, 9 November 1937 pp.460-464.
44. PRO FO371/21030 F10443/28/23 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 4 November 1937. See also S. Olu Agbi, op.cit. p.499.
45. PRO FO371/20959 F9536/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 13 November 1937. On the German mediation see J.P. Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern Crisis 1931-1938. A Study in Diplomacy and Ideology*. (Oxford Univ. Press, Oxford, 1982) pp.260-290.
46. DBFP 2/XXI No.369 Cabinet conclusions 17 November 1937 pp.500-503. See also p.503 footnote 1, in which Chamberlain in a letter of 21 November explains his actions to his sister Hilda. Cadogan noted after the meeting- 'Cabinet hopeless - won't even say we shd go as far as non-recognition', see Sir A. Cadogan diary entry for 17 November 1937 in Cadogan papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, ACAD 1/6
47. DBFP 2/XXI No.374 F9836/9/10 Sir R. Lindsay to A. Eden 19 November 1937 pp.509-510, and PRO FO371/20959 F9798/9/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 19 November 1937.
48. DBFP 2/XXI No.376 F9854/6799/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 20 November 1937 p.513.
49. DBFP 2/XXI No.403 F10574/6799/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 6 December 1937 pp.556-557.
50. DBFP 2/XXI No.400 F71/71/23 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 2 December 1937 pp.553-554.
51. For the details of the Ladybird and Panay attacks, see M. Koginos, *The Panay Incident. Prelude to War*. (Purdue Univ. Studies, Lafayette, Ind., 1967) pp.24-53.

52. Letter from Katherine Sansom to Michael Gordon 3 December 1937, in K. Sansom (ed.), *op.cit.* p.97.
53. PRO FO371/21005 F11035/2595/10 Sir R. Craigie to Sir R. Vansittart 14 December 1937.
54. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.433 F11201/9/10 Sir R. Lindsay to A. Eden 17 December 1937 pp.589-591. See also R. Dallek, *op.cit.* p.154.
55. For the British reaction to Roosevelt's initiative, see R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.81-85. The British interest in coercive action against Japan can also be seen in the directive to the Industrial Intelligence Centre in December 1937 to prepare a paper on sanctions for the CID Economic Pressure Sub-Committee, see F0837/527 Capt. E. Ryan to Major D. Morton 28 December 1937.
56. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.441 F11362/9/10 A. Eden to Sir R. Lindsay 24 December 1937 pp.405-406.
57. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.468 F291/84/10 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 5 January 1938 p.365. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.112.
58. J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 7 January 1938 in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3 Vol.3
59. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.471 Foreign Office to Sir R. Lindsay 7 January 1938 pp.635-637. The report of the incident at Shanghai is in *DBFP 2/XXI* No.473 F334/35/10 H. Phillips (Shanghai) to A. Eden 8 January 1938. pp.460-461.
60. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.473 F407/84/10 Sir R. Lindsay to Foreign Office 10 January 1938.
61. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.478 F407/84/10 Sir A. Cadogan to N. Chamberlain 11 January 1938 p.647 footnote 1. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.94-95.
62. On Roosevelt's plan for a World Conference and the British response see R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.87-89 and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.102-105.
63. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.497 F1023/78/10 'British Policy in the Far East', Sir J. Pratt memorandum 24 January 1938 p.668.
64. PRO FO371/22107 F1679/84/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 9 February 1938. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.39-40.
65. PRO FO371/20989 F7636/220/10 A. Eden to R. Howe (Shanghai) 9 October 1937.
66. PRO FO371/20989 F8621/220/10 J. Affleck (Tientsin) to E. Hall-Patch (Shanghai) 27 October 1937.
67. PRO FO371/20990 F11251/220/10 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 21 December 1937.

68. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.524 F2065/15/10 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 19 February 1938 p.704.
69. For the text of the Customs Agreement, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.565 F6072/15/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 May 1938 pp.757-759. The destruction of the original files for this class means that it is impossible to gauge the reaction of the ^{Fat} Eastern Department to this agreement, certainly references in the following years tended to be unfavourable. However, this was largely due to the fact that the agreement never worked properly, although this was as much due to Chinese intransigence as it was to Japan's actions.
70. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.553 F4462/71/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 April 1938 pp.471-473.
71. PRO WO106/5573 Major-General R.H. Haining to Field Marshal Sir C. Deverell 13 December 1937. The original telegram from Piggott has not been traced.
72. See PRO FO262/2016 124/70/38 Major-General F.S.G. Piggott minute 28 February 1938 on H. Phillips (Shanghai) to Lord Halifax 17 February 1938, in which the Military Attaché complained about the attitude of the British authorities at Shanghai- 'These cases of discriminatory, unfriendly and other undesirable activities always appear in official letters; similar cases of friendly action and co-operation hardly ever.'
73. See PRO FO800/299 Sir A. Clark Kerr Private Papers 29938/21 R. Howe to Sir A. Clark Kerr 24 May 1938.
74. See F.S.G. Piggott, *op.cit.* pp.302-307, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.115.
75. PRO FO371/22153 F8037/1155/10 N. Ronald minute 2 August 1938 on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 30 June 1938 enclosing Major-General F.S.G. Piggott/General K. Ugaki conversation 24 June 1938.
76. PRO FO371/22153 F8692/1155/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 August 1938.
77. PRO T188/188 Sir F. Leith Ross Private Papers, C. Orde to Sir F. Leith Ross 23 July 1937.
78. For Kung's revival of the loan proposal, see *DBFP 2/XXI* No.491 F787/78/10 D. Mackillop to A. Eden 19 January 1938 pp.659-660. Leith-Ross discussed the idea of a loan with Eden on 1 February and, although the latter could see many obstacles to the plan, he nevertheless eventually concurred, on this see T188/205 Sir F. Leith-Ross to Sir F. Phillips (Treasury) 2 February 1938.
79. The plan presented by Dr. Quo, the Chinese Ambassador to Britain, for a loan secured on wolfram is in *DBFP 2/XXI* No.534 F2921/25/10 Lord Halifax/C-T Quo Conversation 15 March 1938 p.718. For the ministerial response to this proposal see T188/207 and in particular Sir J. Simon to N. Chamberlain 5 April 1938. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.131.

80. PRO F0371/22108 F4582/84/10 Lord Halifax to Sir J. Simon 9 May 1938. Also quoted in P. Lowe, op.cit. p.42 and B.A. Lee, op.cit. p.132.
81. DBFP 2/XXI No.566 F4865/84/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 7 May 1938 p.761.
82. DBFP 2/XXI No.570 F5039/15/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 10 May 1938 p.766. Also quoted in B.A. Lee, op.cit. p.132.
83. PRO T188/224 Sir F. Leith-Ross to N.E. Young 12 May 1938.
84. DBFP 2/XXI No.584 CAB27/623 FP(36) Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee 30th meeting 1 June 1938 pp.785-794. Craigie's telegram was circulated at the meeting as an enclosure to a Foreign Office memorandum. See also B.A. Lee, op.cit. pp.133-134.
85. Reference to the new proposal from Cyril Rogers can be found in PREM 1/315 Sir F. Phillips to Sir F. Leith Ross 17 June 1938; the original telegram has not been traced, which is due to the original file 25/10 being destroyed.
86. DBFP 2/XXI No.591 F6449/25/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 June 1938 p.800.
87. PRO T188/224 Sir J. Simon to Lord Halifax undated July 1938.
88. PRO PREM 1/315 Sir H. Wilson minute 28 June 1938.
89. DBFP 2/XXI No.595 CP152(38) 'Assistance to China', Lord Halifax memorandum 1 July 1938 p.807. See also B.A. Lee, op.cit. p.134.
90. DBFP 2/XXI No.597 Cabinet conclusions 6 July 1938 p.815. Also cited in R.J. Pritchard, op.cit. p.109, but see also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.42-43.
91. DBFP 2/XXI No.599 Cabinet conclusions 13 July 1938 pp.819-822. The decision not to go ahead with the China loan needs also to be seen against the background of the decision in July 1938 to turn down the Admiralty's New Naval Standard, see R.J. Pritchard, op.cit. pp.63-65.
92. N. Chamberlain to H.A. Gwynne 28 April 1938, in Gwynne Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Mss Gwynne 17.
93. See C. Hosoya, 'Britain and the US in Japan's View of the International System, 1937-1941', in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation, 1919-1952*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) pp.60-61.
94. Ibid. pp.61-62. See also K. Usui, 'The Politics of War, 1937-1941', in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The China Quagmire. Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent 1933-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1983) pp.329-338.
95. PRO F0371/22181 F7605/71/23 Sir R. Craigie to R. Howe 7 June 1938. On Craigie and Ugaki see also S. Olu Agbi, op.cit. pp.500-501.

96. PRO FO371/22091 F7418/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 July 1938.
97. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.600 F8491/12/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 July 1938 p.826. Also quoted in B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.142.
98. PRO FO371/22181 F8961/71/23 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 27 July 1938.
99. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.599 Cabinet conclusions 13 July 1938 p.820.
100. P. Fleming to Sir A. Clark Kerr 12 July 1938, in *Inverchapel Papers, General Correspondence 1937-8*.
101. C. Chancellor to R.A. Butler 18 November 1938, in *Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB F79*.
102. PRO FO371/22092 F7944/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 July 1938 and F8151/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 July 1938. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.46-47, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.143.
103. *DBFP 2/XXI* No.603 F8129/16/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 July 1938 pp.831-833.
104. Quoted in K. Usui, *op.cit.* p.336.
105. See K. Usui, 'A Consideration of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Japanese Views of Britain, 1937-1941.' in I. Nish (ed.), *op.cit.* pp.85-86, C. Hosoya, *op.cit.* pp.85-86, and T. Ōhata, *op.cit.* pp.52-53.
106. PRO FO371/22109 F8153/84/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 27 July 1938.
107. *DBFP Third Series Vol.VIII*. No.12 F8751/16/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 12 August 1938 pp.13-14.
108. PRO FO371/22093 F8915/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 17 August 1938. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.47.
109. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.31 F9019/12/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 August 1938 p.28.
110. J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 18 July 1938, *Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3 Vol.3*.
111. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.54 F8915/62/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 27 August 1938 pp.48-49. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.145-146.
112. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.41 F9124/12/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 August 1938 p.36.
113. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.45 F9124/12/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 24 August 1938 p.41.

114. PRO F0371/22052 F9256/12/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 2
September 1938.
115. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.86 F9684/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 8
September 1938 pp.75-77.
116. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.99 F10780/12/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 15
September 1938 p.89
117. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.107 F10125/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22
September 1938 pp.96-97. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.49
118. K. Usui, 'The Politics of War, 1937-1941', pp.336-338.
119. Sir R. Craigie, *op.cit.* p.62.

CHAPTER FOUR

'A SURRENDER OF VITAL PRINCIPLES'

'While every effort will be made to avoid a breakdown of the Tokyo negotiations, there is a point beyond which it is not advisable to go, and it may well be argued the danger of a surrender of vital principles is greater than that of a breakdown of the conversations. The respite to be won by concessions would be of a temporary and precarious nature and the conflict of principle would inevitably rise again almost immediately.'

Lord Halifax Memorandum 21 August 1939¹

The collapse of the Craigie-Ugaki talks at the end of September 1938 was followed by a period of markedly worsening relations between Britain and Japan in East Asia. This was largely the consequence of Japan's continuing inability to defeat China. The problem for the Japanese was that, despite their series of military victories, which in October 1938 had included the capture of both Hankow and Canton, Chiang Kai-shek's regime still refused to surrender. This led the Japanese to believe that the survival of the Kuomintang government rested on foreign support, and that if this lifeline could be cut by forcing the Western powers out of the region the Chinese could be forced to make peace. This policy manifested itself in two ways. First, it led to a number of diplomatic initiatives such as Konoe's 'New Order in East Asia' statement of 3 November 1938, the formal repudiation of the Nine Power Treaty on 18 November in response to an American protest about that statement, and the publication of new peace terms on 22 December; all these initiatives were designed to assert Japan's regional hegemony and to nullify the last remnants of the Washington System. Second, it precipitated a campaign to pressurize the Western concessions in the occupied areas to end all forms of co-operation with the Nationalists, Shanghai and Tientsin being the main areas of contention.²

This new hardline attitude, which obviously held the danger that it could lead to a direct confrontation with Britain, was not constructed in a vacuum, but was also affected deeply by events in Europe, and in particular by the Munich settlement over Czechoslovakia which revealed to Japan the extent of British weakness in Europe and the apparent lack of will for war. This impression naturally encouraged Japan to believe that it could pursue its ends in East Asia without too great a risk of incurring a reaction, and that it need not be restrained in its methods. In addition to this the Japanese Army hoped that the new talks between Germany, Italy and Japan to turn the Anti-Comintern Pact into a military alliance would further restrict Britain's freedom of action by threatening her with a war in Europe should a firm stand be taken in East Asia.³

The British were therefore faced with an increasingly dangerous position and in the autumn much time was spent discussing how the Foreign Office should react. Initially this debate revealed a continuing divide between London and Tokyo, which was not helped by Craigie's misguided belief that Munich would have a salutary effect on the Japanese. He expressed this conviction in a memorandum for the embassy staff on 5 October 1938, which is worth quoting from at length-

'I think it would be a fair deduction to say that Herr Hitler has for the first time met with a diplomatic check and has been obliged to agree to certain things which must have been distinctly unpalatable.

The Japanese are busy trying to convey the impression that the Munich conference was a diplomatic defeat for the democratic powers. The more I study the matter the more I am convinced that the exact contrary is the case. The two dictators have been forced to realise - what they have hitherto refused to believe - that France and Britain were prepared to fight on this issue if Germany resorted to force... It is permissible to feel great sympathy for Czechoslovakia in her hour of difficulty and we may thoroughly dislike the sabre-rattling of the dictators. But when this has been said we must recognise that discontented minorities cannot and should not remain indefinitely under a ruthless oppression... Furthermore it is permissible to hope that Czechoslovakia, freed of these alien and hostile elements and enjoying the guarantee of the four most powerful nations of Europe, will be able to look forward to a more peaceful and no less

prosperous future.

I have put forward these points at some length because I think it is important that we should each of us, when opportunity offers, try to correct the mistaken impression which is being sedulously fostered here that France and Great Britain have suffered a serious setback. Even if this were true it is something we should seek to combat in this country so prone at present to underestimate the might of the British Empire; as however it happens to be untrue we can resist such aspersions with all the greatest vigour.'⁴

Craigie's reaction seems now to be inexcusably naïve and even callous, but it must be read, unburdened by hindsight, as a contemporary defence and seen as an opinion that was by no means unique at the time. It did indeed appear to many observers that Chamberlain had pulled off a remarkable coup and that Hitler had been thwarted from his intended war, and it should be remembered that Munich was seen as necessary not only by those later castigated as the 'Guilty Men' but also by Cadogan and the Chiefs of Staff.⁵ There is, however, in Craigie's outlook an unrealistic sense of optimism, a belief that a corner had been turned, which was also frequently present in his dealings with Japan. This was all too evident when he reported to the Foreign Office on 21 October that his interpretation of Munich had been accepted in Japan, noting that-

'There is widest commendation of achievement of Prime Minister and definitely more friendly trend towards us is now noticeable among public as a whole and more responsible elements in particular.'⁶

It is probable that the evidence for this apparent appreciation of Chamberlain came from Piggott's sources, but what is disturbing is that the Ambassador should have believed it was true.

In contrast to these pronouncements Clark Kerr noted on 13 October that the Chinese saw the settlement as another example of 'perfidious Albion', and-

'The Japanese reaction ... is that we are prepared to put up with any indignity rather than fight.

The result is that all in all our prestige is at a low ebb in the east and anything which could be construed as a sign of weakness or of a lack of serious determination to maintain our position in the east may have

consequences far beyond Shanghai.'⁷

Unsurprisingly considering their jaundiced views on the nebulous Japanese 'moderates', the Far Eastern Department took Clark Kerr's side over the effect of Munich on Japan, and saw Britain's display of weakness as encouraging the Japanese move into South China in October 1938.⁸ This new advance by the Japanese army, which constituted a clear threat to the security of Hong Kong, led to renewed discussion of how Britain could aid China and whether sanctions should be introduced against Japan.⁹ Craigie's response to these proposals was hostile, and in this he was heavily influenced by the rumours of new talks between the signatories of the Anti-Comintern Pact. These negotiations prompted him to stress again the need to see events in East Asia as part of a world picture, and therefore British actions had to be judged on the basis of whether they would encourage or hinder Japan's conversations with the Axis powers. He concluded that British attempts at coercion would most likely antagonize Japan, and even opposed a denunciation of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty on the grounds that-

'Such action would be indistinguishable from sanctions and ... would definitely rule out our prospects, such as they are, of improving Anglo-Japanese relations, weakening the "axis" and asserting a salutary influence on the ultimate peace settlement.'¹⁰

Such was his concern over the prospects for Anglo-Japanese relations that in November he proposed that he should be allowed home for consultations, and even at one point suggested, post-Munich, that a settlement for East Asia might be attainable if there was Anglo-German co-operation in pursuing that end.¹¹ On 2 December 1938 he took his fears one step further by conjuring up the image of Japan as not just using a European war as an opportunity to make mischief but acting as a co-belligerent with the Axis powers. This led him to pose a fundamental question-

'If "co-operation" with Japan would be sufficient to prevent the consummation of this alliance, would not that render desirable a reconsideration of the earlier decision not to pursue this line of enquiry? I have never believed that "co-operation" need necessarily involve a complete surrender to the wishes of the Japanese extremists or the abandonment of the cause of China - quite the contrary. It would however

definitely mean the abandonment of any further scheme to support, or give material assistance to, the régime of General Chiang Kai-shek. It would mean recognition of the actual fact of Japan's military and economic predominance in China today, and an effort to win back ultimate Chinese independence through co-operation, both with China and Japan, in establishing that assured market and that source of raw materials which represents Japan's primary needs in the economic field. Not an attractive policy at first sight but one which should not perhaps be rejected out of hand if the need to separate Japan from the totalitarian countries is real and urgent.'¹²

Craigie's attempt to place events in East Asia on a world scale met with some sympathy within the Foreign Office; Sir John Brenan noted on 11 January 1939 that-

'In this despatch Sir Robert Craigie tries to lift the Far Eastern question out of the plane on which it has hitherto been treated by His Majesty's Government: the ineffectual attempt to maintain British trading interests in China by means of impotent protests and recriminations: and to place it where it belongs as an important factor in the general world situation.'¹³

Despite this approval of the scale of his thinking, there was, however, no agreement with his conclusion: the problem remained as it had done since the time of the naval talks; to appease Japan meant alienating the United States and the maintenance of good relations with Washington was considered to be a greater priority than the hypothetical possibility of hindering the formation of a Tripartite alliance.¹⁴

Craigie's effort to counter the calls from London for a more pro-Chinese policy was, however, short-lived. The apparent triumph of the hardliners in Japan, as witnessed in the events of November and in particular the challenge to the Nine Power Treaty, soon caused him to reverse his opposition to putting pressure on Japan. He summed up the reasons for his change in thinking in a letter to Cadogan in January 1939 where he wrote-

'... I advocated a policy of conciliation here as long as I felt there was any hope of the Japanese people playing fair with us; but the prolongation of this trouble, the military successes and the eclipse (temporarily I hope) of more reasonable elements from Japanese political life have

necessitated a change of method on our part until such time as the situation here changes for the better.'¹⁵

Craigie's new approach was not simply a result of Japan's strident tone over China; it was also influenced by another change in the international climate. In the late autumn of 1938 the United States indulged itself in one of its periodic forays into world affairs, condemning Nazi Germany for the outrages of *Kristallnacht* and confronting Japan's challenge to the sanctity of treaties in East Asia.¹⁶ The former led Craigie to recognize that any chance of Anglo-German mediation had died, and he noted on 29 December to the Foreign Office-

'If we appear to be sacrificing our ideals to our interests by co-operating with the Germans to effect a compromise in the Far East, at a time when the Americans are engaged in an ideological dispute with the Germans, we risk losing their sympathy and being accused of similar behaviour to that attributed to us by Mr. Stimson over the Manchurian affair.'¹⁷

The most important change, however, was in the American attitude towards Japan. As has been noted at the time of the *Panay* Incident, Craigie believed that a policy of coercion towards Japan could only be attempted if the United States was willing to take action; he was therefore much encouraged in his change of heart by an enquiry on 1 December 1938 from Sumner Welles, then acting American Secretary of State, asking what Britain thought of economic reprisals against Japan.¹⁸ This appeared to him to offer real possibilities, and when his opinion was asked for by London he wrote on 1 January 1939 that, as Japanese aims were now clear and as it appeared that American attitudes were hardening, the time was right for action to be taken, and he proposed that Britain, France and the United States should start by refusing to purchase Japanese gold. He supported his case by pointing to the increasing vulnerability of the Japanese economy due to the war effort.¹⁹ The Far Eastern Department was greatly pleased by this change of heart, with Ronald minuting-

'Sir R. Craigie seems to have radically altered his opinions during the last few months. His views now coincide with those held by the Department eight or nine months ago.'²⁰

Craigie's support was welcome not only in the sense that it was agreeable to have a common front, but also because it provided the Foreign Office

with a useful weapon in persuading the Treasury and the Board of Trade to agree to a positive response to Washington's enquiry.²¹ The fact that even Craigie, who had been so circumspect about reprisals in 1938, was now willing to support tough action was a persuasive argument. The Board of Trade was, however, less impressed with Craigie's new stance and responded to his bellicosity by advising the Foreign Office, ironically considering Craigie's previous stance, that-

'We should like it plainly put to him ... that in our view, based on experience, it is useless to contemplate economic reprisals if we do not also contemplate war.'²²

The result of the debate within Whitehall, in which Craigie's conversion played a significant role, was that on 23 January a telegram was sent to Washington asking for the American view of Britain's denouncing its Commercial Treaty but making it clear that Britain could not make any firm plans until it was known what the Roosevelt administration was planning.²³ The British motive for this careful reply was made clear in a note from Halifax to Chamberlain on 9 January in which he wrote-

'I rather doubt whether in fact it is likely to be found very feasible to do anything very effective... but it is of very great political importance... that the Americans should not again have the fun of saying what they would have done if only we had not stood in the way.'²⁴

The American reply came on 3 February when Welles told the British Counsellor in Washington, Mallet, that the United States preferred to offer aid to China rather than to take direct action against Japan.²⁵ This did not come as a surprise to Whitehall, and though it ended for a while talk of sanctions it also acted as a stimulus to increased assistance for China.

The issue of loans to China had been under reconsideration since November, when Chiang Kai-shek had told Clark Kerr that China desperately needed financial aid.²⁶ Here too, Craigie saw fit to modify his views from initial opposition to approval once the United States had agreed to aid Chiang Kai-shek. His support was also facilitated by a change of emphasis in the nature of the proposed loan from one direct to the Chinese government to a currency loan, which had the advantage that it could not be used for the purchase of munitions. On 17 January, in response to a

request from the Prime Minister for his view, Craigie noted that-

'... I think there will be a storm but that we shall weather it without great difficulty. Essential requirement is to keep in step with United States...'27

This telegram was, as in the case of sanctions, essential in confirming that it was safe for Britain to move forward in this field and at a Cabinet meeting on 18 January his views were one of the factors that led to approval of the currency loan proposal, which was finally announced in Parliament on 8 March.²⁸

The increasing tensions in East Asia also caused Craigie to work for the improvement of the British position in another field. On 14 December 1938 he added his voice to that of Sir Josiah Crosby, the British Minister to Thailand, in calling for naval reinforcements for the Far East to stem the advance of Japanese influence in the region, by arguing-

'Japan is at the present time ruled by men who are influenced in the main by the prevalent German ideas of "power politics" and to such minds as these the moving of a few capital ships represents a far more convincing argument than any number of protests or the most passionate advocacy of the sanctity of treaties.'²⁹

He also emphasized the advantages that would be gained in the United States which would be more convinced that Britain was willing to defend its own interests. Craigie's entry into this area led the Far Eastern Department quickly to put pressure on the Admiralty to consider these views and to push for the issue to be put before the Chiefs of Staff Committee.³⁰

This pressure from the Foreign Office coincided with what Dr. Pritchard has referred to as a 'palace revolution' within the Admiralty, in terms of both staff and strategy. In the latter the increasing threat of war in Europe had led to a reassessment of the assumption that, in the case of a crisis in East Asia, the main fleet would automatically be sent to Singapore without reference to the situation in Europe. Instead the Admiralty was developing the idea that, if a conflict with the Axis powers were already in progress in Europe, then it would be better to delay the sending of the fleet at least until Italy had been defeated and the Mediterranean secured.³¹ With such proposals mooted the Admiralty had little time for

Foreign Office plans for a squadron to be permanently stationed in the East, and the reply to the Foreign Office of 29 March recorded that-

'Neither as it exists now, nor as it will be when the present contemplated expansion is completed, can the British Fleet be regarded as adequate to meet with success, alone and simultaneously, the navies of Germany, Italy and Japan ... My Lords fully appreciate the political arguments which have been advanced for the stationing of capital ships in the Far East: but it will be appreciated ... that at the moment, with our restricted number of capital ships and with heavy commitments in the Mediterranean, it is impossible to do so. They hope however that by 1942 we shall be able to station a capital ship in the Far East.'³²

This moderately worded reply disguised the true feelings of the Admiralty about the Foreign Office proposal and a more accurate assessment can be found in a minute by Admiral Backhouse, the new First Sea Lord, who noted on 1 March that-

'The moral to be drawn from the situation we now find ourselves in is that our foreign policy should be largely governed by the strength of the Navy. This principle was completely rejected by the Government in 1930 and it was not until 1936 or 1937 that it was fully realised again. (Our Ambassador at Tokyo was one of the F.O. officials who was most energetic in connection with drawing up the London Naval Treaty, and the Foreign Office of the day gave the Admiralty no support whatever.)'³³

In other words as far as Backhouse was concerned Craigie's past was now coming back to haunt his present; due to the disarmament process Britain had too small a fleet to defend all its interests, and was forced to identify its priorities; on this scale East Asia was never to be as important as Europe.

It was during these months of escalating tensions in the autumn and winter of 1938/9 that Shigemitsu Mamoru took up his post of Ambassador to the Court of St. James. The news of his appointment to London was first received in September 1938 and was greeted with some enthusiasm in British circles with Craigie, as one example, noting to Lord Halifax-

'I am informed by my staff that Mr Shigemitsu is a man of outstanding ability and has probably the highest reputation of any serving Japanese Ambassador ... he is pleasant to deal with and is believed to be well

disposed towards Great Britain, where he has long wanted to serve as Ambassador.'³⁴

Partly the satisfaction in Britain at Shigemitsu's appointment must be seen as a result of the relief generated by the confirmation of Yoshida's departure, and that the new Ambassador appeared in such sharp contrast to his predecessor. This was the view expressed by Cadogan on 4 November when he wrote to Sir Horace Wilson, the Chief Economic Adviser to the Cabinet-
'... he [Shigemitsu] is probably a good representative of his Government and if the latter have any good intentions, it might be possible to make better progress with him than with Yoshida.'³⁵

Ironically, considering his previous efforts to persuade Britain to retreat from China, Shigemitsu's arrival in November coincided with the virtual Japanese abrogation of the Nine Power Treaty. This was, of course, a move that came as a logical progression from the policies he had espoused as Vice-Minister, and in a talk with Carl Sandberg, a Swedish-born entrepreneur on 29 January 1939, he made clear that he still believed that the West should retreat from East Asia by remarking-
'... in view of America and our Dominions refusing to admit Japanese into their territories, there was a double necessity for Japan to find an outlet in China.... The main gist was that other nations must realise Japan's special claim and her necessities, that Japan particularly realised Great Britain's interest in China ... but that Japan felt very strongly that the assistance which England and America were giving to China by supplying her with both finance and materials was an unfriendly form of neutrality.'³⁶

The confrontational approach adopted by the New Order statement did not, however, make it easy for Shigemitsu to find a receptive audience for his views as Konoe's pronouncement seemed to presage Britain being vanquished from the region entirely. This meant that, though on arrival he set to work by meeting in rapid succession many of the major figures who held sway over British policy towards East Asia such as Lord Halifax, R.A. Butler, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, and Sir Horace Wilson, he failed to make much progress. On 22 November this impression was underlined in a talk with Chamberlain which appears to have been a rather ill-tempered affair, with the Prime Minister complaining about Japan's deliberate ignoring of

Britain's legitimate rights in China while the Ambassador responded by pointing to the British infringement of neutrality in its support for the Chinese at Geneva and during the Brussels Conference.³⁷

It was obvious to Shigemitsu from these first meetings that somehow Britain had to be placated, and on 19 December he approached the MP Sir John Wardlaw-Milne, who was the Chairman of the House of Commons China Committee, to suggest a scheme that would break the deadlock in Anglo-Japanese relations. His proposal incorporated a recognition by Britain of 'Japan's unique position in China', an agreement that all problems that arose in China between Britain and Japan should be settled by 'frank and friendly conversations', and for a committee to be set up to deal specifically with outstanding matters from Shanghai.³⁸ To the Foreign Office, however, this idea hardly broke new ground, and it was seen as merely a rehash of the plan that Ugaki had put forward in the summer. It was agreed within the Department that the only way in which it could be made acceptable was for it to include a clause which reiterated both parties' commitment to the Nine Power Treaty and the Open Door, and it was planned that Lord Halifax would present this idea to Shigemitsu at an interview on 21 December. At the last moment, however, the Ambassador cancelled this appointment, and in the wake of the following day's announcement of new Japanese peace terms the initiative was forgotten.³⁹

Shigemitsu was not discouraged by this setback, but rather continued in his enthusiastic efforts to start meaningful talks in London. On 9 January, in a meeting with Lord Halifax, he offered in a purely private capacity to have a series of talks with the Foreign Secretary to discuss outstanding problems.⁴⁰ This idea did not find much welcome in either the Department or the British Embassy in Tokyo. Craigie, in a reply to a request for his views on the subject, stated that he thought that the start of serious talks in London might make the Japanese assume that Britain was willing to negotiate a compromise over China, and reminded the Foreign Office that British policy was to see any talks in London as only complementary to those in Tokyo.⁴¹ He also argued-

'Apart from above reasons for caution I doubt whether the Ambassador is sufficiently in touch with recent developments here to be able to convey a

very accurate impression of Japanese Government's policy.'⁴²

Although Craigie's opinion was influenced by his own hardline attitude at this point and the personal motive of wanting to keep all important talks with Japan within his own orbit, his comment raised an important question. Shigemitsu had last been in Japan in 1936, a year before the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war; since then he had only known at second hand the complex twists and turns of policy-making. The result was that in the Foreign Office it became a common assumption that, no matter how well-intentioned the Ambassador appeared to be, his opinions were of questionable value as he was no longer in a position fully to comprehend and communicate the mood of Japan, and that it was therefore better to rely on the British Embassy in Tokyo to carry out negotiations on the spot. This was to be a continual restriction on Shigemitsu's utility in London during his two and a half years in office.

There were also other factors that led the Foreign Office to treat Shigemitsu's request for talks with caution. There were doubts about his grasp of English which led to the fear that he could accidentally mislead Tokyo about Britain's position; to this was added the more serious concern that, like Yoshida before him, he might deliberately misrepresent the opinions of the Foreign Secretary in an effort to convince the Gaimushō that talks in London had a reasonable chance of success. This impression was generated by the belief that the Japanese Ambassador had reported to the Gaimushō that it was Halifax rather than himself who had first proposed private talks. Sir John Brenan wrote caustically on 17 January-

'It is becoming obvious that Mr. Shigemitsu is a careerist who is anxious to secure a personal success during his stay in London. There is reason to believe that he has been discouraged by Tokyo from initiating discussions on policy with the Secretary of State, and that in order to get over this difficulty he has falsely reported to his government that it is Lord Halifax who is pressing for conversations... .

In dealing with a diplomatist of this character I suggest respectfully that the Secretary of State will have to be doubly careful that he does not give the Ambassador any ground for claiming to have secured damaging concessions of principle, especially with regard to a recognition of the "new situation in East Asia" or "Japan's special position in China".⁴³

The result of the doubts about Shigemitsu in the Foreign Office meant that his proposal for talks was turned down and it was not until the start of the war in Europe that he would ^cone _h more find himself at centre-stage.

Another important issue that affect^{ed}~~ing~~ Shigemitsu in this period was the talks between Japan and the Axis powers over a Tripartite Alliance. The position reached by the beginning of January 1939 was that the Italians had agreed to a proposal from the Germans for a tripartite defensive alliance, but that the Japanese had not committed themselves, as the general terms put forward by Ribbentrop for an alliance against Britain and France as well as the Soviet Union had led to heated debate in Japan.⁴⁴ Support for the German draft came largely from the Japanese Army, but met with resistance in the Cabinet from Arita and the Navy Minister, Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa who, when Konoé resigned as Prime Minister in early January, managed to persuade his successor, the veteran nationalist Hiranuma Kiichiro, to remain firm. The obstinacy of Tokyo in agreeing to the alliance particularly infuriated the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin General Ōshima Hiroshi, and in an effort to put further pressure on Arita he tried to garner support from his fellow ambassadors in Europe.⁴⁵

This was an easy enough task with Shiratori Toshio, the pro-Axis Ambassador to Italy, but less simple with Shigemitsu. In January a conference of Ambassadors was held in Paris where Shigemitsu opposed the idea of a Pact; subsequently in February Ōshima travelled to London to persuade the Ambassador to change his attitude but to no avail, a fact to which Oshima later testified when cross-examined at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial.⁴⁶ Shigemitsu's opposition rested on his belief that to alienate the British and the French would only hinder a settlement of the China problem and that to ally with Germany and Italy at a time of rising tensions in Europe was foolhardy in the extreme.⁴⁷ Ōshima's efforts did not end there, and his clear unwillingness to adhere to the Cabinet's policy led to a decision to send out a special mission from Japan headed by Ito Nobufumi, a former Ambassador to Poland, with a new draft for ~~a~~ an alliance. Ōshima responded to this move in early March by trying to convene a meeting of all the European heads of mission with Ito in Berlin in a further attempt to force through his own line, but again his plan ~~also~~ failed as Arita refused to

give permission for the conference, with the result that it was poorly attended, with Shigemitsu as one of the absentees.⁴⁸

The ebbs and flows of this debate were to a large extent followed by the Foreign Office in London through the ability of the Government Code and Cypher School to read the Japanese diplomatic code, although this gold-mine appears to have been lost in late February due to the introduction of the new 97-Shiki O-bun Injiki cypher machine on the Berlin, Rome and London to Tokyo circuits.⁴⁹ The British were therefore aware that the issue of an alliance was causing great division owing to the reluctance of Japan to enter into an anti-British agreement, and this impression was supported by information that Craigie had been able to gather in Japan from various sources which included Yoshida Shigeru, ex-Finance Minister Ikeda Seihei, General Koiso Kuniaki and General Araki Sadao.⁵⁰ The Department took heart from the apparent deadlock in the talks, but realised that there was little Britain could do to influence events. Craigie, however, began to feel differently as the obvious difficulties the army was having in convincing the government to sign a military alliance convinced him that the moderate cause was not lost. Therefore by the beginning of April he was returning to the view that Britain still had something to gain from a policy of conciliation towards Japan and began to stray from the tough line he had espoused at the start of the year.⁵¹

TENSIONS AT TIENTSIN

In the background, as these large issues were grappled with, what started as a routine dispute in north China began slowly to encroach on the path of Anglo-Japanese relations. The crisis concerned the position of the British and French Concessions at Tientsin which stood as two small surviving enclaves of Western rule in north China. Their existence posed two problems for the Japanese, who otherwise had almost complete political and military control of the region: first, the Concessions were used by Chinese nationalists as a safe haven from which to launch terrorist attacks against the Japanese; second, and perhaps more importantly, they acted as an economic challenge to the Chinese puppet government at Peking due to the

continued use of the official Chinese currency, the *fapi*, within their perimeters, which weakened the Peking government's attempt to dominate the economy of north China by setting up its own currency. Added to this was the presence in the British Concession of a substantial amount of silver belonging to the Kuomintang government, which the Japanese wished to see transferred to the reserves of the puppet government to strengthen its financial position.⁵²

Tensions in Tientsin first manifested themselves in the summer of 1938 when the Japanese authorities raised the silver issue and banned the export of animal skins from north China in an attempt to put pressure on British business interests. However, it was the issue of terrorism, where clearly there was a greater legal justification for action by the Japanese Army, which provoked the initial atmosphere of crisis. This came in October 1938 when the Japanese Government protested to Craigie about the refusal of the British authorities at Tientsin to hand over a man called Ssu Ching-wu who, they alleged, was the head of a 25,000 strong band of guerrillas. This complaint sparked off a debate in British circles over how to react which followed lines similar to the previous disputes over Shanghai. Craigie and Edgar Jamieson, the British Consul-General at Tientsin, held that if Ssu was guilty he should be handed over, and Craigie also took the opportunity to reiterate to the Foreign Office that his task of getting the Japanese to respect British interests in China would only be made harder if the British concessions in China did not follow a policy of strict neutrality. Clark Kerr's response was to argue that as Ssu had committed no crime within the Concession there was no legal basis for handing him over, and to state that the concessions were already doing their utmost to ensure law and order and that nothing more should be done to satisfy the Japanese.⁵³

Sympathy in the Foreign Office lay with Clark Kerr in this dispute, not simply due to the legal position, but also because the Foreign Office believed that the protests over terrorism were merely a front for Japan's real motive of forcing Britain and France to relinquish their rights altogether. On receiving news in November that Japan was ordering its nationals to leave the Concession, Lord Halifax speculated in a telegram addressed to both Ambassadors that-

'This I suspect will be the first step in a carefully prepared programme for the destruction of our political position in China, first in the North and then probably in other parts of the occupied areas. Mere diplomatic representations are not likely to produce any effect and I am for the moment frankly at a loss to think of any preventative action open to us, except economic retaliation...'⁵⁴

The result of such thinking was that, typically, the Foreign Office could decide neither on a policy of retaliation nor one of appeasement, such as the handing over of Ssu, and consequently during the autumn pressure on the British authorities in Tientsin continued to increase.

On 14 December Jamieson reported that every road leading into the British and French Concessions had been barricaded in an attempt by the Japanese army to capture Chinese illegally entering and leaving, and that residents who failed to produce identity cards or passports were being turned away. Added to this was the extension of the export ban to wool, another vital commodity for British business.⁵⁵ Apart from ordering Craigie to issue a protest in Tokyo, and to explain that the Concession authorities were doing all they could to deter terrorists from using the Concession as a base, there was little Britain could do to resist these encroachments. In late January 1939, however, there came some cause for optimism when it was announced that the Japanese Army General Staff had decided to send the Anglophile General Homma to command the forces at Tientsin. This optimism was briefly justified on 8 February when Jamieson reported that the barriers had been raised at Tientsin and the searching of Concession residents stopped, but this proved to be only a lull in the storm.⁵⁶

Despite Homma's presence there remained a wide range of issues separating the two sides; in addition to the dispute over Ssu, there was the Japanese claim that the deputy chief of the British Municipal Council Police Li Han-yuan was an agent of Chungking, and also the growing economic pressure. On 10 March the Chinese puppet government at Peking declared the *fapi* to be an illegal currency, and as a result export restrictions were extended so that they now covered 70% of Britain's trade.⁵⁷ Under this intense pressure Jamieson's patience began to snap and on 15 March, when it was announced that searches for *fapi* were to be reintroduced, he wrote back to London-

'I wish to make it perfectly clear that I do not wish to make any concessions to the Japanese. My position is that I have done everything to ensure that the British Concession is being kept neutral. No anti-Japanese incidents have occurred in the concession since commencement of hostilities. I have made and am continuing to make a diligent search for persons using concession as a base for non-neutral acts.'⁵⁸

Jamieson's sudden intransigence was soon faced with a new challenge when two days later, the chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce at Tientsin, a Mr H. Dyott, was kidnapped by Chinese bandits in the pay of the Japanese. Although this was bad enough the situation was made even worse when the Japanese authorities put the most blatant obstacles in the way of British attempts to search for him.⁵⁹

At this point Craigie, who until then had had little to do except to communicate the occasional protest, decided that the situation in Tientsin was becoming potentially explosive and wrote to London on 22 March-

'I do not like the way the situation is developing at Tientsin and while I am most anxious to help I feel only locally will it be possible to bring about any real improvement. One way in which this could be done would be for Major General Piggott to visit Tientsin and to use his influence with the Japanese military authorities in the same way as he did in Shanghai in June 1938.'⁶⁰

In particular Craigie emphasized that Piggott had the advantage of being on friendly terms not only with Homma but also with General Sugiyama Gen, the Commander-in-Chief of the North China Area Army. Not surprisingly such a suggestion did not win unanimous approval with the Far Eastern Department, the strongest objections coming from A.L. Scott who noted in a minute-

'I think the root of the trouble at Tientsin is too deep for even General Piggott to pull up. It is the Japse [*sic*] in North China who are responsible for the present situation ... and no amount of friendly talk washed down with draughts of sake will make any difference. ... I am a little apprehensive however that a visit by General Piggott may lead the Japse to expect a weakening of the present firm attitude of our local auths [*sic*] and that in particular he may try to persuade our military auths [*sic*] at Tientsin of the need to compromise "in the interests of friendly relations".'⁶¹

Scott was, however, overruled by his superiors and Craigie's proposal was approved, as Sir John Brenan observed, on the grounds that-

'The Military Attache's friendly relationship with high Japanese military officers is a useful asset which can be used to advantage in a case of this sort. At the worst I do not think he can do any harm...'62

By the time Piggott's visit had been approved the situation in Tientsin had deteriorated considerably due to the Dyott affair. Jamieson, exasperated by the blatant obstructionism of the Japanese addressed an *aide-mémoire* to Homma on 25 March using the most unguarded language-

'I desire to warn you in most solemn terms that unless Mr. Dyott is returned immediately, safe and sound, the effect on reputation not only of yourself but of the Japanese army as a whole will be most deplorable.'63

Whether Jamieson realised how insulting this phrasing was to a Japanese officer, let alone to the Japanese nation, is not made clear from the documents, but the note certainly caused a volcanic uproar both in Tientsin and Tokyo. Craigie reported to the Foreign Office that-

'Military Attaché during thirty-five years experience cannot recall any occasion when the feelings of the military authorities have been so aroused. The sending of such a communication to General Homma the leading pro-British General in the Japanese army has had an effect which, unless remedied at the earliest possible moment, may be incalculable.'64

The result was that Jamieson on 29 March withdrew the *aide-mémoire*, although he subsequently claimed that it helped to save Dyott's life.65

Dyott was finally released on 3 April after a ransom of 70,000 dollars had been paid; on the same day Piggott arrived in Tientsin and in a visit lasting six days transformed the situation.66 Again Piggott began his mission by calling on the local Japanese commander. Homma made it clear to him that the situation at Tientsin was far more severe than it had been at Shanghai in the previous year. In particular he stressed the problem of guerrilla activities, and highlighted this by allowing Piggott the rare privilege of seeing Japanese intelligence maps which pinpointed the hideouts of terrorists within the British Concession.67 On receipt of this information Piggott appeared before the Associated British Committee in the Concession, told them of Japanese grievances, and advised that co-operation

was needed, and as a result it was decided that a Japanese liaison officer should be attached to the British Municipal Police.⁶⁸ This move, allied to yet another whirlwind of Piggott-inspired social gatherings where Japanese and British could meet in informal surroundings, led to a vastly improved atmosphere in the city. Craigie was delighted with the apparent success of the mission seeing it not only as justifying his proposal to send Piggott, but also as underlining the progress that could be made if Britain was prepared to co-operate with the Japanese.⁶⁹ Even the Foreign Office at first had to agree reluctantly that the situation had been transformed and that Piggott had achieved more than they felt possible. Brennan minuted on 14 April in response to some typically overblown 'Piggottry' that-

'In spite of the fulsome style of these reports the Military Attache may have succeeded in easing the tension in Tientsin, in which case his visit and methods are justified.'⁷⁰

On 9 April, however, the day that Piggott left Tientsin, this new atmosphere of co-operation received its first challenge, when the newly appointed pro-Japanese Inspector of Customs in Tientsin, Dr. Cheng Hsi-keng, was murdered while watching the film *Gunga Din* at the Grand Theatre in the British Concession.⁷¹ Within just over two months this incident and its ramifications were to lead Japan to instigate a new, even harsher blockade of the British Concession and to bring the two countries to the brink of war. The crisis developed over the Japanese conviction that four men being held in British custody were responsible for Cheng's death, and the British refusal to hand over these men for trial by the local Chinese court on the grounds that the only evidence against them were confessions obtained by the Japanese under torture.⁷² Britain's diplomatic record in dealing with this stage of the Tientsin crisis was hardly a picture of expertise and produced the unedifying spectacle of a major squabble over policy between Jamieson and his superiors.

Jamieson's view of events, influenced by Piggott's visit, was that the men should be handed over whether guilty of the specific crime or not, as they were members of a terrorist gang and therefore their presence prejudiced the neutrality of the concession.⁷³ His opinion was also influenced by his recognition that Japanese patience with the British over Tientsin was

wearing thin and that to take too legalistic a stance might lead to a dangerous escalation of tensions. In his telegram of 13 May which informed the Foreign Office of the detention of the four men he noted-

'... the Japanese believe that we are deliberately assisting the Chinese by our attitude [and] will, I am convinced take some positive action unless our policy is altered.'⁷⁴

He received support for his stand from Craigie, who, owing to his alarm at the growing bellicosity of the Japanese authorities, urged the Foreign Office to give Jamieson full discretion in deciding how to proceed.

In this they were opposed by both Clark Kerr and the Far Eastern Department, who were determined to act strictly within the bounds of legal propriety. For Clark Kerr this conviction of the need to adhere to principles was underlined by his faith in Chiang Kai-shek's cause and his belief that the guerrillas in the concession were fighting for it.⁷⁵ In the Foreign Office, as well as sympathy for China, there was also the view that Britain would win no concessions from the Japanese by compromising. In addition, underpinning the Foreign Office attitude was a severe underestimation of the serious nature of the tensions at Tientsin. The minutes written by Foreign Office staff in this period consistently showed their belief that the Japanese were bluffing in their threats to seize the concession; in one letter of 30 May to Clark Kerr, Howe wrote simply-

'I have a feeling that the danger threatening the Concession at Tientsin is not so grave or immediate as the Consul-General makes out in his recent telegrams.'⁷⁶

This led the Department to view Jamieson and Craigie as being needlessly alarmist in the face of Japanese bluff; in particular Craigie's warnings were not heeded because as Brenan remarked-

'... these alarming reports are received through General Piggott who swallows without discrimination every threat and every assurance that the Japanese make to him.'⁷⁷

Indeed, to a large extent the Department increasingly saw the developing crisis as a result of Piggott's baleful influence on Jamieson. Scott noted on 2 June-

'It is quite evident that General Piggott's visit has been responsible for a radical change of attitude on the part of our Consular auths [sic] at

Tientsin ... Mr. Jamieson who in mid-March did not wish to make any concession to the Japse [sic] now thinks it necessary to concede everything the Japse [sic] want in order to avert an attack on the Concession ... In fact the fears I expressed in my minute of 23 March seem to have been largely realised.'⁷⁸

The result of this tortuous debate over policy amongst the concerned parties was that, in the face of Japanese pressure, British policy continued to drift, Homma being neither appeased nor convinced that Britain was in a position to resist. The situation was not helped by the fact that Jamieson's and Clark Kerr's individual handling of the crisis left much to be desired. Though Piggott was clearly guilty of encouraging Jamieson to be over-conciliatory raising Japanese expectations and thus contributing to the crisis, the unsuitability of Jamieson for his post was a more important factor. In this context it is worth noting an assessment of the Consul-General sent in February 1939 to the War Office from Lt.-General E. Grasett, the General Officer Commanding at Hong Kong-

'Our Consul-General is not a very powerful personality, and it is only necessary to talk rather firmly but loudly to him to obtain his agreement, which of course may only be temporary.'⁷⁹

This analysis is certainly relevant to Jamieson's behaviour during Piggott's visit when he was influenced to change his attitude completely. This weakness of character was also demonstrated by Jamieson's tendency to over-react at times of crisis as is evident with both the Dyott affair and the events of May and June 1939, and it is easy to sympathize with the exasperation shown by Scott in one minute when he wrote-

'... I don't know why Mr. Jamieson does not try to do a little negotiating.'⁸⁰

The problem with Jamieson did not lie only with his weak personality, but also with the practical problem that he failed to provide Clark Kerr and the Foreign Office with detailed accurate information. For example it was only on 27 May that Jamieson revealed that two of the prisoners had been carrying bombs when they were arrested, and on 14 June, the day the blockade started, that he referred to their confessing their crime to Major Guy Herbert, the British Consul at Tientsin, while they had been in

Japanese custody.⁸¹ Finally on 22 June he admitted that Herbert had implied to the Japanese that the men would be handed over.⁸² The Far Eastern Department was not impressed that Jamieson had withheld this information, and Brennan noted on 16 June that, had they been in possession of such material a month before, they might well have acted differently.⁸³

In addition to this Jamieson was guilty of delaying the implementation of instructions which did not accord with his own views. This fault also applied to Clark Kerr; even when Jamieson had revealed incriminating evidence rather than mere conjecture, Clark Kerr continued to prevaricate due to the moral issues concerned and his belief, shared with the Foreign Office, that the Japanese were bluffing.⁸⁴ His attitude throughout the crisis was summed up by a telegram he sent to London on 17 May when first called by Jamieson to take a lead-

'This imposes upon me a decision from which I confess I flinch. This problem reduces itself to a repugnant simplicity to sacrifice the four ... scapegoats in the hope that by this sacrifice Japanese may be persuaded to hold their hand for a time at any rate and give concession a breathing space.'⁸⁵

The behaviour of the diplomats in China does not, however, excuse the Far Eastern Department from the charge of blatant complacency in the face of numerous reports of Japanese bellicosity, not only from Jamieson and Craigie, but also from Lt.-General Grasett at Hong Kong. This failure to register how serious the crisis was becoming was a result of their long ingrained belief that Japan was not as formidable as was often held, and that Britain merely had to make clear its willingness to resist in order to force the Japanese to back down. This was a dangerous presumption on which to base a policy when the Admiralty had made clear in the winter their opposition to a 'main fleet to Singapore' policy, and when the Treasury and Board of Trade had still not agreed to economic retaliation against Japan. Another problem was that the Department dealt with the developing crisis without drawing the situation to the attention of the higher echelons of the Foreign Office. During most of May and June the senior official who saw most of the material was Sir George Mounsey, who supervised the Department, and it was only on 7 June that the issue was brought before the

Cabinet and even then Lord Halifax, on the advice of the Department, tended to play the dangers down.⁸⁶ On 20 June Cadogan noted in his diary-
'As regards Tientsin, we have bungled the thing sadly. F.E. Department and Mounsey have been working their little groove and never referred a paper to me. That puts me in the awkward position that I can't explain or shift the blame. I saw copies of the telegrams ... and did not ask what it was about. I ought to have.'⁸⁷

This failure to consult also applied to relations with other Ministries and was particularly important in relation to the War Office, who were directly responsible for the defence of the Concession. At no point did the Department ask the Army how they planned to respond to military action at Tientsin by Japan. Instead the War Office was kept on the sidelines and only occasionally made its concern known, although its feelings were hinted at in a minute by one member of M.I.2c who wrote succinctly-

'What a mess has been made out of this business.'⁸⁸

Chamberlain too, added his voice to criticism of the Foreign Office, and wrote to his sister Hilda on 17 June-

'... the F.O. did not consult me and though I was very uncomfortable about the way things were going I can't always be interfering in their job so I left it alone.'⁸⁹

The only figure on the British side to emerge respectably from the build-up of the crisis was Sir Robert Craigie. He clearly recognized that the Japanese were not bluffing and, more important, saw that the events at Tientsin were turning into a symbol of Anglo-Japanese antagonism, but his influence was limited because Jamieson reported not to him but to Clark Kerr. As a result his opinions were ignored until the crisis reached its peak on 14 June, when Homma, faced with a lack of compromise by Britain over any of the issues raised, reintroduced the barrier system and ordered his troops to search all Concession residents, both men and women, who passed through the barriers.⁹⁰ This great insult to British prestige, allied to the ever tighter commercial blockade of the Concession, forced the British government to consider how to react to the high-handed policy of the Japanese Army, whether to retaliate through economic or military measures or seek to conciliate Japan, and this meant that Craigie had to be consulted.

Craigie was not, however, in the frame of mind to tell the Department what they wanted to hear; by mid-June his patience with London had been stretched to endurance, largely due to events at Tientsin but also because of the appearance of another crisis in north China. The latter had its roots in the spring of 1939, when Clark Kerr had given permission for his Military Attaché, Lt.-Colonel Ronald Spear, to travel in the company of troops of the Chinese Eighth Route Army from Chungking to Peking, which meant that he had to pass through Japanese lines. On 31 May news reached the Consulate-General at Peking that Spear had been arrested by the Japanese at Hsia Hua Yuan, seventy miles north west of Peking, for not having a pass, and was being held in custody in the town of Kalgan.⁹¹ Efforts at the local level to secure his release failed and by 7 June it was clear that representations would have to be made in Tokyo. Craigie raised the case with the Gaimusho but felt that Spear should never have attempted such a mission, and he told the Foreign Office on 10 June-

'... my fear is that the Japanese local authorities inflamed by the situation in Tientsin will regard this as a heaven sent chance to make difficulties for us and early release will be correspondingly more difficult.'⁹²

The need for Craigie to be consulted therefore allowed him the opportunity to express at length his dissatisfaction with British policy towards Tientsin. On 14 June he sounded his first major warning by writing-

'It seems to me that we are risking our whole position in N. China involving ourselves at an inappropriate moment in serious trouble with Japan on account of legal niceties which I frankly find myself unable to appreciate.'⁹³

On 18 June he went a stage further and composed a long and damning critique of Foreign Office policy, not merely directed at events in Tientsin but at the line taken by London since the start of the Sino-Japanese war-

'Relations with this country have now become so strained and the feeling against us has been aroused to such a pitch that unless some fundamental change in policy - or at least in tactics - can be envisaged there is a serious danger of two countries drifting into a long conflict. Tientsin is but symptomatic. The major cause of our trouble is of course a vast clash of interests in China, especially acute during the present

hostilities, but bound to continue with varying intensity for many years, but such clashes of interest between powerful states in relation to the fate of a weaker state are nothing new in history and have by no means always led to war: nor need the present clash lead to war if the Japanese policy can be rendered less intransigent and British policy be pursued with more regard for realities.

There has been an open partisanship about our policy which in the circumstances of today does more credit to our heart than to our head. No doubt if we were in Sir A. Clark Kerr's place I should be tempted to adopt the same vigorous championship of a valiant cause. But from this post I feel bound to emphasise deadly dangers to which we are heading if we cannot get back to a position of stricter neutrality such as the Americans have been clever enough to maintain.'⁹⁴

In relation to events specifically at Tientsin, Craigie disclaimed any blame for himself noting-

'My advice on these points and others has been neglected because it would have compromised not so much the strictness of our neutrality as its often excessive benevolence towards China.'⁹⁵

He ended by suggesting that, as a means of settling the present crisis, talks should be opened in Tokyo to examine the whole range of problems thrown up by the Tientsin crisis.

These arguments were in marked contrast to the position that Craigie had taken in the winter of 1938/39, and instead appeared to be a reversion to the position he had held in the previous summer during the talks with Ugaki. The change can be explained in a number of ways. The vital point was that Craigie's bellicosity in December 1938 had relied on two factors, that the Americans appeared to be pushing for a tougher line and that the Admiralty could be persuaded to station a permanent force at Singapore. By the summer of 1939 both of these hopes had been shown to be misplaced; the United States after its brief outburst over the threat to the Nine Power Treaty had returned to its usual passivity, and in Britain the Admiralty had pushed through the Committee of Imperial Defence its plan to make Italy the first object of attack in any European war undermining the 'Main Fleet to Singapore' policy by stating that in the case of an emergency in East Asia; neither the size of squadron or the time-lapse before it reached

Singapore could be predicted. In such circumstances, Craigie believed, taking a tough stance with Japan was tantamount to suicide. In addition Craigie had in his mind the disturbing rise of tensions in Europe in the spring of 1939 with the German occupation of Prague, Italy's seizure of Albania and the raising of the Danzig issue; at such a time Britain could ill-afford distractions elsewhere.⁹⁶

Craigie's attitude also changed because he believed that the situation in Japan by the early summer of 1939 differed from that at the start of the year, when it had appeared that moderate opinion had been dissipated and that Japan was on the verge of signing an alliance with the Axis Powers. The fact that no alliance had emerged, and that Germany and Italy had been forced to sign the Pact of Steel on 22 May without Japan present, showed that the influence of the moderates had not died and that there was still a pro-Anglo-Saxon lobby to which an appeal could be addressed.⁹⁷ Craigie did not, however, believe that the moderates had vanquished the pro-Axis clique completely but recognized that they were merely holding their ground against strong pressure, although he was optimistic that-

'If they [the moderates] win and if a military coup d'etat can be avoided a new era in Anglo-Japanese relations will slowly dawn.'⁹⁸

In such a position he felt it disastrous for Britain to pick a quarrel with Japan as this would play straight into the hands of the hardliners; he rather held that Britain needed to show what could be gained from pursuing a more conciliatory policy. Connected to this was Craigie's insistence in the spring of 1939 that Britain should not risk pushing Japan towards the Axis by allowing the talks with the Soviet Union on an alliance in Europe to be extended to East Asia. In a telegram of 15 June he noted-

'Question of an alliance with Russia must of course be determined on basis of considerations other than our relations with Japan but at least let us be clear that conclusion of an alliance will reduce to vanishing point the chance of a friendly settlement of outstanding differences with Japan and impose upon us the responsibility of assuming a firmer attitude in our dealings with this country.'⁹⁹

Craigie was not simply espousing a policy in which the only concern was to seek conciliation, he also continued to recognize the need to convince

Japan that Britain could only be pushed so far. He did this in the belief that by showing the Japanese the consequences of confrontation alongside the fruits of co-operation, his negotiating position would be strengthened, and wrote to the Foreign Office on 15 June that-

'So serious ... is the threat to our whole position and prestige in the Far East that, even failing the support of America, I feel that some sort of counter-action on our part is essential.'¹⁰⁰

The easiest way for Britain to do this was to flex its economic muscles, and on 16 June Craigie pressed the Foreign Office to draw together a series of reprisals split into two categories; the first to be introduced gradually, prior to a denunciation of the 1911 Commercial Treaty, and a second harsher group to follow on from such an event, although in a further communication of 19 June he made it clear that talks should be the first priority.¹⁰¹

In the bellicose atmosphere within the Far Eastern Department it was the call for retaliation that appealed rather than the proposal for talks, but the Department, due to the gravity of the crisis, was no longer responsible for policy-making, which was now in the hands of the Cabinet and the Chiefs of Staff. The crucial meeting for deciding the British response to the crisis was a gathering of the Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee on 19 June.¹⁰² Memoranda produced for the meeting differed in their approach. One from the Foreign Office argued strongly for economic sanctions, preferably in parallel with the United States, on the political grounds that to compromise would-

'... lead to the downfall of China, it would put Japan in a better position to undermine the British Empire in the East, and it would alienate America, whose goodwill is essential to us in the West as well as in the East.'¹⁰³

Another memorandum jointly presented by the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, considered the prospects of economic retaliation in more detail and, showing the influence of the latter ministry, argued that the most effective measure Britain could take was to restrict Japanese exports, thus striking not only at Japanese industry but also at Japan's poor foreign exchange reserves. It concluded, however, on the cautious note that-

'There are disadvantages in making the Tientsin incident the occasion for

taking action, in that the Americans are not at present directly involved and that an influential section of our own commercial community are out of sympathy with our action in refusing to hand over the four Chinese. Consequently there are strong arguments for seeking to keep the incident localised if possible and searching for a solution by negotiation.'¹⁰³

The report from the Chiefs of Staff on the strategic situation went a stage further and made it clear that to initiate the 'main fleet to Singapore' policy at this juncture would-

'... endanger our position in Europe to an extent which, from a military point of view, would be quite unjustifiable.'¹⁰⁵

With the British guarantees to Romania and Greece and the pact with Turkey, the Royal Navy was in a position where very few capital ships could be spared, and it was calculated that only two could be sent to Singapore. This reiterated the conclusion that action could only be taken if Britain had the active support of the United States.¹⁰⁶

The decision facing the Committee was therefore a complicated one, and made more complex by a lack, at this point, of any response from Washington. From the start it was apparent that Chamberlain was not impressed with the Foreign Office line of introducing sanctions, but was rather drawn to the proposal from Craigie for talks, which seemed to offer the only way out of the crisis, and the minutes record Chamberlain as stating that-

'He himself would have thought that our best course would have been to endeavour to reach some settlement with the Japanese on the most favourable terms obtainable, though, no doubt in so doing we should open ourselves to considerable humiliation and criticism.'¹⁰⁷

Halifax and Cadogan were, however, able to restrain the Prime Minister from ordering talks to begin immediately by stating that it was necessary first to hear from the United States and to consult more with Craigie, but this only put matters on hold as pressure from other members of the Cabinet for a diplomatic solution continued to grow.

On 19 June Chamberlain received a letter from Lord Runciman, the Lord President of the Council, which urged him to take the line recommended by Craigie and warned that-

'If ultimately we are to be effective in our use of the Fleet it will be

wiser of us to look after the European position first of all, and when we are secure in this theatre we can later on deal with the Japanese Navy. That I submit is the correct order ... to go to war with our present divided forces without the active cooperation of the U.S.A. would in my judgement be disastrous, and I could not accept any responsibility for this course.'¹⁰⁸

The need for caution was further confirmed by a meeting the following day between Chamberlain and Admiral Chatfield, by then Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, where the latter made clear his concurrence with the Chiefs of Staff that Britain could not afford to contemplate a war in the East which might lead Hitler and Mussolini to take advantage of a British preoccupation with Japan.¹⁰⁹

On 20 June a second meeting of the Foreign Policy Committee was convened at which Chatfield expanded on Britain's naval dilemma and stated that the Chiefs of Staff had indicated that, if necessary, the Royal Navy could send seven battleships to Singapore by late August, but that they could not recommend this course of action due to the dangers elsewhere. The Prime Minister's response to this was to conclude that-

'... we could only send an effective Fleet to the Far East at the cost of abandoning our naval position in the Mediterranean. This was conclusive in favour of making every endeavour to reach an early settlement of the dispute at Tientsin. It was clear that we should only be prepared to run the risks involved in sending a Fleet to the Far East if Japan made our position there quite intolerable.'¹¹⁰

The Foreign Office line was thus defeated by the practical objection that Britain simply could not afford to run the risk of war through a policy of retaliation. This was not a policy chosen out of any real choice, but was rather one of necessity. Chamberlain noted to his sister Ida-

'It is maddening to hold our hands in the face of such humiliations but we cannot ignore the terrible risks of putting such temptation in Hitler's way.'¹¹¹

The stage was therefore set for Craigie to try to achieve some kind of settlement in Tokyo.

Another factor in favour of an attempt at talks was the position of Shigemitsu. As early as 9 May he had indicated to R.A. Butler his growing concern about the direction of Anglo-Japanese relations and, in particular, the effect of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, which he saw as adding ammunition to those in Japan who were still pushing for a Tripartite Alliance.¹¹² He followed this with a meeting with Halifax on 19 May in which he bemoaned Britain's continuing lack of collaboration with the Japanese and pressed for concessions over Tientsin, and lamented that-
'... in the atmosphere which prevailed in China there appeared to be a lack of collaboration on the part of the British and very little endeavour to understand Japanese difficulties.... Neither his country nor the Japanese Government had ever expressed any hostile feeling towards Great Britain. Ministers and public men always hoped for a better understanding, but he really wondered whether this feeling was reciprocated by English official circles.'¹¹³

He did not have another opportunity to express his alarm until he was called to the Foreign Office on 19 June to receive a stern warning from Halifax about the situation at Tientsin. Shigemitsu managed to deflate what could have been a stormy conversation by concurring in the Foreign Secretary's assertion that the behaviour of the Japanese Army had been shocking, and conveyed to Halifax the important point that it was not the policy of the Japanese Government to escalate the incident but rather to reach an agreement over the status of the Concession. This was a vital signal to give to the British when the situation was so confused and reinforced Craigie's case for the opening of talks.¹¹⁴ It was recognized by Halifax that Shigemitsu would be of little use as an intermediary in the talks with Japan, and when it was suggested at the Foreign Policy Committee meeting on 19 June that he should approach the Ambassador he replied-
'The Japanese Ambassador in London had in this matter little influence either with the local Japanese authorities in Tientsin or with the Japanese Government in Tokyo.'¹¹⁵

This was also the feeling of Craigie and when asked on 3 July by Halifax whether it was worth presenting further protests to Shigemitsu, he replied a day later-

'I doubt if any useful purpose would be served by making further

representations to the Japanese Ambassador at the moment.'¹¹⁶

The result was that Shigemitsu was to take a very low key role in the Tientsin Crisis at least until the end of August.

Even before approval of his plans for talks were received from London, Craigie had on 18 June sounded out Foreign Minister Arita on the subject, stressing how important it was for talks to be held in Tokyo rather than in the heated atmosphere of Tientsin, and had met with a favourable response.¹¹⁷ Over the next week the situation remained fluid due to the Japanese Army's dislike of negotiations and its insistence that all problems should be settled in Tientsin. The belligerent attitude of the Army meant that Arita and Prime Minister Hiranuma, who also supported the idea of talks, realised that success could only be achieved through a *fait accompli*. The result was that the proposals for talks could only be passed between Craigie and Hiranuma through the use of Piggott and a Japanese man referred to as 'M' acting as unofficial go-betweens.¹¹⁸ Eventually on 28 June a communiqué appeared stating that talks were to be held about Tientsin, and with that there was a slight easing of tensions in the city and a drop in the number of body-searches of British subjects.¹¹⁹ To some in London the mere fact that Craigie had managed to get this far was success enough, and Chamberlain noted hopefully in a letter of 2 July to his sister Hilda that-

'The Tientsin incident shows some prospects of relief now that Craigie has very skilfully managed to get the venue removed to Tokyo...'¹²⁰

Despite Craigie's success in relaxing tensions and arranging for talks to begin, this approach still found little favour in the Department, who continued to push for retaliatory measures against Japan and raged against the timidity of the Services and of the Board of Trade. On 23 June Dening noted in response to the Chiefs of Staff report of 18 June that-

'... (it) is based on the assumption ... that economic retaliatory measures are considered likely ... to lead to war. But are they? The burden of our contention is that they are not, and further than that it is an opinion that all that is required is some degree of firmness in order to make the Japanese desist.'¹²¹

The Department therefore continued to develop plans for sanctions in the

expectation that the talks would fail, despite a decision at the Committee of Imperial Defence that no retaliatory measures should be introduced for the interim lest they damage the Tokyo talks.¹²² On 30 June they proposed to Craigie that legislation should speedily be passed through Parliament to lay the foundations for economic retaliation and thus impress the Japanese with British resolve. Craigie's reply on 3 July was to argue that it was first necessary to see how the talks developed, but that it would do no harm for a bill to be drawn up.¹²³

Although they disliked the idea of talks it was still necessary for the Department to set guidelines for Craigie, and the instructions they sent only clarified the growing divergence of opinion between them and the Embassy in Tokyo. One of the areas of disagreement was the issue of how wide was to be the agenda of the talks. From the time of Craigie's first approach Arita had made it clear that the negotiations could not be concentrated only on the legal problems but must also include discussion of currency and silver.¹²⁴ Negotiation over the latter two issues was anathema to the Foreign Office as these were areas where any concession would be seen as the British government betraying the Chinese; on 4 July Craigie was told that compromise over currency was inadmissible. To Craigie this attitude was unrealistic and on 6 July he warned-

'Question at issue is not whether any action can affect maintenance of the Federal Reserve Bank currency since it is already well established and Japanese are determined to maintain it at all costs; question is rather whether a solution can be found in agreement with interested Powers or whether one is to be imposed by methods which will be highly inconvenient to our prestige unless we are prepared and in a position to oppose force by force.'¹²⁵

As suggested by Craigie's response the question of the agenda was linked to the problem of how far Britain could resist Japanese pressure, and whether the Japanese were only bluffing. To Craigie's mind it was clear that Britain was in no position to stand and fight and that Japan was serious; an impression heightened by the wave of anti-British protests whipped up by the Japanese army in Tokyo in the first fortnight in July. On 14 July he answered a request for his views on the chances of war by noting that-

'I do not anticipate that Japan would "go to war" in the sense of despatching ultimatum or delivering sudden attack on British territory. I do however consider that the first act of pressure on our part will be answered by counter action ... with the result that we should quickly drift into a state of things scarcely distinguishable from open hostilities. ... My advice therefore is that ... pressure by Great Britain alone should be avoided ... unless difficulties ... about "fleet movements" can be overcome so that we may not only show ourselves ready but in fact be ready to take naval and military measures for defence of our territory and interests in the Far East.'¹²⁶

This warning was backed up by a similar telegram sent collectively by the Service Attachés to their respective overseers on 15 July.¹²⁷ This was not a view shared by the Far Eastern Department, who continued to believe that Craigie and the Chiefs of Staff were unnecessarily despondent failing to take into account that Japan's military machine and economy was already overstretched by the war in China. Their belief that Japan was not in a position to go to war meant that they held in practice as well as in principle that Britain did not have to concede over the economic issues.¹²⁸

In the background to this disagreement over the details of what should be discussed there were signs of a growing clash of personalities between the Department and the Embassy. There had, of course, been previous episodes when relations had become strained due to Craigie's eagerness to negotiate and the Foreign Office's innate caution, but Tientsin raised the mutual recriminations to a new level. One of the main reasons for this was the continuing presence of Piggott in Tokyo. The Department believed that he was a malign influence, that it was probable that he was the source of the scare stories about the likelihood of war, and that he had given Craigie the fallacious impression that the talks would mark a turning point in Anglo-Japanese relations. The distrust of Piggott had obviously been heightened by his visit to Tientsin and its debatable effect on Jamieson, but was also affected by other incidents. First, a telegram he had sent to the War Office on 2 June criticising Clark Kerr had caused consternation, and second there were also renewed doubts about his discretion in discussions of British policy with his Japanese counterparts.¹²⁹ One particular incident that infuriated the Foreign Office was when, in March

1939, he was reported as stating to a group of Japanese officers that a pro-Chinese statement made by R.A. Butler to the House of Commons had only been for the sake of appeasing public opinion.¹³⁰ This led Robert Howe to tell Craigie on 25 May-

'We do not wish to make heavy weather of the incident and ask the War Office to reprimand him, but I think you should call his attention to the grave impropriety of what he said and point out to him that, if these unofficial conversations are to do any good, neither side ought to give utterance to misleading, still less to false, statements.'¹³¹

Craigie's reply to this letter on 30 June strongly defended Piggott, pointing out that the latter's words had been misinterpreted by the British official who had reported them, stating tersely that-

'... I may tell you in confidence that one argument which the Japanese Prime Minister used in order to prevail over the reluctance of the Japanese Army to hold the Tientsin conversations in Tokyo was precisely that General Piggott and I were sufficiently well known in Army circles to enable the military representatives to feel that they would not be dealing with total strangers impervious to reasonable argument.'¹³²

The Ambassador then went on to write a passage that summarized his growing exasperation with the Far Eastern Department and the role which he felt that he was being forced to play out in Tokyo-

'I am left here with the feeling that such efforts as we are able to make here to prevent the state of our relations with Japan from going from bad to worse are viewed with suspicion and misgiving by the Far Eastern Department and that only when we are engaged in our normal duty of protesting and recriminating can you really sleep comfortably in your beds.'¹³³

This passage, however, revealed more than Craigie's impatience; it also made clear his continuing personal ambition to make a success of his time in Tokyo.

Craigie was not, however, as isolated as he imagined; his efforts had the constant backing of Chamberlain, who wrote to his sister Hilda on 15 July-

'Thanks to the ineptitude of our Foreign Office we have been manoeuvred into a false position where we are single-handed and yet are being attacked

over a policy as essential for America, France and Germany as ourselves... The only thing that gives me any confidence is Craigie's attitude. He always seems to preserve his calm and never seems to get rattled.... But the anti-Japanese bias of the FO in the past has never given him a chance. If he gets us through this mess I shall insist on his having an honour to mark our gratitude.'¹³⁴

Importantly there was also an understanding on the part of Halifax and Butler that Piggott had a useful role to play, particularly in providing the Ambassador with an *entree* to the Army, and in this context it is interesting to note that in January 1940 Butler wrote to Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for War stating-

'General Piggott's sympathies are well known to be 100% Japanese. In Halifax's view there is no doubt that he has considerably contributed to the easing of tension in Anglo-Japanese relations, even though some of his critics feel that his views are too much one way.'¹³⁵

On 15 July the talks between Craigie and Arita finally began with the Foreign Minister presenting the Japanese agenda for the negotiations, which consisted of discussion of general Anglo-Japanese relations in China, of the legal problems arising from Tientsin, and finally of the economic problems.¹³⁶ In furtherance of the first item Arita presented Craigie with a formula for Britain to accept, which stated that-

'The British Government fully recognise the actual situation in China, where hostilities on a large scale are in progress and note that, as long as that state of affairs continues to exist, the Japanese forces in China have special requirements for the purpose of safeguarding their own security and maintaining public order in the regions under their control, and they have to take the necessary steps in order to suppress or remove any such acts or causes as will obstruct them or benefit their enemy. The British Government, therefore, will refrain from all acts and measures which will interfere with the Japanese forces in attaining their above mentioned objects.'¹³⁷

This wording was, of course, quite unacceptable to Craigie, as it would have forced Britain to become virtually a benevolent neutral, and because it did not just apply to the Tientsin area but to the whole of occupied China. Since he realised, however, that for Britain simply to reject the

idea of a formula would be extremely dangerous as it would very likely precipitate the end of the talks, he proposed that the best policy was to dilute the Japanese wording to make it as innocuous as possible.¹³⁸

Clark Kerr objected strongly to this line, but in the Foreign Office, despite clear antipathy towards such an agreement, work was started on an alternative formula which accepted the Japanese line as far as possible while at the same time reserving Britain's legitimate rights in the region.¹³⁹ On 19 July Craigie duly presented this document to Arita, who immediately rejected it, while Craigie still refused to accept the original Japanese draft. That evening the talks recommenced with the presentation of a new Japanese formula and after two days of negotiation this eventually emerged as a mutually acceptable document.¹⁴⁰ The final text, which was officially signed on 24 July and became known as the Arita-Craigie Agreement, was a subtly worded and vague work, which was, in the tradition of agreements with Japan, open to various interpretations. It differed from the original Japanese formula only in the last sentence where it stated- 'His Majesty's Government have no intention of countenancing any act or measures prejudicial to attainment of the above mentioned objects by Japanese forces and that they will take this opportunity to confirm their policy in this respect by making it plain to British authorities and British nationals in China that they should refrain from ^{such} acts and measures.'¹⁴¹

The crucial change of wording was in the last half of the sentence, in that it implied that the onus of the agreement rested on the British Concessions in China, and committed the latter to uphold a policy of neutrality without restricting the British Government itself from assisting the Chinese.

The reaction in China and the United States to the publication of the Agreement suggested that these subtleties were lost on the wider audience and the general opinion was that this was an example of 'perfidious Albion' at its worst.¹⁴² In the British press too there was displeasure at the apparent appeasement of Japan and letters of complaint were sent both to the editors of newspapers and to the Foreign Office, one of the most memorable of the latter being a rather brief note from a Reverend R.G. Milburn to Lord Halifax which simply stated-

'Permit me as a clergyman to protest against this wicked agreement with Japan. One feels so strongly that one does not like to say more.'¹⁴³

In Whitehall, however, news of the Agreement was generally met with great relief and with admiration for Craigie's negotiating skills. Chamberlain noted to his sister Ida-

'Craigie has with great skill got an agreement with the Japs about the preliminary formula and if only a little restraint can be exercised on our side the inflammation should gradually subside.'¹⁴⁴

In a Cabinet meeting of 26 July Halifax defended the formula by noting that its most important achievement had been to lessen tensions and to gain time; he described the British policy as being one of holding on and doing anything necessary 'to extricate ourselves from a difficult position.'¹⁴⁵

Craigie too was pleased with his achievement which convinced him that the talks could lead to a real improvement of relations with Japan. With such hopes he reversed his previous support for the introduction of legislation to allow the imposition of sanctions, which had anyway been delayed due to difficulties over wording and the opposition of the Board of Trade.¹⁴⁶ He also raised objections to news from London that the Government was on the verge of announcing an export guarantee loan to China, and wrote-

'If by announcing this credit we cause the downfall of the Minister of Foreign Affairs who has risked much to avert trouble between the two nations I doubt whether we shall have a friend left in this country. ... My own position would be so shaken as greatly to impair my utility.'¹⁴⁷

In both cases his objections had the necessary effect as, with the European situation still so uncertain, there was no wish to risk antagonizing the Japanese at such a critical juncture.

With the Agreement signed it was possible for the talks on Tientsin proper to open. These began on 24 July with Craigie chiefly assisted by Piggott, Major Herbert, and P. Gore-Booth, the Second Secretary in Tokyo. On the Japanese side the chief figure was Katō Sotomatsu, a former Counsellor at the Japanese Embassy in London, who had a reputation as a moderate: he was, however, assisted by Major-General Muto Akira, the Vice-Chief of Staff of the North China Army and a noted firebrand.¹⁴⁸ The talks began once again with the Japanese setting an agenda of issues that they wished to discuss,

which consisted of twelve points taking in the position of the four suspects, general problems of public order, and the economic problems. By 31 July a provisional agreement had been thrashed out over the first two areas, with a decision that the four men should be handed over to the Japanese for interrogation and a compromise where it was agreed that the Japanese should be able to observe the work of the police in the Concession.¹⁴⁹

Over the economic issues, however, no such easy progress was made, and as early as 27 July Craigie reported that deadlock had been reached over both the currency and the silver questions.¹⁵⁰ The result of this was that on 1 August Craigie asked the Foreign Office to moderate its position over the silver, which he saw as the more important of the economic problems. His proposal was that to meet the Japanese demand the silver ought to be handed over to the Federal Reserve Bank or the Yokohama Specie Bank, but that it ought to remain sealed. He supported his case by arguing that-

'Above represents the only way out of the present difficulty which I can see and is to my mind preferable to serious consequences which would attend the breakdown. I am quite satisfied that it would be impossible for the Japanese to leave the Conference Table empty-handed on both questions.'¹⁵¹

In London it was realised that the deadlock over the economic issues was very threatening, and that any compromise would affect the rights of other powers such as France, the United States and, obviously, China. In a Cabinet meeting of 2 August Halifax summed up his fears by confessing-

'... the position in the Far East was now causing him more anxiety than the position in any other part of the world.'¹⁵²

The position of the British Government was further complicated by the American announcement on 26 July that they would abrogate their 1911 Commercial Treaty with Japan in six months time. This momentous decision was made without any prior consultation with London and came as a complete shock.¹⁵³ To those in the Foreign Office who deprecated Craigie's efforts the American action came as a demonstration that Britain no longer had to appease Japan but could begin to stand its ground and even move to abrogate its own Commercial Treaty.¹⁵⁴ To these voices was added the opinion of Sir George Sansom, freshly returned from Japan and convinced that his former

chief's assessments of the situation were fundamentally wrong. The resurgent opposition within the Foreign Office to a policy of compromise influenced Halifax, who at the Cabinet meeting of 2 August proposed that Britain should use the continued anti-British demonstrations in both Japan and occupied China as an excuse to break off the talks, and that if it was decided that retaliation was necessary then Britain should denounce its Commercial Treaty with Japan.¹⁵⁵ This view did not find much support with Chamberlain, who told the Cabinet that in his opinion-

'... the utmost consideration should be given to Sir Robert Craigie. Our Ambassador in Tokyo was working under most difficult conditions and had very few cards in his hand, but he had shown great skill and coolness. It was clear, therefore, that before any decision was taken which might have the effect of breaking or suspending the negotiations, Sir Robert's views should be ascertained and due weight given to them.'¹⁵⁶

Chamberlain's recommendation received the general support of the Cabinet and it was subsequently decided that before a position over the economic issues was settled it was necessary to consult Craigie further and also to sound out France and the United States. In terms of the talks in Tokyo the result was that on 2 August Craigie was informed that there would have to be a delay while the economic problems were mulled over, and to ease the blow an effusive tribute was made to his diplomatic efforts so far.¹⁵⁷

Craigie was far from happy with this enforced lull in the talks, and he supported his case for a compromise with a number of arguments that illustrate his hopes and concerns at the time. As early as 1 August he had urged restraint in assessing the impact of the apparent toughening of American policy. With his long experience of American affairs he considered himself well qualified to pass judgement, and noted caustically- 'I have seen the present United States Administration run away so often from their own initiatives that I hesitate to regard the action very seriously and believe the new American treaty will be negotiated well before expiration of six months limit. We must be sure it is not just another flash in the American pan before putting any reliance on this new development.'¹⁵⁸

Having dismissed the possibility of co-operation with the United States, Craigie saw the position as little different from that in June, apart from

the fact that he was now even more convinced that British concessions could strengthen the position of the Japanese 'moderates'. On 5 August in a long telegram to the Foreign Office he wrote-

'Rapprochement with Democrats ... would definitely smash such reliance as Germany may have on Japan's active assistance whether on the outbreak or during the course of a world war and correspondingly reduce the chance of Herr Hitler risking the gamble.'¹⁵⁹

Craigie's arguments were not, however, accepted within the Department. The most influential criticism of the Ambassador's views came from Sansom, who produced a minute on 3 August disagreeing deeply with the former's assessment of the Japanese 'moderates'. Sansom held that the 'moderates' if they did exist only differed in terms of method rather than aim from the 'radicals' and that they were anyway small in number and not very influential. Bearing this in mind, he also addressed the issue of what it would actually take to come to an understanding with Japan, a topic which Craigie largely had skirted over, and came to the conclusion that it would involve at the least giving up British privileges in China and might also require compromising over colonial quotas.¹⁶⁰ Such opinions tallied with that of the Department, but carried considerably more weight from the pen of the man who was deemed the doyen of Japanese experts.

Another aspect to the Department's refusal to accept Craigie's arguments was that the atmosphere of crisis had further heightened the personal animosities that had already been witnessed in the first part of the crisis. The clearest example of this came in a brief correspondence between Nigel Ronald, the First Secretary in the Department, and Craigie. Ronald wrote to Tokyo on 5 August to try to explain the reason for the delay in sending on instructions, and noted in passing-

'What with three Far Eastern debates and about 40 questions in four days, Howe away and Brennan on leave work of department has got rather behindhand. Incidentally to us here it would seem of doubtful wisdom to show too much haste as implying that we can be hustled. But ~~that~~^{in that} in awful damp heat with a lot of savages howling round your garden, dark hints whispered in your ear by all and sundry in season and out, and constant pressure from here to go on making bricks without straw naturally the picture presents itself to

you in a rather different light.'¹⁶¹

The underlying impatience with Craigie's barrage of telegrams displayed in this explanation was not lost on the Ambassador. Craigie, who was suffering from neuritis and had had to give up his summer break at Chuzenji to stay in the stultifying heat of Tokyo for the talks, was not in the best of temper and replied with an acidic note on 9 August-

'I fully appreciate your difficulties and hope Mr. Howe is now recovered. At the same time I am sorry you should think my plea for earliest possible settlement is dictated either by motives of personal convenience or blind acceptance of Japanese pressure. We are all of us ready to stay here through the summer if that would help to extricate us from present mess. If sometimes I wonder whether our perspiring efforts are of any avail it is because of the ^{Far Eastern Department's} Bourbon-like inability to learn anything from past events. Perhaps however this picture is as much distorted by distance as is your picture of our attitude here.'¹⁶²

Such language did little to endear Craigie to the Foreign Office and Cadogan noted in his diary on 10 August that Sir George Mounsey seemed 'rather anti-Craigie.'¹⁶³

Away from this direct confrontation Craigie's position was further undermined due to his continued reliance on Piggott for advice. Grave doubts had been expressed already in the Department about the wisdom of the latter's participation in the Tientsin talks, but this was as nothing compared to the consternation when on 29 July Craigie asked the Foreign Office if Piggott's tour of duty, which was due to end in October, could be extended, as his presence was needed in the negotiations over Tientsin.¹⁶⁴ Nigel Ronald minuted in response to this that he along with Sansom believed Piggott to be a 'public danger', and noted-

'If I might say so without altogether outstripping the bounds of propriety, I consider that General Piggott has been the *âme damnée* of the whole sorry story of our recent Tientsin troubles. I realise that this is a serious charge, but I cannot refrain from recording my opinion, so strongly do I feel on the subject.'¹⁶⁵

The general annoyance with Piggott's behaviour and his faith in his Japanese friends led the Foreign Office to goad the Military Attaché over the failure of his military acquaintances to arrange for the release of

Colonel Spear from custody, and on 3 August a sarcastically worded telegram drafted within the Department was sent by Halifax to Craigie-

'I must confess that I am keenly disappointed at the absence of any concrete results from Military Attaché's efforts. ... Surely his intimate contacts with the Japanese Army should enable [him] to secure if not release, at least more generous treatment for an officer of the status of Military Attaché.'¹⁶⁶

The atmosphere was thus not one in which Craigie's views were likely to receive a very favourable hearing, and it is clear from the minutes made in the Department that there was little enthusiasm for a continuation of the Tientsin talks. This position was underpinned by the views received from France and the United States about the economic issues. The French reported on 11 August that as the silver deposited in their Concession was in the hands of a private bank they would find it very difficult to order it to be handed over to the Japanese.¹⁶⁷ The United States meanwhile indicated their opposition to any agreement that would restrict the use of the *fapi* in north China.¹⁶⁸ To the Department this proved that Britain could not comply with the Japanese terms and, as neutralization of the silver was not likely to find favour with Tokyo, it was decided that no British counter-proposal should be made. The justification for this view was summed up by Mounsey in a memorandum of 12 August in which he wrote-
'... we now have an opportunity of taking a firm stand vis-à-vis the Japanese on ground which will give us international support and in regard to which the Japanese must find it difficult, if not impossible, to drive us into war.'¹⁶⁹

The arguments of the Department convinced both Halifax and Cadogan that this was the right course of action, that to continue making concessions was too dangerous and that there seemed little likelihood of Japan choosing to go to war over the silver. On 16 August Halifax wrote to Chamberlain to explain the Foreign Office's rejection of Craigie's call for a compromise. In his letter he noted-

'I feel pretty clear ... that we cannot do what Craigie wants by way of compromise over silver, and I feel that if we did we should be very likely to get very little positive result in exchange for the great worsening of

our present position vis-à-vis the United States and Japan.'¹⁷⁰

In reply Chamberlain with a heavy heart gave his assent to Halifax's proposals-

'I find myself in full agreement with your conclusions though I fear they may lead to fresh anxieties. I am particularly impressed with the memorandum initialled G.M. [George Mounsey] which admirably summarises considerations already in my mind. I wish I could believe that by a "compromise" on silver we could begin a new era of Anglo-Jap [sic] agreement. But I can't bring myself to any such belief. I see no practical alternative to that proposal & we must learn to live with the consequences.'¹⁷¹

The result of Chamberlain's assent was that on 17 August the Foreign Office's terms were communicated to Craigie who passed them on to Katō the next day. He tried to soften the impact by stating that Britain had still not finished consulting the interested third parties and therefore asked for a mere adjournment of the talks. This, however, failed to mollify Katō and when the Foreign Office, against Craigie's advice, published a statement clarifying their position on 20 August, it led to an announcement the following day from the Gaimushō that the talks had broken down. Craigie was naturally resentful that his advice had been rejected and his telegrams over the next few days clearly revealed his bitterness.¹⁷² This was not simply because he believed that the talks could have succeeded but also due to his belief that tensions at Tientsin could once again bring Britain and Japan to a crisis point. These fears proved in the end to be unsubstantiated owing to two events in the last days of August.

On 20 August severe flooding at Tientsin left most of the British Concession under water in conditions so atrocious that it would have been impossible for the local Japanese forces to increase their pressure.¹⁷³ The other, and much more important, event was that on 23 August the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed in Moscow. The effect in Tokyo was bewilderment and anger at the German betrayal. Japanese policy, which had since 1936 been based on a alignment with Germany, was thrown into turmoil with the Army, which had renewed pressure for an alliance earlier in the month, unsure how to react and the moderates convinced that the time had come to return

to the fray by pushing for closer relations with Britain and America. The Hiranuma Government was caught in the middle of this furore and on 28 August announced its resignation. It was replaced by a new Cabinet led by General Abe Nobuyuki, and rumours soon circulated that Shigemitsu was to be selected as Foreign Minister, although in the end this was not to be the case.¹⁷⁴ In such an uncertain atmosphere there was little likelihood the Japanese would risk the alienation of Britain by raising the stakes at Tientsin, and therefore the end of the talks passed without any serious recriminations. Whether this would have happened had the above events not occurred is a moot point, and the question of how justified Craigie's fears were must remain unanswered.

Craigie quickly recognized that the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact raised the possibility of a backlash in Japan against Germany which Britain would be wise to exploit, and on 24 August recommended to Halifax the renewing of the Tientsin talks and on a broader scale an attempt to push for a Sino-Japanese peace settlement. He justified these proposals by arguing-

'In making these recommendations I do not mean that I renounce abhorrence of the original Japanese aggression or recent anti-British campaign. But the present moment is too critical for us to look at anything but the future and I am convinced that there is possibility if we act quickly enough of turning the present situation to our advantage.'¹⁷⁵

These suggestions met with some approval in the Foreign Office and Craigie was told that he could make soundings about Tientsin but that peace talks were still too controversial.

An interest in reopening the Tientsin talks was also displayed by the Japanese Embassy in London. In late August Shigemitsu, realizing that the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact could have a salutary effect on Anglo-Japanese relations, began to make diplomatic manoeuvres of his own, and on 26 August sent Arthur Edwardes to ask R.A. Butler if it would be worth starting new talks based around the sealing of the silver, and whether-

'... if he were to explore the possibilities of improving Anglo-Japanese relations and made approaches to us, he would be snubbed...'¹⁷⁶

This was followed by a talk between Shigemitsu and Lord Halifax on 28 August in which the former expressed his approval of the Abe Cabinet, and

noted optimistically, according to Halifax's record of the talk, that-
'... the doublecrossing of Japan by Germany and of ourselves by Russia must cause both the Japanese and the British Governments to reconsider the positions in which they find themselves, and to consider a possible improvement in their mutual conditions.'¹⁷⁷

However, before anything could come of Shigemitsu's soundings they were overtaken by events. On 1 September Germany invaded Poland and two days later Britain was at war.

NOTES

1. PRO CAB24/288 CP 178(39) 'Situation in the Far East' Lord Halifax memorandum 21 August 1939.
2. On Japan's policy towards China in autumn 1938 and the Western reaction, see K. Usui, 'The Politics of War, 1937-1941' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The China Quagmire. Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent 1933-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1983) pp.348-354, and P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia, 1937-1941*. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) pp.50-53.
3. For more on the tripartite negotiations in the autumn of 1938, see T. Ōhata, 'The Anti-Comintern Pact, 1935-1939' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Deterrent Diplomacy. Japan, Germany, and the USSR 1935-1940*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1976) pp.65-77, M. Toscano, *The Origins of the Pact of Steel*. (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1967) pp.3-85, and D.C. Watt, *How War Came, The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939*. (Heinemann, London, 1989) pp.46-55.
4. PRO FO262/1978 8/234/38 Sir R. Craigie memorandum 5 October 1938. I am indebted to the late Anthony Haigh for initially putting me on to the trail of this memorandum.
5. See Cadogan's diary entry for 30 September 1938 in D. Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945*. (G. Puttnam, New York, 1971) p.110.
6. *Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP) 1919-1939 Third Series Vol.VIII No.170 F11105/152/23* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 October 1938 p.158.
7. PRO FO371/22053 F10827/13/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 13 October 1938. See B.A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939. A Study in the Dilemmas of British Decline*. (Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, 1973) p.150.

8. See for example PRO FO371/22185 F11368/152/23 N. Ronald minute 5 November 1938 on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 7 October 1938.
9. See for example PRO FO371/22097 F11730/62/10 China Association to R.A. Butler 4 November 1938 on economic sanctions, and *DBFP* 3/VIII No.233 F11989/84/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 7 November 1938, pp.216-218 in which Clark Kerr related Chiang Kai-shek's latest push for loans.
10. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.208 F12895/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 November 1938 p.192.
11. PRO FO371/22186 F11672/152/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 3 November 1938.
12. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.308 F13894/71/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 2 December 1938 p.292. Also quoted in B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.157.
13. PRO FO371/22181 F13894/71/23 Sir J. Brenan minute 11 January 1939 on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 2 December 1938.
14. *Ibid.*
15. PRO FO371/23555 F2215/176/23 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 30 January 1939.
16. See R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1979) pp.167-168.
17. PRO FO371/23458 F780/87/10 Sir R. Craigie to R. Howe 29 December 1938.
18. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.298 F12771/62/10 Sir R. Lindsay to Lord Halifax 1 December 1938 pp.278-279, and No.315 F12896/62/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 5 December 1938 p.299. See also W. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador. Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1966) pp.262-264.
19. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.382 F44/44/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 January 1939 pp.359-360. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.160-161.
20. PRO FO371/23436 F45/44/10 N. Ronald minute 4 January 1939 on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 January 1939.
21. The Board of Trade and the Treasury had both made complaints to the Foreign Office in December 1938 about the proposal for economic sanctions, see PRO T160/1131 F15194/4 J. Willis (Board of Trade) to R.A. Butler 13 December 1938, and FO371/22100 F13063/62/10 R.V. Nind Hopkins (Treasury) to R.A. Butler 21 December 1938.
22. PRO FO371/23436 F331/44/10 J. Willis to R. Howe 9 January 1939.
23. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.440 F418/44/10 Lord Halifax to V. Mallet 23 January 1939 pp.411-414. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.57-58.

24. PRO PREM 1/314 Lord Halifax to N. Chamberlain 9 January 1939. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.169.
25. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.465 F1172/44/10 V. Mallet to Lord Halifax 3 February 1939 pp.435-436.
26. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.211 F11990/84/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 7 November 1938 pp.195-196.
27. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.427 F539/11/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 17 January 1939 p.400.
28. PRO CAB23/97 1(39) Cabinet conclusions 18 January 1939. On the issue of the loan to China see also P. Lowe. *op.cit.* pp.59-62, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.162-165.
29. *DBFP* 3/VIII No.338 F471/471/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 December 1938 p.320. On the subject of the controversy over all aspects of naval policy in the winter of 1938/9 see R.J. Pritchard, *Far Eastern Influences Upon British Strategy Towards the Great Powers, 1937-1939*. (Garland, New York, 1987) *op.cit.* pp.131-149.
30. PRO FO371/23544 F478/471/61 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 6 January 1939, and *DBFP* 3/VIII Appendix 1 (i) R. Howe to Secretary of Admiralty 13 February 1939 pp.542-548.
31. See R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.138-149.
32. *DBFP* 3/VIII Appendix 1 enclosure in no.(ii) F3147/471/61 S.H. Phillips (Admiralty) to R. Howe 29 March 1939 pp.549-550.
33. PRO ADM1/9909 Admiral R. Backhouse minute 1 March 1939.
34. PRO FO371/22193 F9638/9638/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 8 September 1938.
35. PRO FO371/22163 F12542/11783/10 Sir A. Cadogan to Sir H. Wilson 4 November 1938. On the same day Shigemitsu presented his letters of credence to King George VI.
36. C. Sandberg to Sir M. Hankey 1 March 1939, in Hankey Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, HNKY 4/31.
37. PRO PREM 1/277 N. Chamberlain/M. Shigemitsu conversation 22 November 1938. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.163.
38. PRO FO371/22052 F13642/12/10 R. Howe minute 19 December 1938. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.156.
39. *Ibid.*
40. PRO FO371/23555 F275/176/23 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 9 January 1939.

41. PRO FO371/23555 F417/176/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 13 January 1939.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid. F417/176/23 Sir J. Brennan minute 17 January 1939.
44. See T. Ōhata, op.cit. pp.76-77, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.54-55.
45. For Ōshima's attitude at this time, see C. Boyd, *The Extraordinary Envoy: General Hiroshi Ōshima and Diplomacy in the Third Reich, 1934-1939*. (Univ. Press of America, Washington D.C., 1980) pp.88-92.
46. On the Paris meeting, see C. Boyd, op.cit. p.91. Shigemitsu subsequently got one of his staff to complain to the Foreign Office about an article in the *News Chronicle* on 10 February which stated that he had urged his fellow diplomats to accept the alliance, see PRO FO371/22994 C1895/421/62 S. Okamoto/R. Howe conversation 13 February 1939. For Ōshima's later comment on Shigemitsu, see R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide (eds.), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial*. (Garland, New York, 1981) Vol.XIV p.34066.
47. M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny. My Struggle For Peace*. (Hutchinson, London, 1958) pp.146-147.
48. See C. Boyd, op.cit. p.92 and D.C. Watt, op.cit. p.56.
49. See PRO WO208/859 for various decrypts from the Tokyo-Rome and Tokyo-Berlin circuits, and also FO371/22994 C2955/421/62 N. Ronald minute 14 March 1939 and C3269/421/62 N. Ronald minute 20 March 1939, which make it clear that the Foreign Office were aware of the terms of the agreement being discussed. In the Foreign Office files the decrypted telegrams were referred to once again by six figure numbers beginning with a '0', for example Ronald on 14 March refers to 072924 and 073984. It is not entirely clear whether at this stage GC&CS was reading the telegrams emanating to and from the Japanese Embassy in London, but certainly after the appearance of the *News Chronicle* article of 13 February there were minutes within the Foreign Office indicating that they knew that the allegations about Shigemitsu were mistaken, see FO371/22994 C1895/421/62 L. Collier minute 28 February 1939. For the introduction of the new cypher machines at the Japanese Embassies, see E.T. Layton, R. Pineau & J. Costello, *"And I Was There" Pearl Harbor and Midway-Breaking the Secrets*. (William Morrow, New York, 1985) p.80.
50. One example of this was that Craigie was able to report to the Foreign Office about the divisions between the Gaimushō and Ōshima due to information offered by Yoshida Shigeru, see *DBFP* 3/VIII No.526 F2124/176/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 3 March 1939 p.485.
51. Craigie was initially encouraged by information from a source that the Japanese wished to cultivate better relations with Britain and the United States, see PRO FO371/23555 F1704/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 February 1939. This impression was then built on by a

glowing letter to Craigie from Ikeda Seiin, asking him not to take leave that summer as his presence was needed in Japan, see *DBFP 3/VIII* No.575 F3816/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 17 March 1939, enclosing S. Ikeda to Sir R. Craigie 14 March 1939 pp.528-531.

52. On the troubled relations at Tientsin in 1938, see D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* pp.350-351, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.182.
53. For the initial raising by the Japanese of the Ssu case and Craigie's attitude towards it, see *DBFP 3/VIII* Appendix II no.(i) F10469/717/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 October 1938 p.551, and no.(iv) F10669/717/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 10 October 1938 p.553. For Clark Kerr's response, see no.(xi) F11145/717/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 23 October 1938 pp.556-557.
54. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.277 F12167/717/10 Lord Halifax to Sir A. Clark Kerr and Sir R. Craigie 24 November 1938 p.259.
55. For the imposition of the blockade, see *DBFP 3/VIII* No.336 E. Jamieson to British Embassy [Shanghai] 14 December 1938 p.315.
56. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.477 F1295/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 8 February 1939 p.447.
57. PRO FO371/23487 F2125/382/10 Major G. Herbert to Sir A. Clark Kerr 2 March 1939.
58. *DBFP 3/VIII* No.566 F2732/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 15 March 1939 p.520.
59. PRO FO371/23395 F2713/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 17 March 1939.
60. PRO FO371/23396 F2867/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 March 1939.
61. *Ibid.* A.L. Scott minute 23 March 1939.
62. *Ibid.* Sir J. Brenan minute 24 March 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.73.
63. PRO FO371/23396 F2960/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lt.-General M. Homma 24 March 1939 enclosure in E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 24 March 1939.
64. PRO FO371/23396 F2986/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 March 1939.
65. PRO FO371/23396 F3169/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 29 March 1939 and F3228/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 30 March 1939.
66. PRO FO371/23396 F3270/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 3 April 1939.

67. PRO FO371/23397 F3449/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir R. Craigie 6 April 1939, enclosing Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Sir R. Craigie 6 April 1939.
68. See F.S.G. Piggott, *Broken Thread. An Autobiography*. (Gale and Polden, Aldershot, 1950) p.315.
69. PRO FO371/23398 F5167/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 April 1939.
70. PRO FO371/23397 F3502/1/10 Sir J. Brenan minute 14 April 1939, on E. Jamieson to Sir R. Craigie 11 April 1939, enclosing Major General F. Piggott to Sir R. Craigie 11 April 1939. This modifies slightly the assertion in B.A. Lee, op.cit. p.183 who writes that the Foreign Office disapproved of Piggott's proposals from the start, in fact the criticisms began once the crisis had started in May.
71. *DBFP Third Series Vol.IX No.1* F3484/1/10 E. Jamieson to Sir A. Clark Kerr 10 April 1939 p.1. For a general account of the course of the negotiations up until the Japanese introduced the blockade on 14 June, see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.74-77, D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.350-354, and B.A. Lee, op.cit. pp.183-185.
72. *DBFP 3/IX No.64* F4531/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 13 May 1939 pp.66-67.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid. p.67.
75. PRO FO371/23397 F4808/1/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 17 May 1939.
76. WO106/5474 R. Howe to Sir A. Clark Kerr 30 May 1939.
77. PRO FO371/23397 F4808/1/10 Sir J. Brenan minute 22 May 1939.
78. PRO FO371/23398 F5167/1/10 A.L. Scott minute 2 June 1939, on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 April 1939.
79. PRO WO106/114 Lt.-Gen. E. Grasett (Hong Kong) to Major-General H. Pownall (War Office) 10 February 1939.
80. PRO FO371/23397 F5040/1/10 A.L. Scott minute 27 May 1939, on E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 24 May 1939.
81. *DBFP 3/IX No.123* F5056/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 27 May 1939 pp.111-112, and FO371/23399 F5871/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 14 June 1939.
82. *DBFP 3/IX No.249* F6293/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 22 June 1939 p.249. See also D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.352-353.
83. PRO FO371/23399 F5871/1/10 Sir J. Brenan minute 16 June 1939, on E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 14 June 1939.

84. PRO FO371/23398 F5632/1/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 12 June 1939.
85. *DBFP* 3/IX No.86 F4808/1/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 17 May 1939 p.83. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.75-76.
86. For the records of the Cabinet meeting, see PRO CAB23/99 31(39) Cabinet conclusions 7 June 1939. It is worth noting that the Admiralty warned the Foreign Office in early May against pursuing too forward a policy in East Asia, see ADM116/4087 C. Jarrett to N. Ronald 3 May 1939. On the Admiralty decision to downgrade the 'main fleet to Singapore policy', see R.J. Pritchard *op.cit.* pp.141-142 and 150-152.
87. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry for 20 June 1939, in D. Dilks (ed.), *op.cit.* p.189. This qualifies the statement in D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* p.353 that Lord Halifax was to blame for the Tientsin crisis due to an 'ill-timed attack of moralism'. The fault was not with him but rather with the Far Eastern Department and Cadogan's lack of supervision.
88. PRO WO106/125 J.N.G.(?) undated minute, on E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 11 June 1939.
89. N. Chamberlain to H. Chamberlain 17 June 1939, in N. Chamberlain Papers, Birmingham University Library, NC18/1/1103. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.79.
90. *DBFP* 3/IX No.196 F5784/1/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 14 June 1939 p.168.
91. PRO FO371/23511 F5298/1497/10 N. Archer to Sir A. Clark Kerr 1 June 1939.
92. PRO FO371/23511 F5990/1497/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 10 June 1939. Craigie was not the only person to express dismay over Spear's mission, on 23 June Cadogan noted 'The whole idea of Spear's trip seems to me to have been perfectly asinine, and a sure way to guarantee the maximum of trouble, if not worse.' See F6075/1497/10 Sir A. Cadogan Minute 23 June 1939.
93. *DBFP* 3/IX No.197 F5785/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 June 1939 p.170. See also the distressed message from the C-in-C China to the Admiralty quoted in R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* p.155.
94. *DBFP* 3/IX No.227 F6017/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 June 1939 p.196. See also D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* p.355.
95. *Ibid.* p.197.
96. For the European background to the Tientsin Crisis, see D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* pp.188-338.
97. On the signing of the Pact of Steel and the debate within Japan, see M. Toscano, *op.cit.* pp.307-402, T. Ōhata, *op.cit.* pp.93-105, and D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* pp.346-348.

98. *DBFP* 3/IX No.62 F4527/456/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 13 May 1939 p.65.
99. PRO FO371/23999 F5883/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 15 June 1939. For the influence of Japanese objections to the Anglo-Soviet talks, see R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.200-203.
100. *Ibid.*
101. PRO FO371/23400 F6036/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 June 1939.
102. PRO CAB27/625 FP(36) Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee 52nd meeting 19 June 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.80-82, R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.157-158, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.188-189.
103. PRO CAB27/627 FP(36)95 'Retaliation for the Tientsin Blockade' Lord Halifax memorandum 16 June 1939.
104. PRO CAB27/627 FP(36)94 'Economic Retaliation Against Japan' Lord Halifax/O. Stanley memorandum 16 June 1939. The comment about the opposition of British merchants at Tientsin being opposed to coercion of Japan is interesting considering that the attitude of the China Association, which was the body that represented the British commercial community in China, consistently favoured a tough policy towards the Japanese.
105. PRO CAB27/627 FP(36)96 'The Situation in the Far East' Chiefs of Staff report 18 June 1939. For the background to this report see R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.156-157.
106. *Ibid.* At this stage the United States had still not indicated what their attitude towards the crisis would be, despite Lindsay making a number of visits to the State Department, see PRO FO371/23400 F6074/1/10 Sir R. Lindsay to Lord Halifax 19 June 1939. For the American attitude towards the Tientsin crisis see J. Utley, *Going to War With Japan 1937-1941*. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1985) pp.60-63.
107. PRO CAB27/625 FP(36) Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee 52nd meeting 19 June 1939.
108. PRO PREM 1/316 Lord Runciman to N. Chamberlain 19 June 1939.
109. PRO CAB104/70 N. Chamberlain/Lord Chatfield conversation 20 June 1939.
110. PRO CAB27/625 FP(36) Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee 53rd meeting 20 June 1939.
111. N. Chamberlain to I. Chamberlain 25 June 1939, in N. Chamberlain Papers, NC18/1/1104. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.85.

112. PRO F0371/23555 F4419/176/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 9 May 1939.
113. *DBFP* 3/IX No.91 F4934/372/10 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 19 May 1941 p.87.
114. *DBFP* 3/IX No.236 F6096/1/10 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 19 June 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.82-83.
115. PRO CAB27/625 FP(36) Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee 52nd meeting 19 June 1939.
116. *DBFP* 3/IX No.282 F6787/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 July 1939 p.242.
117. *DBFP* 3/IX No.228 F6029/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 June 1939 pp.198-199.
118. PRO F0371/23403 F8061/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 30 June 1939. Typically the Foreign Office minutes on this telegram expressed grave misgivings about Piggott's role in this subterfuge, although it must be noted that they were written in mid-August when the talks were on the verge of collapse, see *ibid*, N. Ronald minute 12 August 1939, and R. Howe minute 15 August 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.83.
119. *DBFP* 3/IX No.268 F6431/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 June 1939 pp.231-232.
120. N. Chamberlain to H. Chamberlain 2 July 1939, in N. Chamberlain Papers, NC18/1/1105. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.86 footnote 32.
121. PRO F0371/23438 F6279/44/10 M.E. Dening minute 23 June 1939, on FP(36)96 'Situation in the Far East' Chiefs of Staff report 18 June 1939.
122. PRO CAB2/9 Committee of Imperial Defence 362nd meeting 26 June 1939. See also D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* p.356 and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.190.
123. *DBFP* 3/IX No.279 F6729/44/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 3 July 1939 p.241.
124. *DBFP* 3/IX No.254 F6337/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 23 June 1939 pp.219-220.
125. *DBFP* 3/IX No.290 F6945/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 6 July 1939 p.250.
126. *DBFP* 3/IX No.322 F7340/44/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 July 1939 p227.
127. PRO W0106/128 Major-General F. Piggott to War Office 15 July 1939. This warning received little sympathy within M.I.2c, where Sansom's

view that Japan was too economically and financially exhausted by the war in China to attack Britain was very influential.

128. The clearest exposition of the Far Eastern Department's view on this is in PRO FO371/23438 F6782/44/10 M.E. Denning minute 28 June, which also shows the influence of Sansom's opinions. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.87-89, and B.A. Lee, op.cit. pp.192-193.
129. For Piggott's criticisms of Clark Kerr, see PRO FO371/23398 F5337/1/10 Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to War Office 2 June 1939.
130. PRO FO371/23483 F4584/372/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 April 1939. This report referred to a dinner party Piggott held for a Colonel Kagesa on 24 March, at which, it was reported by Cowley, the British Consul in Tokyo, the following conversation took place- 'Colonel Kagesa drew attention to Mr. R. Butler's statement in the House to the effect that H.M.G. were considering other kinds of assistance to China. General Piggott explained that the Foreign Under-Secretary was obliged to say this in order to placate the Opposition and public order.'
131. Ibid, R. Howe to Sir R. Craigie 25 May 1939.
132. PRO FO371/23485 F8566/372/10 Sir R. Craigie to R. Howe 30 June 1939.
133. Ibid.
134. N. Chamberlain to H. Chamberlain 15 July 1939, in N. Chamberlain Papers, NC18/1/1107. Also quoted in P. Lowe, op.cit. 88.
135. R.A. Butler to O. Stanley 11 January 1940 in Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB E3/21.
136. *DBFP* 3/IX No.328 F7346/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 15 July 1939 pp.282-283. For Arita's policy towards the Tientsin talks see Y. Inouye, 'Arita's Conversations With Ambassador Craigie About a Japanese Economic Bloc' in *Proceedings of the British Association of Japanese Studies*, 1978 Vol.3 pp.126-137.
137. *DBFP* 3/IX No.325 F7347/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 15 July 1939 p.279. Also quoted in B.A. Lee, op.cit. p.193.
138. *DBFP* 3/IX No.327 F7348/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 15 July 1939 pp.281-282.
139. For the Foreign Office counter-draft, see *DBFP* 3/IX No.337 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 17 July 1939 p.290. For Clark Kerr's objections, see *DBFP* 3/IX No.331 F7359/6457/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Sir R. Craigie 16 July 1939 p.285.
140. See *DBFP* 3/IX No.347 F7649/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 July 1939 pp.298-300, and No.355 F7670/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 July 1939 pp.305-307.

141. *DBFP 3/IX No.353 F7645/6457/10* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 July 1939 pp.304-305. See also D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* p.357, B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.194, and P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.89.
142. *DBFP 3/IX No.383 F7834/6457/10* Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 25 July 1939 p.326. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.196.
143. PRO FO371/23459 F8398/87/10 Reverend R.G. Milburn to Lord Halifax 31 July 1939.
144. N. Chamberlain to I. Chamberlain 23 July 1939, in N. Chamberlain Papers, NC18/1/1109. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.90.
145. CAB23/100 39(39) Cabinet conclusions 26 July 1939.
146. For Craigie's volte-face, see *DBFP 3/IX No.593 F7899/44/10* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 July 1939 pp.338-339. On the opposition of the Board of Trade, see FO371/23439 F7014/44/10 Brown (Board of Trade) to Sir A. Cadogan 6 July 1939. The Treasury also expressed doubts about the wisdom of sanctions, see PREM 1/314 S.D. Waley minute 14 July 1939 and Sir R.V. Nind Hopkins minute 17 July 1939. See also R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.187-189.
147. *DBFP 3/IX No.423 F8103/11/10* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 28 July 1939 p.354. The Export Credit Guarantee Agreement was finally signed on 18 August 1939 when it was clear that the Tientsin talks were on the point of collapse.
148. For the details of the Tientsin negotiations, see also K. Usui, *op.cit.* pp.362-364, D.C. Watt, *op.cit.* pp.357-359, and P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.90-93.
149. PRO FO371/23528 F8244/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 31 July 1939.
150. *DBFP 3/IX No.403 F8071/6457/10* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 July 1939 pp.346-347.
151. *DBFP 3/IX No.442 F8303/6457/10* Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 August 1939 p.380.
152. PRO CAB23/100 40(39) Cabinet conclusions 2 August 1939. Also quoted in R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* p.165, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.198.
153. For the American motives behind this decision, see M. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares For Total War. The Search For Economic Security, 1919-1941.* (Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, 1987) pp.133-135, and W. Heinrichs, *op.cit.* pp.289-290, and R. Dallek, *op.cit.* p.194.
154. For example see PRO FO371/23439 F7899/44/10 H. Ashley Clarke minute 27 July 1939.
155. PRO CAB23/100 40(39) Cabinet conclusions 2 August 1939. See also R.J. Pritchard, *op.cit.* pp.165-166.

156. Ibid.
157. *DBFP* 3/IX No.452 F8393/6457/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 2 August 1939 p.389.
158. *DBFP* 3/IX No.444 F8245/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 August 1939 p.382
159. *DBFP* 3/IX No.473 F8478/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 5 August 1939 p.412.
160. PRO F0371/23529 F8502/6457/10 'Memorandum on British Policy in the Far East' Sir G. Sansom memorandum 3 August 1939. Also quoted in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.91, and B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.199.
161. PRO F0371/23529 F8489/6457/10 N. Ronald to Sir R. Craigie 5 August 1939.
162. Ibid, Sir R. Craigie to N. Ronald 9 August 1939. For reference to Craigie's ill-health see J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 14 October 1939, in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3.
163. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry for 10 August 1939, in D. Dilks (ed.), *op.cit.* p.194.
164. PRO F0371/23571 F8107/3027/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 29 July 1939.
165. Ibid, N. Ronald minute 31 July 1939.
166. PRO F0371/23512 F8231/1497/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 3 August 1939.
167. *DBFP* 3/IX No.516 F8792/6457/10 R. Campbell (Paris) to Lord Halifax 11 August 1939 pp.446-450.
168. *DBFP* 3/IX No.511 F8981/6457/10 Sir R. Lindsay to Lord Halifax 11 August 1939 pp.443-444.
169. PRO F0371/23531 F9097/6457/10 Sir G. Mounsey minute 12 August 1939. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* pp.200-201.
170. PRO PREM 1/316 Lord Halifax to N. Chamberlain 16 August 1939. See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.201.
171. Ibid, N. Chamberlain to Lord Halifax 17 August 1939. The file also contains a record of a conversation where Chamberlain stated that-'the Japanese had made things impossible and that, while he felt sorry for Sir Robert Craigie himself, this was the only course to take.' C. Syers to Sir H. Wilson 17 August 1939.
172. See, in particular, PRO F0371/23404 F9379/1/10 Sir R. Craigie to E. Jamieson 24 August 1939.

173. *DBFP 3/IX No.651 F9159/1/10 E. Jamieson to Lord Halifax 20 August 1939 p.479.*
174. For the turmoil in Japan caused by the Nazi-Soviet Pact see K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads, 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Policy.* (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986) pp.14-16, and D.C. Watt; *op.cit.* pp.473-477.
175. *DBFP 3/IX No.584 F9421/87/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 24 August 1939 p.496.* See also B.A. Lee, *op.cit.* p.203.
176. PRO FO371/23532 F9583/6457/23 A. Edwardes/R.A. Butler conversation 26 August 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.100.
177. *DBFP 3/IX No.598 F9601/176/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 26 August 1939 pp.507-508.*

CHAPTER FIVE

'AN EFFORT OF APPEASEMENT'

'Hornbeck showed some anxiety lest in the stress of war the Allied Governments might embark upon an effort of "appeasement" with Japan which he thought would stultify our own interests and lead to misunderstandings with the United States.'

Memorandum by F. Ashton Gwatkin 21 May 1940¹

The outbreak of the European War had grave repercussions in East Asia. It meant that Britain and France now were even less able to protect their interests in the region, leading to an ever increasing power vacuum. Such a process naturally led to an instability which was only worsened by the refusal of the United States to take up the mantle of the Western European powers, and the German determination to inveigle the Japanese into supporting their cause.

Japan therefore found itself in an advantageous position, and the obvious temptation was to use the new situation to bring the conflict in China to a favourable conclusion. The question was, however, how this could best be achieved; should Japan lean towards the Democracies in the hope of using their influence to solve the China Incident, or favour Germany and the latter's new-found Soviet partner in order to force a full retreat of the West from the region? The discrediting of the pro-German lobby in Japan due to the Nazi-Soviet Pact meant that the 'moderates' were initially able to secure an influential position in the Abe and Yonai Governments; in particular the two Foreign Ministers in this period, Admiral Nomura Kichisaburō and Arita Hachirō, argued for a *rapprochement* with the Western powers. Thus on the surface Japan appeared to be tentatively moving towards the West, but in Army circles sentiment was increasingly focussed on the revival of a pro-Axis policy, a settlement of Japan's differences with Moscow thus cutting off Soviet support for the Kuomintang, and the use of the war in Europe as an opportunity to prise the French and British out

of East Asia. The clash between these two views was to hinder the growth of the Government's pro-Western policy until the events of the early summer in 1940 provided an irresistible answer to the debate.²

For Britain the main effect of the outbreak of war on East Asian policy was that it made the 'strategic nightmare' of a three-front war a greater and even more frightening prospect. Almost as soon as the war began in Europe there was a reassessment among the higher echelons of the British Government to see if the Japanese threat could be neutralized. The problem was to discover how this goal could be achieved; one possibility was that, in the interests of power politics and the primacy of the need to defeat Germany, China might be sacrificed to the higher strategic goal of winning over Japan by whatever means necessary. A policy of complete appeasement, however, carried with it many problems; the most important of these was that any such move would irrevocably alienate Washington, and that this would have a detrimental effect not only in East Asia but also on the level of ^{the} assistance given by Washington to the Allied war effort in Europe. In fact now more than ever before Britain was forced to negotiate with Japan with one eye kept firmly on Washington to ensure that the State Department and American public opinion did not disapprove. As Halifax remarked to the War Cabinet on 4 September-

'Any suggestion of the revival of our Alliance with Japan, even as a long term object, would need to be very carefully considered from the point of view of the effect upon the United States.'³

Another aspect of the argument against any immediate attempt at a *rapprochement* with Japan was that Britain had little reason to trust Japan even if an understanding could be reached; all that Britain might be doing by agreeing to recognise the 'New Order in East Asia' could be signing away its own position in the region. In addition to this there was the danger that any policy of making abject concessions to an Asian power might have grave consequences in the British colonies of South and South East Asia, as the imperial hold over these areas relied not on actual power but on prestige and the myth of European invincibility. The arguments against an all-out policy of appeasement were therefore very strong and found little support in Government circles, and this line was explicitly rejected by

Chamberlain when he noted to the War Cabinet on 28 September 1939-

'...it was to our interest to steer a middle course and to avoid giving offence either to the Chinese or the Japanese Governments. It was important to encourage those elements in Japan who were friendly to us. At the same time we must be careful not to prejudice Chiang Kai-shek's position in any way.'⁴

An alternative to the policy of easing tensions in East Asia by making concessions to the Japanese was to try instead to solve the problem of Anglo-Japanese antagonism by negotiating a peace agreement between Japan and China. A proposal on these lines first originated from the French on 3 September, but was initially dismissed in the Foreign Office as too dangerous because it might antagonize the Americans.⁵ The suggestion was, however, revived later in the month when Craigie reported optimistic signs in this direction from Tokyo. The apparent Japanese willingness to discuss peace with China was communicated to Craigie by General Koiso Kuniaki, who had been in fairly regular contact with the Ambassador through Major-General Piggott since the previous February. Already in mid-June Koiso had told Craigie of his own plan for Prime Minister Hiranuma to meet Chiang Kai-shek on neutral ground to discuss peace, and it was this plan which resurfaced in a conversation they had on 22 September when Koiso claimed that his project had the support of General Abe and of the new Army Minister General Hata Shunroku. Craigie, who had been led to believe by Piggott that Koiso had strong pro-British leanings, enthusiastically informed London, suggesting that Britain could assist this plan by allowing the proposed meeting to take place at Hong Kong.⁶

The Foreign Office naturally saw this as an interesting proposition, for though there were obvious arguments against Britain and France pushing for a peace settlement themselves, the situation was far more promising and more likely to be acceptable to Washington if it were a Japanese initiative. On 25 September Lord Halifax reported to the War Cabinet about the proposed talks, and a decision was taken the next day that Britain should offer its good offices in arranging for them to go ahead, but that Britain should not attempt to mediate directly.⁷ Plans were then made to inform Chiang Kai-shek what was afoot, but before Clark Kerr could see the

Generalissimo the situation had changed. On 30 September Craigie paid a call on the new Foreign Minister, Admiral Nomura Kichisaburō, who, much to the Ambassador's surprise, denied any knowledge of the Koiso proposal, and reported that he would have to investigate it.⁸ This led to a further delay until 11 October when Craigie met Nomura again, only to find that the Foreign Minister's stance was to declare that-

'... in view of the well known determination of successive Japanese Governments not to enter into direct discussions with Chiang Kai-shek, any meeting at Hong Kong between prominent Chinese and Japanese personalities would certainly be regarded as a volte-face on the part of the present Government and would be disapproved by Japanese public opinion.'⁹

Craigie was flabbergasted by this turn of events which left him considerably embarrassed, while the Foreign Office pretended that they had never held out strong hopes anyway.¹⁰

These events therefore blocked off another possible avenue of progress for Britain in trying to improve relations with Japan, but there was by no means a consensus within British circles that a solution to the Sino-Japanese conflict would necessarily ease Britain's position. The Chiefs of Staff, for example, had written in an influential memorandum for the War Cabinet on 28 September-

'We have always recognised the danger of becoming embroiled with a first class power in the Far East when we are at war with Germany. Moreover so long as the neutrality of Italy is not definitely assured, a possible extension of the war to the Far East must be prevented by any means in our power.'

The fact remains however that so long as Japan has this commitment in China, she is unable to concentrate on us, and the continued drain on her economic resources must react on her capacity to wage war in the future against a major power.'¹¹

To this mode of thinking an end of the Sino-Japanese conflict was the last thing that Britain should desire or strive for, as this would only free Japanese forces for an offensive against the British position in the East.

This still left the question open of how far could Britain afford to go along the path of conciliation, for, although this course could not be

pursued at the cost of hindering the war effort against Germany or of alienating the United States, it was undeniable that the fragile relations between Berlin and Tokyo following the 'betrayal' of the Nazi-Soviet Pact provided Britain with a window of opportunity. The answer to this dilemma was that Britain should pursue a policy of limited appeasement towards Japan in relation to a small number of issues of mutual interest such as the settlement of the Tientsin problem, a partial withdrawal of British troops from China, and various concessions to Japan in the economic field, with the hope that this would create an atmosphere in which relations could begin to improve.¹² An important statement of intent to this end was made on 22 September by R.A. Butler, who had been given the ministerial brief of overseeing the day to day running of British policy towards East Asia. He wrote that it was dangerous for Britain to have poor relations with both Japan and the Soviet Union and proposed that steps should be taken to draw closer to the former, and went on-

'If she [Russia] is to become the inveterate enemy of the British Empire, it is essential that we should harness Japan to ourselves. It is therefore wise to take precautionary steps now. Russia and Japan are bound to remain enemies, and with our position in India and the East it would pay us to make a return to the Anglo-Japanese alliance ^{as soon as} possible.'¹³

This was naturally a policy that appealed to Sir Robert Craigie, and during the period between September 1939 and June 1940 he worked hard to further this cause and pushed the Foreign Office to make the most of the available opportunities.

In Japan too there was a recognition of the opportunities raised by the new circumstances in Europe, and in a Cabinet meeting on 21 September it was decided that efforts should be made to persuade Britain to recognize the 'New Order in East Asia', to end its tacit support for Chiang Kai-shek's regime and to transfer its allegiance to the government being constructed in collusion with Japan by Wang Ching-wei.¹⁴ As a result of this policy Shigemitsu was called upon to lobby in London for an improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations. This role forced him to become more active than had been the case over the previous ten months and he began to hold a series of weekly meetings with R.A. Butler in which they discussed any problems that had arisen and sought to find areas of common interest. The result was

that during these months tentative steps were made by both Britain and Japan towards some kind of understanding, and divisive issues were dealt with in a conscious spirit of compromise.

The first major issue raised in East Asia by the European war was one that threatened to increase divisions rather than heal them. This was the matter of the future of the British garrisons in China. On 5 September Craigie was handed an *aide-mémoire* by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Sawada Renzō calling for the withdrawal of all British forces from China on the grounds that their presence might lead to incidents arising out of the European conflict.¹⁵ It was obvious that the justification for this request was without foundation as there were no German forces in China, and that the real reason was a wish to further weaken the position of the Western Concessions and to humiliate the British in the eyes of the Chinese and thus damage the latter's morale. The Japanese request put Britain in a very difficult position, as even before the former had raised the issue the British authorities had been considering the withdrawal of the garrisons. In August, when it was clear that war was imminent in Europe, Vansittart had suggested their removal, a proposal which had won the approval of General Grasett but the opposition of Craigie and Clark Kerr.¹⁶

The Japanese intervention made the situation substantially more complex as any decision to withdraw, even if militarily necessary, would not now be seen as such, but rather as giving way to Japanese pressure. Another complication was that the United States made clear their utter disapproval of the Japanese demand and put pressure on Britain to resist. The initial sentiment in the Foreign Office was to stand firm and this was strongly supported by Craigie, who argued that Britain should only withdraw when the decision could be made to look unilateral.¹⁷ The pleas of Craigie and the Far Eastern Department, however, came to nothing and instead a decision to stage a withdrawal, although only of troops from north China, was soon taken by the War Cabinet.¹⁸ This was a symptom of the way that things were to change in East Asian policy from September 1939; increasingly decisions were to be taken at the highest level. The days of independence which had after all led to the Tientsin Crisis were over; now that Britain was at war the foibles of the East Asian experts could no longer be indulged.

The most vital issue between Britain and Japan remained the future of the Tientsin negotiations. Craigie, despite his drive for the continuation of the talks in late August, showed a measure of caution once the war began in Europe and recommended on 4 September that Britain should only proceed slowly over this matter.¹⁹ Tensions were lifted to a small degree by the handing over of the four Chinese terrorists to the District Court at Tientsin on 6 September and the release from custody of Colonel Spear on 8 September after a visit by Major-General Piggott to Peking, but it was not until 18 September that Craigie finally felt that the situation was stable enough to recommend to the Foreign Office that the talks be reopened.²⁰ His argument for the revival of the negotiations rested on his strong conviction that, now that war had begun in Europe, it was too dangerous for Britain to endanger its relations with Japan over as small an issue as the future of the Tientsin silver. He was also encouraged in his desire to restart the talks by a suggestion from Jamieson that the silver problem could be overcome by selling some of the deposits to raise money for flood relief at Tientsin. The issue was of such importance that the subsequent recommendation by the Foreign Office that the talks be renewed was considered by the War Cabinet on 23 September. At this meeting the Ministers approved a new attempt to sound the Japanese out, but kept to the cautious line espoused by the Foreign Office of first trying to get the silver sealed in a neutral bank and, only if this proved impossible, allowing it to be used for flood relief.²¹

Craigie raised the matter of the talks with Admiral Nomura at his meetings with the Foreign Minister on 30 September and 11 October, and both times pressed strongly for their renewal but to little effect, as Nomura argued that Britain was still too far from the Japanese position for the talks to succeed.²² In the background to this stalemate was the fact that Nomura as the new Foreign Minister and a non-diplomat was in too weak a position to press the Gaimushō in this direction and also that his chief interest lay not in an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement* but in relations with America. Nomura's attitude naturally stalled the momentum of the British initiative, but it was not the only factor. In mid-October Grew, who had been in the United States for the summer, returned to Japan and informed Craigie that

the American attitude towards Japanese aggression against China was becoming noticeably harsher. This was followed on 19 October by Grew's famous Horse's Mouth speech to the America-Japan Society in Tokyo in which he warned his Japanese audience of the impatience of the American people with Japanese aggression.²³ This naturally caused some hesitation on the British side, but proved to be only momentary as soon there were positive indications of renewed Japanese interest in a Tientsin settlement. In talks with both Lord Halifax and Sir George Sansom in late October Shigemitsu stressed the chances for success, while on 25 October Craigie received from Katō an offer of international control of the silver, agreement to its use for flood relief, and a proposal for the removal of restrictions within the Concession on the use of the FRB currency.²⁴

The situation now looked more promising but the road towards a formal reopening of the talks was not easy. One problem was that once again Shigemitsu appeared to be misinterpreting British policy in his dispatches to Tokyo, which threatened to hinder their progress by generating false impressions. This became apparent in a meeting on 11 November between Craigie and Tani Masayuki, the new Vice-Minister at the Gaimushō, when the latter noted that, according to Shigemitsu, the chances of success had increased due to Lord Halifax's statement that the British Government had '... no intention of pursuing political designs in China, their interests being limited to commercial and financial considerations.'²⁵

Craigie was forced to disabuse Tani of this false interpretation of Halifax's words, but this did not stop the Vice Minister from taking advantage of Britain's apparent retreat by ignoring the terms recently put forward by Katō and instead proposing a new plan where the silver was to be given to the Provisional Government at Peking for them to spend on flood relief. Craigie made it clear that this was unacceptable, which led three days later to Tani proposing that the silver be deposited in the Yokohama Specie Bank and used for flood relief.²⁶ Contrary to previous practice, where all proposals were made solely in Tokyo, this plan was also communicated in London by Shigemitsu to R.A. Butler. This caused concern in the Foreign Office that the Japanese Ambassador was attempting to take over the talks which, in the light of his latest *faux pas*, led Robert Howe to minute on 17 November-

'We should be well advised to let these negotiations continue to be centred in Tokyo and I do not much like the idea of the Japanese Ambassador's being brought into them. Mr. Shigemitsu would have no latitude in the negotiations and his efforts would be concentrated on endeavouring to get us to yield from our point of view, and he is an obstinate person with whom it is difficult to reason.'²⁷

Howe's doubts about Shigemitsu's suitability were given further ammunition when, on 25 November, Craigie reported that it appeared that Tani was under the impression, due to Shigemitsu's report on his 20 October talk with Lord Halifax, that the British Ambassador had been given a free hand in the silver talks. This was followed by a newspaper article, apparently based on Shigemitsu's report, criticizing Craigie for being inflexible in the talks in contrast to London, which desired an early agreement.²⁸

Despite Shigemitsu's clumsy intervention in the negotiations, progress was made in November towards a solution, and by the end of the month Lord Halifax was in the position where he could ask the War Cabinet to agree ~~to~~ formally to reopen the talks. Within the Far Eastern Department there were still doubts whether Craigie's efforts would actually lead to an agreement, a view which was shared by Cadogan who noted in his diary on 27 November-
'... why he [Craigie] should think there is any chance of success, I simply can't think.'²⁹

Halifax and Butler were, however, keen to let Craigie go ahead, not just because an agreement was possible but also because the need to conciliate Japan was becoming ever more pressing. One reason for this was that it seemed increasingly evident that Japan was teetering on the brink of a momentous decision. Lord Halifax warned the War Cabinet on 27 November-
'A struggle was going on in Japan between those who favoured a rapprochement with Germany through the Soviets, and those who desired Japan to draw nearer to the Democracies. Everything pointed to the near approach of a turning point in Japanese policy, and it would be wrong to miss any chance of drawing Japan closer to our side.'³⁰

The fear that Japan would turn towards the totalitarian bloc had been present since the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and had increased after the Nomonhan armistice had been signed on 16 September. In November the possibility of this diplomatic revolution seemed to gather in momentum due

to the opening of fisheries talks between Japan and Russia. Craigie, who had little sympathy for the Russians, played up this threat, and sent a number of worrying telegrams reporting rumours of closer Japanese-Soviet relations. In particular, he noted in a telegram of 22 November-

'In the Japanese Army opinion, although of course normally anti-Russian, is becoming more and more interested in the plan of an agreement with the USSR as offering, superficially, the quickest method of liquidating the China incident without undue detriment to Japan's immediate political and economic ambitions.'³¹

The pressures driving Britain towards an agreement over Tientsin need also to be seen in the light of economic relations between Britain and Japan and how these had been complicated by the war with Germany. As early as 19 September the Far East Combined Bureau [FECB] at Singapore had decrypted a telegram revealing Japan's concern over restrictions on its supply of raw materials from the British Empire now that war had started.³² This was followed on 23 September by a proposal from the Japanese Commercial Counsellor in London, Shudo Yasuto, that Britain and Japan negotiate a *modus operandi* over trade to allow Britain to buy Japanese foodstuffs and silk in return for continued Japanese access to British machinery and Imperial raw materials.³³ In the Foreign Office such a proposal fell on fertile ground as only the day before R.A. Butler had asked Sir George Sansom to enquire into the possibility of making a friendly gesture to Japan in the economic field.³⁴

However, the problem was that this was not solely a Foreign Office matter, as the Treasury, the Board of Trade and other lesser ministries also had a say in commercial policy and therefore all decisions had to be reached at inter-departmental meetings. The first of these on 26 September agreed that no binding trade agreement should be signed and that Britain should aim at concessions over commodity exports to Japan rather than agree to a commitment to increase imports from Japan. Following this another meeting was held on 5 October, which, after discussing a new more detailed proposal from Shudo, decided that the new Japanese outline could act as a basis for negotiation, but with the proviso that there was also a need to endeavour to link any concessions to a relaxation of the restrictions on British

trade in China.³⁵ It was agreed that the decision to start talks should be communicated to Shigemitsu through Sansom. The latter was, considering his attitude during the summer and his previous utterings on economic concessions to Japan, surprisingly keen on the idea of attempting to reach a compromise with Japan, and, in words that would not have ^{been} out of place coming from Sir Robert Craigie, had already minuted on 3 October-

'... I am, and have since the lapse of the alliance always been, most anxious to see an understanding between Gt. Britain and Japan; and it is because I think there is a prospect of reaching such an understanding that I feel the method of approach to be of first importance. ... I can see danger in making piecemeal concessions without at a very early stage bringing them into relation with a general scheme of friendship.'³⁶

The meeting between Shigemitsu and Sansom subsequently took place on 6 October, and marked the initial entry of the Japanese Ambassador into a series of negotiations which were to take up a considerable amount of his time and his hopes for the next eighteen months. His extensive involvement in these talks was due to a conscious decision by the British to keep them in London rather than Tokyo, partly because their very nature, as indicated above, required extensive consultation between the many concerned ministries, but also because it was believed that by holding the talks in Britain the economic problems could be treated on a separate plain to those arising from the war in China. The meeting on 6 October was held in a friendly atmosphere and the only difficulty arose over the attempted linkage between trade with Britain and trade in China. Shigemitsu responded to this by arguing-

'... it would be dangerous to link in any open or official way the two separate questions of Anglo-Japanese political differences in China and commercial relations in general. It would produce a hostile reaction in Japan.'³⁷

Despite this difficulty there was still general agreement on the need to work for some kind of trade arrangement and consequently a reason for some optimism.

At this stage the prospective agreement, though useful, was still of relatively minor importance, and it is noticeable that the Ministry of

Economic Warfare at first showed little interest in the talks. Indeed Sir Victor Wellesley, who advised the Ministry about East Asian affairs, minuted on 28 September-

'I can see no reason for a War Trade Agreement with Japan as yet. Japan is not contiguous with Germany. No trade with Germany is therefore likely to pass through Japan.'³⁸

Such complacency was to be rudely shattered on 20 October by the arrival of a vitally important telegram from Craigie which changed the whole basis of Britain's economic relations with Japan. Craigie wrote-

'... there is another matter in addition to improvement of Anglo-Japanese relations and better treatment for British interests in China that we should keep in mind in connexion with any arrangements that we make to facilitate supplies to Japan, namely the danger of supplies reaching Germany via Japan and Siberia.'³⁹

He then went on to report rumours obtained from what he referred to as 'good sources' in Tokyo that the Germans were trying to arrange for the delivery of Manchurian soya beans via the Trans-Siberian Railway. The seriousness of this turn of events led him to propose that there was a need for a formal General Trade Agreement with Japan, but that Britain should-

'... indicate to the Japanese that they can hardly expect us to facilitate supplies unless they on their side undertake not to export Japanese, Manchurian or Chinese produce to our enemies by any route and unless they undertake also to prevent the transit to our enemies of goods from third countries either through their territories or by their vessels.'⁴⁰

Craigie did not, however, go as far as proposing a War Trade Agreement which would formally link the Siberian issue to Anglo-Japanese trade, as he realized that any attempt to do this would only increase the agitation of the radicals against the weak Abe Government.

At first the Ministry of Economic Warfare appeared too shocked to take in the gravity of Craigie's news, but within days further reports from Japan made it clear that a major circumvention of the British blockade on Germany was beginning to emerge, granting the Reich continued access to the commodity-rich countries of South East Asia. This was a major threat to the Allied war effort as it allowed Germany continued supplies of rubber, nickel and tin from the Dutch East Indies, wolfram and antimony from China,

copper from the United States and Japan, and vegetable oils from Manchukuo. At once the Ministry of Economic Warfare was galvan²ized into co-operating with the Foreign Office to push for some kind of General Trade Agreement along the lines suggested by Craigie, which would indirectly link favourable terms for Anglo-Japanese trade to a commitment by Japan not to supply Germany with raw materials. In November both ministries began to prepare memoranda for the War Cabinet arguing in favour of such an agreement and noting Craigie's approval for such a line, but they soon found themselves facing strong opposition from the Treasury and the Board of Trade.⁴¹ The Treasury's objections rested on their concern that too generous an agreement with Japan would allow the latter to accrue large stocks of sterling which would very likely be sold on the open market at Shanghai for dollars with the effect of lowering the value of sterling.⁴² The Board of Trade meanwhile claimed that no trade agreement was possible until enough time had passed to see what trade Britain would need in wartime and that for Britain to enter into an agreement with Japan and thus commit itself to the purchase of goods that it ~~may~~^{might} discover it did not need would be very unwise.⁴³ The result was that at an inter-departmental meeting on 24 November to discuss the two draft memoranda it was decided that it was impossible to continue along these lines and the idea of a Trade Agreement was dropped.⁴⁴

The problems faced over the Trade Agreement were not the only obstacle to an improvement in commercial relations. It was hoped by Chamberlain and others that effective economic warfare could in a relatively short space of time bring the German economy close to collapse, and in an attempt to increase the pressure it was decided in November to introduce Orders in Council to restrict German exports severely. The motive for this move was to reduce drastically German acquisition of foreign exchange, but it was officially justified as retaliation for Germany's indiscriminate use of mines off Britain.⁴⁵ The initiation of such a policy may have been necessary for the pursuit of the war against Germany, but it portended a series of clashes with the latter's trading partners, which obviously included Japan. The seriousness with which Japan viewed this British move was made evident when on 27 November, the day that the Orders in Council came into operation, Shigemitsu handed a vigorous note of protest to Lord

Halifax which declared that there was no justification for Britain's act under international law. In addition to this he also protested over other issues arising from Britain's war effort, such as the problem over goods which Japan had ordered from British factories before the war which were requisitioned once the conflict broke out, and the question of the future of £1,200,000 worth of goods from Japan for Germany which had been seized at British ports.⁴⁶

The need to make a decision over Tientsin therefore came at a point when Anglo-Japanese relations were on the verge of becoming increasingly strained, and just as Britain had discovered that there was less room for manoeuvre in its attempts to conciliate Japan than had been originally thought. Another important influence on Lord Halifax's support for a concerted attempt to end the Tientsin dispute was the advice of Craigie. On 16 November he had sent a lengthy analysis of Anglo-Japanese relations to the Foreign Office in which he had noted-

'... commercial interest as a means of improving relations ... certainly has possibilities, and would have valuable psychological effect on both pro- and anti- British elements here ... But in any event, Japanese Government and public consider (however unreasonably) a Tientsin settlement to be a pre-requisite of any discussion on wider issues. ... I assume it to be of vital importance that Japan should not become an adversary in the present conflict and, however improbable this may appear at the moment, we must try to arrest at the start any trend in policy leading in that direction.'⁴⁷

Even while the War Cabinet considered whether to go ahead with the Tientsin negotiations Craigie kept up the pressure, reiterating his arguments about what he referred to as the 'titanic struggle' in Japan between the advocates of a pro-Western and pro-German policy.⁴⁸ He was also assisted by two other developments; first, that Grew had begun talks with Nomura about renegotiating the American-Japanese Commercial Treaty, which lessened the possibility of an American backlash against renewed Tientsin talks, and second that the Japanese came up with a new more reasonable compromise over silver which proposed the deposit of the silver in a neutral bank but under the joint control of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Yokohama Specie Bank and the use of a sum of £100,000 for flood relief.⁴⁹

Despite all of these motives for using the Tientsin talks as a means of conciliating Japan at a crucial juncture there was still some opposition within the War Cabinet, notably from Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was already showing signs of a dangerous underestimation of Japan's martial capabilities and the importance of East Asia.⁵⁰ On 4 December, however, after a week of discussion in the War Cabinet, Craigie was finally given permission to reach a settlement.⁵¹ He immediately set to work, and on the day he received his instructions from London he and Tani drew up a first draft of a formula over silver and followed this the next day by transmitting to the Foreign Office another draft to cover the currency issue.⁵² The Foreign Office took fright at this rapid diplomacy and urged Craigie to be more cautious. This was not an attitude which appealed to the latter, who realized that the potential tensions in Anglo-Japanese relations and within Japan itself were so great that there was no time to lose, and he defended his stance on 10 December by arguing- 'The time is surely one for broad and far sighted decisions - not for bargaining on sums which are small in relation to issues involved and on points which involve no possible question of principle. The present friendly Government may fall before the year is out, and if it does so before Tientsin is settled I am convinced that we shall find the settlement of our problems increasingly difficult.'⁵³

Despite the obvious differences in approach between London and Tokyo, the real obstacle to the talks in fact proved to be neither the timidity of the Foreign Office nor the excessive demands of the Japanese, though these were both important, but rather the opposition of the Chinese Government in Chungking. On 13 December Clark Kerr reported that the Chinese Foreign Minister was against any sale of silver to raise funds for flood relief, an announcement that threw the Foreign Office into a state of utter dismay.⁵⁴ In response a telegram was sent to Clark Kerr for him to forward directly to Chiang Kai-shek; it vociferously defended the silver formula negotiated by Craigie and noted-

'His Majesty's Government are not prepared to allow this situation to continue indefinitely and they, especially in view of the moral and material support which they have given to the Chinese Government, feel that they are entitled to expect the latter to afford such help as may be

possible or at any rate not to adopt too rigid an attitude. ... It is in the interests of the Chinese Government not to place obstacles in the way of our relations with Japan which hamper our war effort, since the victory of the Allies in Europe is in the best interests of an independent China.'⁵⁵

The note could not, however, be delivered immediately. First Clark Kerr, who was in Shanghai, had to get to Chungking, only to find when he got there in late December that Chiang Kai-shek had gone to the front. This caused a considerable delay in the Tientsin talks, but in some respects this was fortunate as the negotiations in Tokyo had moved into a new minefield. This had arisen due to the Japanese indicating on 20 December that the figure of £100,000 was too low for flood relief, and the Foreign Office's opposition to Craigie's subsequent proposal to raise the sum to £300,000.⁵⁶

As the Tientsin talks stagnated, Japan kept up its pressure on Britain to relax its restrictions on trade with Germany. On 5 December Shigemitsu handed to Robert Howe an *aide-mémoire* asking for special treatment for Japan over machinery that had been already been ordered from Germany, for Japan to be allowed to order further vital goods in the future, and for the Orders in Council not to be applied before 1 January 1940.⁵⁷ This was followed on 10 December by a request from Shigemitsu to Lord Halifax that the *Sanyo Maru*, a Japanese ship, which was just about to leave Rotterdam, be exempted from British contraband control. This posed a very difficult problem for Britain because the Ministry of Economic Warfare had received information that the ship was carrying a cargo of 'secret naval goods' from Germany for the Imperial Japanese Navy.⁵⁸ Any decision over searching of the ship therefore had to be made at the highest level as it raised important policy questions. In the War Cabinet Churchill with his usual bellicose attitude towards Japan argued for a strict search of the ship, but this was countered by Halifax who argued that any search would cause political difficulties with Japan. The eventual decision made on 14 December was that the ship would only be given a cursory search if there was an assurance from the Japanese that the whole cargo was for the Japanese Government and that none of it would pass into German hands in East Asia. Subsequently on 15 December Shigemitsu made such an assurance

to Halifax and within two days the ship, which had left Rotterdam on 14 December, was searched and released without incident.⁵⁹ This was then followed later in the month by the free passage of another ship, the *Mito Maru*, due to a British agreement to meet the demands of Japan and of other powers and postpone the Orders in Council until 1 January 1940.

The other problem that Britain faced in December 1939 was how to promote better commercial relations with Japan now that the idea of a Trade Agreement had been scotched. Craigie, again reflecting his anxiety that Britain was losing an opportunity to establish better relations with Japan, continued to forward complaints about various British practices which led him to believe that the economic warfare policies were leading to the needless antagonism of Japan. On 11 December he sent a number of observations to the Foreign Office, noting in passing that-

'... we have a good opportunity of retaining Japan's friendship during the present hostilities and ... we should meet her wishes as far as we can without seriously impeding our economic measures against Germany.'⁶⁰

This telegram encouraged Sansom to continue to look at new ways in which Britain could conciliate Japan in the economic field, and he eventually fixed on a plan to communicate to the Japanese a message stressing Britain's belief that in the future a beneficial agreement could be reached. Before this optimistic missive could be sent to Tokyo it had, however, to be approved by the other Ministries, and it came under withering fire from S.D. Waley of the Treasury, who wrote to Robert Howe that such a move would be unwise at the present because the Americans were due to end their Commercial Agreement with Japan in January. This view was shared by Leith-Ross, now the Director-General of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, who also noted that too conciliatory a line would be unwise, not only for the reason raised by Waley but also because-

'We are at present discussing a USA proposal to restrict supplies of metals to Russia and Japan (esp.[sic] molybdenum and nickel) & the USA would certainly take it amiss if we chose this time to assure Japan with other raw materials.'⁶¹

By the end of 1939 therefore the British and Japanese Governments were as far away from agreement as ever before. Despite the warnings from Craigie

that there was much to lose if the opportunity was wasted, Britain still held back from making any substantial advance to Japan, due to the obstacles of concern for American public opinion and the need not to aid Germany by making concessions to the Japanese. Just as the British were trapped so were the Japanese; the Nomura-Grew talks failed to alleviate American pressure, which only added to the calls to solve Japan's problems by aligning with Germany, and it was increasingly obvious that despite the British desire for improved relations the latter was not prepared to meet Japan's paramount demand, assistance to end the war in China.⁶² In London Shigemitsu, despite attempts to force the pace, was largely reduced to forwarding complaints arising from Britain's economic warfare, mirroring Craigie's role as the postman for British claims from China. Meanwhile the war with Germany served only to raise more and more seemingly intractable differences.

In January 1940 one incident related to the pursuit of the war with Germany led to the most serious crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations since the previous summer. On 30 December 1939 the Admiralty received information that a number of German sailors who were stranded in the United States were planning to return to the Reich via Japan and the Trans-Siberian Railway. The first part of this journey entailed travelling from San Francisco to Yokohama on the Japanese merchant ship, the *Asama Maru*.⁶³ The Admiralty therefore decided that it was necessary to intercept this ship and detain the German sailors. This plan was discussed with the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare, who raised no objections, and on 9 January the relevant orders were sent out to the Commander-in-Chief China Station with the explicit instruction-

'Vessel is not I repeat not to be stopped within sight of Japanese coast.'⁶⁴

Craigie was not personally informed of this proposed action and only learnt about it from his Naval Attaché, Captain D.N.C. Tufnell, on 12 January; he immediately told the Foreign Office that he hoped that they realized what impact such a move would have on Anglo-Japanese relations and that if the interception were to take place it had best be at a distance of over sixty miles from the Japanese coast. A complacent Foreign Office replied the next day assuring him that there was nothing to worry about as the Japanese

had already been warned of the intended action.⁶⁵

On 21 January the *Asama Maru* was intercepted by HMS *Liverpool*, and twenty-one Germans comprising thirteen officers and eight technical ratings were taken into British custody. The problem was, however, that the ship had been intercepted not sixty miles away from Japan but at a distance of thirty-five miles or what the Japanese termed as 'within sight of Mount Fuji'. The high-handed nature of the British action allied to its proximity to the Japanese coast led to a feeling of outrage within Japan, and Craigie found himself immersed again in an unwanted and avoidable crisis which it would take all of his diplomatic skills to solve. On 22 January Craigie was called to see Vice-Minister Tani who protested strongly about the British action and demanded the return of the detained Germans.⁶⁶ Craigie was therefore forced to defend the interception by stating that Britain had acted within international law, but when he returned to the Embassy he composed one of his severe and self-righteous rejoinders to the Foreign Office, noting-

'The depth of latent anti-British feeling in this country is probably not fully realised at home, despite my efforts to assess it accurately, but it is against this background that the effect of any action such as the interception of the *Asama Maru* must be judged.'⁶⁷

His mood was little improved the next day when he learnt that the Admiralty were now planning to intercept another ship, the *La Plata Maru*, which led him to send another telegram warning in no uncertain terms that another incident could lead to war.⁶⁸

In the Foreign Office too there was a sense of bewilderment at the sudden appearance of this crisis out of nowhere and a desire to try to placate the Japanese. This led to the Admiralty being restrained from further interceptions and a promise by the Foreign Office to Shigemitsu that the boarding by a Japanese trawler, the *Yo Bai Maru*, of a British launch, the *Kuong Hing*, within Hong Kong territorial waters and the beating up of the latter's crew would not be publicized.⁶⁹ Luckily for the British the Japanese Government was also at this stage anxious to avoid a break in relations. On 14 January the Abe Cabinet had resigned and been replaced by a new Government led by Admiral Yonai Mitsumasa with Arita Hachirō once

again as Foreign Minister. At the time Craigie was much pleased at the reappointment of Arita and had noted to the Foreign Office-

'... when he first entered the Konoye Cabinet I found him reserved and not particularly well disposed towards Great Britain, a steady evolution was noticeable during his period of office and at the end he was more understanding of our point of view and more generally desirous of improving Anglo-Japanese relations.'⁷⁰

His optimism was justified during the crisis, for despite virulent anti-British sentiments in the Japanese press and large demonstrations, Arita kept his head and worked steadily for an agreement.

The first result of this was that Shigemitsu saw Lord Halifax on 24 January and informed him that he was under orders from Arita to ease the situation in whatever way he could, and the next day Arita improved matters further by ordering the two main Japanese shipping companies, ~~NYK~~ and OSK, not to take any more German passengers of military age.⁷¹ On 27 January Craigie met with Arita to present the British plan for a solution of the crisis. In keeping with the concern in the Foreign Office he offered a very moderate proposal; a Japanese promise not to carry anyone valuable to the German war effort in exchange for a British commitment not to stop and search Japanese ships for German passengers, and if necessary the return of those removed from the *Asama Maru* who were not of use to the German Navy.⁷² Though this should have led to an agreement, Arita was in fact disappointed with the British terms as he had been led to believe by Shigemitsu that Lord Halifax had already promised three days earlier to release all the detainees, and he therefore pushed Craigie to retreat to what he thought was the original British position. It appears that the Japanese Ambassador in London had made one of his habitual misinterpretations of the Foreign Secretary's words, but the damage was not permanent and by 1 February Arita had been convinced by Craigie's adept and persuasive diplomacy to accept the proposed British settlement.⁷³ The problem then was to decide how many men were to be returned to the Japanese, this caused some difficulty as the Japanese demanded the return of eleven, but eventually a compromise of nine was agreed to on 5 February and with that the crisis was solved.

The settlement of this potentially explosive incident was a matter of satisfaction for both sides; in the Foreign Office it was recognized that Craigie and his Embassy staff had played a vital role in its containment, and a telegram of thanks from Lord Halifax was sent to Tokyo which stated- 'I wish to congratulate you on behalf of my colleagues and myself on the successful conclusion to which, by your skill, patience and resource, you have brought this difficult negotiation. It was, I feel sure, your consistent readiness to recommend a common sense settlement and your timely show of firmness that brought the Japanese to accept the equitable terms they were offered.'⁷⁴

The sense of relief that Craigie's astute diplomacy had once again saved Britain from an unnecessary crisis was also reflected in a comment made in a letter by Lord Hankey, who now held the ~~post~~ of ministerial post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, to Admiral Sir R. Drax on 3 February- 'We have not had a bad deal over this Asama Maru business... . Craigie has handled it extremely firmly and tactfully, and the ruling Japanese, as distinct from the jingoës, are most anxious for a fair settlement.'⁷⁵

This assessment of Craigie's worth was also reflected in Japan, and in the spring R.A. Butler received a letter from Viscount Kano, the head of the Yokohama Specie Bank in London, that observed-

'Everyone deeply sympathises with him [Craigie] in his difficult task, and highly appreciates his great and untiring efforts.... This in fact is the first time that Japan has had a real hardworking Ambassador.... You really have an excellent representative and I wish to impress this upon you most emphatically.'⁷⁶

The sense of optimism pervading the air after the crisis was also reflected by Shigemitsu who, when he met R.A. Butler to express his gratitude at the settling of the incident, declared that he believed it would give new life to negotiations to solve the other outstanding issues between Britain and Japan, and even expressed the belief that the climate in Japanese politics had so improved that there was a possibility of a return to party government.⁷⁷ Such views did not, however, impress the Far Eastern Department, who saw it as further evidence of just how cut off the Japanese Ambassador was from his native country; Esler Dening noted in response to the Ambassador's last point-

'Mr. Shigemitsu is, I think, quite genuinely working for an improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations. But he has not been in Japan for several years, and he either underestimates or ignores the strength of opposition to democratic government in his country.'⁷⁸

One of Shigemitsu's keenest ambitions at this time was to lay the foundation for an Anglo-Japanese understanding by basing co-operation on a common front against Bolshevism. As noted previously he was a virulent anti-communist, an attitude which he had ably displayed in his warnings against a British understanding with the Soviet Union in the summer of 1939. In many of his talks with R.A. Butler he therefore emphasized his distrust of the Soviets in the hope that it would touch a raw nerve in the British. This tendency had caused Butler to note perceptively in October 1939, after one of the Ambassador's anti-Russian tirades, that-

'Mr. Shigemitsu has always believed in looking at Anglo-Japanese relations against the larger issues which confront our two countries rather than in the atmosphere of the smaller and more detailed questions upon which we are likely to find ourselves in disagreement.'⁷⁹

The most blatant example of Shigemitsu's lobbying over this matter came on 18 March 1940, after the Finnish surrender to the Soviet Union, when Butler recorded the Ambassador's view as being that-

'... we and Japan have a common enemy in Russia and that, although an opportunity had been lost for striking against her, the determination of Japan to keep on terms with us against Russia was undiminished.'⁸⁰

Shigemitsu was matched in his anti-communist passion by Craigie, who also saw a common bond of opposition to the Soviet Union as a possible aid in constructing closer Anglo-Japanese relations. In terms similar to Shigemitsu's, Craigie noted on 26 March-

'Since July 1937 there has been one focal point of disturbance in Anglo-Japanese relations; namely China, nothing would tend to re-establish those relations more quickly than to discover that the two countries now had a point of common interest, namely resistance to the aggressive tendencies and subversive doctrines of Soviet Russia.'⁸¹

The late winter and early spring of 1940 was the high point in the circulation of these ideas. By the end of February it appeared that Japan

was seriously thinking about an anti-Soviet front in East Asia with Britain and France, and on 29 February Craigie offered to do preparatory work in case anything came of these rumours. Such talk met with some sympathy within the Foreign Office, although not always due to a sense of common interest with Japan, and Denning minuted on receiving Craigie's telegram- 'If Japan were to resort to war with the Soviet Union, all danger of a southward movement would be eliminated for the time being, and whatever successes Japan might achieve in her campaign, her economy would be so exhausted by the end of it, that we too could hope for a prolonged breathing space in the Far East.'⁸²

The concept of a common front was carried a stage further when at the end of March a Japanese journalist, named Hashimoto, suggested to Craigie that Japan and Britain should exchange information about the activities of the Comintern. Despite the obvious similarity of this idea to the Anti-Comintern Pact it was met with some enthusiasm in the highest echelons of the Foreign Office, with Halifax indicating some interest, and R.A. Butler minuting-

'Such an exchange could do nothing but good to anybody and would have a slight diplomatic flavour of a piquant character.'⁸³

However, nothing came of this idea, due to opposition from Cadogan within the Foreign Office and criticisms from other departments, such as M.I.2c in the War Office who noted that any link with Japan would mean that British support for China would have to be curtailed and-

'If we jettisoned China ... in favour of an alliance with Japan, favourable application of the US neutrality legislation now afforded to us might quite probably be revised: the disastrous effect of this on US material supplies to this country, especially aircraft needs no amplification ... America is almost a potential Ally.'⁸⁴

Here too, the United States stood as the greatest obstacle to an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*.

Despite the obstacles to this diplomatic realignment Craigie still sensed that with the settlement of the *Asama Maru* case an opportunity to win over Japan had arisen. The high point of his efforts to take advantage of this tide of opinion came with a speech he made to the Japan-British Society in Tokyo on 28 March 1940. The speech was made without first clearing its

contents with the Foreign Office; this was not unusual but it was rather unfortunate as the contents of his address were to cause some controversy. In his speech Craigie observed that there were many problems in Anglo-Japanese relations, but expressed the hope that these would be overcome in the near future because Britain and Japan, despite their superficial differences, in reality had so much in common. The passage which caused the most adverse comment was when he stated-

'Methods in some cases differ but both countries are ultimately striving for the same objective namely lasting peace and preservation of our institutions from extraneous subversive influences. It is surely not beyond the powers of constructive statesmanship to bring the aims of their national policies into full harmony.'⁸⁵

Apart from the sentiments expressed by Craigie which appeared to suggest approval of Japan's ambitions the speech also became the object of criticism, particularly in the United States, because it contrasted very poorly with Grew's Horse's Mouth address to the Japan-America Society the previous October, and in addition because it came only three days before the setting up of the puppet Wang Ching-wei Government at Nanking on 1 April.

In London the speech led to Herschel Johnson, the Counsellor at the American Embassy, calling on R.A. Butler to clarify whether the views expressed were those of the Foreign Office, to which Butler replied that the speech was of little significance and the problems had arisen due to one or two *double entendres*.⁸⁶ Such, however, was the furore in the United States that the Foreign Office decided that it was necessary for a statement to be made to Parliament on 3 April, which read-

'His Majesty's Government do not ... regard their policy ... as being in any way inconsistent with the endeavour to place our relations with Japan on a more friendly footing. Sir Robert Craigie has rendered very valuable service in this direction, and it was this purpose which he was concerned to promote in his speech.'⁸⁷

Craigie, not surprisingly, was embarrassed at the uproar he had caused and told the Foreign Office on 1 April that he had been forced to make a conciliatory speech due to the presence in the audience of Arita and the Emperor's brother, Prince Chichibu.⁸⁸ On 5 April he went further and sent

back a formal apology to Lord Halifax-

'I greatly regret that my speech at Japan's British Society should have provoked so much discussion and that you should have to explain the position in Parliament. In my effort to meet the strong German drive against us here I used certain phrases which, when taken out of context, gave ammunition to those who wish to make difficulties for His Majesty's Government and I shall bear this possibility carefully in mind on any future occasion.'⁸⁹

The irony of this situation was that Craigie only a month previously had felt it necessary formally to dissociate himself from a speech that Major-General Piggott had made at Chatham House on 13 February. Piggott, who had left Japan in November 1939 after ending his term as Military Attaché, had now retired from the Army and was therefore free to make speeches espousing Anglo-Japanese friendship. In this particular lecture he had argued that the defeat of the Nationalists in China was inevitable due to the superiority of the Japanese Army, and though the address was supposedly private its contents were soon widely reported in the Japanese media.⁹⁰ This led Craigie, who had so recently praised Piggott in a telegram to the Foreign Office for 'his patient and untiring efforts', to write-

'... it would be unfortunate if General Piggott's reported statements were to be considered in England as representing the views of this Embassy.'⁹¹

However, Craigie did not apparently learn the lesson from Piggott's speech, which was that all such declarations were subject to microscopic study and misrepresentation, and therefore failed to make his speech in March precise enough to avoid misinterpretation.

Despite all this talk of collaboration against the Soviets and the sentiments raised by the *Asama Maru* crisis, there were in reality only two issues that really mattered in Anglo-Japanese relations at this juncture, Tientsin and commercial policy, and there could be no *rapprochement* without progress in both. In the field of the economic problems the difficulties in the first half of 1940 remained substantially as they had done in 1939, namely that Japan resented the restrictions on German exports and that the British were disturbed by the Japanese role in the trade with Germany along the Trans-Siberian Railway. There were, however, other complicating

factors, in particular the American decisions to go ahead with the abrogation of its Commercial Treaty with Japan and to restrict the export of strategically vital ferro-alloys to Germany, the Soviet Union and Japan, provided Britain with a great dilemma.⁹² Although obviously it was in Britain's interests to see American exports to Germany limited, the difficulty lay in how to react to the new hard line being pursued by the United States towards Japan.

To Craigie this coercive tendency in American policy was misplaced as he believed, in line with his American colleague, Joseph Grew, that Japan was beginning to seek an escape from the China Incident and that if the West was able to offer a feasible alternative to autarky then it might make all the difference. In particular Craigie reacted fiercely to reports from the United States that disparaged the existence of a moderate element in Japan. One incident that irritated him and stands as an example of his views, was when on 9 December 1939 the State Department's Adviser on Far Eastern Affairs, Stanley Hornbeck, told Lord Lothian, the new British Ambassador in Washington, that he entirely discounted the influence of the 'moderates'.⁹³ This led Craigie to write back to London on 1 January-

'Though every Japanese naturally desires the advancement of his country's fortunes, distinction must be made between moderates who favour gradual economic expansion through the control of vital raw materials and the development of overseas markets as the solution for Japan's organic economic ills and extremists who, impelled by mystical fanaticism, aspire to world domination. ... Danger here is that too severe pressure from the United States ... might have more immediate effect of bringing the extremist government into power to carry out re-orientation of Japan's foreign policy.'⁹⁴

Instead Craigie believed that it was necessary to continue trying to come to terms with Japan, and in another telegram on the same day he proposed that Britain should make a firm offer over raw materials to conciliate Japan, a suggestion which interested Chamberlain until the Foreign Office told him of the various complications inherent in such a policy.⁹⁵

The views expressed by Craigie were not accepted by the majority of the members of the Far Eastern Department such as Dening and Sansom who felt

that his faith in the moderates was misguided and that British policy should be to encourage Washington to pursue its new hard line towards Japan as the best means of containing Japanese aggression, an opinion which also had the support of Clark Kerr.⁹⁶ The War Cabinet, however, in making a decision about how to respond to the United States initiative over ferro-alloys had to view the consequences through a wider perspective than either Craigie or his detractors. A key element in the eventual decision to cooperate with Washington, despite the necessity of easing relations with Japan, was a joint Foreign Office-Ministry of Economic Warfare memorandum for the War Cabinet on 19 January which noted simply-

'When the course of war cannot be foreseen, and when all that is certain is that we are fighting for our lives, it is clear that the Allies cannot afford to reject any friendly approach by the President of the United States...'⁹⁷

This was enough to persuade the War Cabinet, although even Eden, anti-Japanese as he was, noted sadly-

'It was ... unfortunate that the United States should wish to take a firm line with Japan, just when we were trying to improve our relations with that country.'⁹⁸

The result was that Britain agreed to restrict the sale of these ferro-alloys to Japan, of which the most important was Canadian nickel. This was in addition to goods which Britain had already restricted in order to meet the requirements of the British war effort and to hinder the possibility of certain materials, such as rubber and tin, from being re-exported to Germany.⁹⁹ The obstacles to a solution of the trade problems were therefore becoming larger rather than smaller.

Despite this setback to their policy of reaching an understanding with Japan, Halifax and Butler were still determined to try placating the Japanese in the economic field wherever possible, and in the face of this ministerial consensus the Far Eastern Department, which had serious doubts about the efficacy of this policy, had no choice but to do their bidding. The problem in making progress in this field was that Japan kept on forwarding new requests which were very difficult to satisfy, as to comply with them threatened to undermine the blockade and generate similar demands from other neutrals. On the Japanese side there was little patience with

such arguments as the shortages caused by the European War were now beginning to bite causing commodity prices to rise drastically thus straining an economy already stretched to the limits by the need to support the war effort in China.¹⁰⁰

The first major problem to arise in 1940 was once again over the issue of German exports; the Japanese had two ships, the *Tajima Maru* at Rotterdam and the *Muroran Maru* at Genoa, ready to sail for Japan in February carrying goods bought from Germany for defence purposes. As early as 11 January the Japanese asked for these two ships to be allowed through British contraband control, but in doing so they were contravening the agreement that had been reached with the Ministry of Economic Warfare in December that had laid down that from, 1 January 1940, the Orders in Council would apply to all cargoes.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless Shigemitsu was still hopeful that in the improved atmosphere of early February 1940, the British would be more amenable and in a talk with Lord Drogheda of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, Okamoto Suemasa, the Counsellor at the Japanese Embassy noted-

'... his Ambassador had expressed to him the opinion that it would be "intolerable" that enemy exports should embitter Anglo-Japanese relations now that the 'Asama Maru' incident might happily be regarded as practically over.'¹⁰²

Halifax, realizing the importance of promoting a momentum in Anglo-Japanese relations, was keen to meet this Japanese demand and therefore put pressure on the Ministry in early February to compromise over these two ships, using the argument that to make concessions over this issue could lead to Japan becoming more amenable over exports to Germany.¹⁰³ This argument was supported by Craigie who in a telegram of 14 February urged the Foreign Office to meet the Japanese over the two ships-

'To refuse to pass these cargoes ... would not only create a further serious disturbance in Anglo-Japanese relations just when we are recovering from the Asama Maru case, but will in no way assist our war effort. ... I would point out that we are hopeful of being able to establish friendly co-operation with the Japanese to prevent such vital raw materials as rubber, tin and tungsten etc. ... being carried in Japanese ships for dispatch to Germany via Siberian Railway. Unless however His Majesty's Government are

prepared to meet Japanese to some extent on this matter of vital imports, we cannot expect proposed arrangements to materialise.'¹⁰⁴

The Foreign Secretary and Craigie were thus very close in outlook, and their combined pressure was enough to persuade the Ministry of Economic Warfare to seek a compromise. A deal was finally struck in a meeting between Halifax and Shigemitsu on 20 February, when the latter said that in future the Japanese would provide all the necessary documentation over payment and descriptions of goods. Nigel Ronald, now head of the Foreign Office's General Department, who ^{was} also present at the meeting, hinted in return that if Japan curtailed its exports to Germany then Britain would be willing to compromise with Japan over the latter's wish to import vital goods from the Reich. Shigemitsu displayed a distinct interest in this proposal, and observed that it could act as the basis for an agreement.¹⁰⁵ The momentum was therefore building on both sides for new talks to start that would touch on all aspects of economic relations.

This was not only a matter of interest for the Foreign Office; the Ministry of Economic Warfare was also keen to begin negotiations. The latter had been encouraged to move in this direction by the rapidly expanding use of the Trans-Siberian Railway by the Germans and evidence from intelligence sources that Germany was building an extensive network in East Asia to arrange for the purchase and transport of vital commodities.¹⁰⁶ Their view on how to deal with this menace did not, however, dovetail easily with that of Craigie or the Foreign Office as it contained a much greater coercive element. The basis of their policy rested on the need to block the gap in the British blockade not on a desire to improve relations with Japan, and therefore their proposal was to deal broadly with the problem by extending contraband control to goods travelling to the Soviet Union, and to use the threat of British economic sanctions to force Japan into talks in which they would promise to comply with this embargo: their memorandum on this subject for the War Cabinet noted-

'The obvious bargaining counter exists in Japan's great need for raw materials for which she is largely dependent on the British Empire and the U.S.A. We might well make it a condition of the supply to Japan of her normal domestic requirements that she should cease to facilitate shipments

to Vladivostock or Dairen for Russia or Germany.'¹⁰⁷

Another element of the extension of contraband control to the USSR which affected Japan was that it would necessitate the start of an intensive campaign of intercepting ships heading towards the Soviet Union, which would require the Royal Navy to increase its patrols in waters off Japan. Taken as a whole the Ministry's plan seemed the very antithesis of what Craigie had been suggesting.

On 14 March the War Cabinet agreed to this policy of coercing the Japanese into talks and a week later a telegram was sent to Craigie informing him that interceptions would soon begin in the Pacific, the only restriction being that they were not to take place within sight of Japan. This flew in the face of a Japanese proposal that had been made on 4 March by Tani to institute an informal one hundred mile zone around Japan which would be free of interceptions.¹⁰⁸ Craigie, with the memory of the *Asama Maru* incident fresh in his mind, not surprisingly thought the Ministry of Economic Warfare's plan to be insensitive and potentially damaging, and protested to the Foreign Office on 26 March that if the aim was to stop cargo from reaching the USSR-

'... most effective method is to make earliest possible arrangements under which Japanese ships ... will abstain from carrying those vital contraband goods the transit of which via Siberian Railway is possible. But if insufficient account is to be taken of Japanese sensitiveness in the matter of interception close to territorial waters, negotiation for friendly arrangement will become infinitely more difficult.'¹⁰⁹

He proceeded to suggest that at the very minimum ships should not be intercepted within fifty miles ~~from~~ Japan.

Craigie's proposal arrived just as the Foreign Office's General Department was drafting a telegram to him to explain the decision to start economic talks with Japan and to describe how Japan was to be persuaded to agree to the British terms. This draft fleshed out the plans suggested by the War Cabinet and in places changed drastically the ideas contained in the Ministry of Economic Warfare's original memorandum. One such amendment was to expand on Craigie's proposal and to suggest that no Japanese ships should be intercepted. Elsewhere the draft also caused controversy by

proposing that there was no need to consult the United States before approaching Japan, and, in contradiction to the conciliatory line over shipping, that Japan should be persuaded to submit to the British demands over trade with Germany through a policy of introducing restrictions on sales of commodities to Japan before talks had even began.¹¹⁰ The Ministry of Economic Warfare, not surprisingly, reacted unfavourably to the first two proposals as they were utterly opposed to any concessions over interception, and were quite convinced that the United States approval must be won before talks could start; as Sir Frederick Leith-Ross wrote to Nigel Ronald-

'If we have to choose between an agreement with Japan and keeping even this degree of support from the United States, we feel that we would have to choose the United States. And certainly we do not want to risk losing American support without getting a really watertight agreement with the Japanese.'¹¹¹

Meanwhile in the Foreign Office Lord Halifax and R.A. Butler were disturbed at the prospect of coercing Japan into talks, which led the latter on 5 April to write to Ronald Cross, the Minister for Economic Warfare-

'We accept the main line of reasoning, but do not see why a severe strain need be imposed on our relations with Japan. We have evidence of a predisposition on the part of that country to reach an agreement with us which will be satisfactory. ... the Far Eastern situation cannot be divorced from the world situation, and we would not be happy were our relations with Japan to take a wrong turning as a result of our handling of the Japanese over this question.'¹¹²

In part this reaction was the result of intimations by Shigemitsu of just how important an economic agreement would be in improving Anglo-Japanese relations. He communicated this impression not only directly through his meetings with Halifax and Butler but also through the use of Arthur Edwardes as an informal channel. On 27 March, for example, Edwardes wrote to Butler stating that Shigemitsu was very keen on negotiating a War Trade Agreement, but could not say so openly as Shudo's proposals had been rejected by the British.¹¹³ This use of Edwardes as an intermediary was deprecated by the Far Eastern Department, who saw him as little more than a traitor to his country, but Butler recognized that he had an important role

to play, and later in the year when the use of Edwardes as a source of information was criticized, the Minister noted in response-

'I find this information, as does the S/S, really quite valuable. I am taking the utmost care with this contact, but I refuse to be turned into a robot of our Gestapo.'¹¹⁴

The result of the various criticisms of the General Department's draft was that the original Foreign Office draft was merged with a new one from the Ministry of Economic Warfare and it was agreed to tone down the coercive elements, to reinstate the proposal to intercept Japanese ships, and to introduce a commitment to consult the Americans. This was, however, not all, as in early April another issue forced itself on to the agenda. On 3 April Shigemitsu called on Halifax to forward a note asking Britain to allow another eight ships which were, in the main, loading at Italian ports, to carry further consignments of German exports to Japan. He claimed that all of the goods concerned had been ordered and paid for before the Orders in Council had been introduced and were necessary for military defence.¹¹⁵ This proposal naturally threw both the Foreign Office and the Ministry into a state of confusion and at a joint meeting on 9 April it was decided that the best solution would be to link approval for their release to the success of the contraband talks and thus add another bargaining chip to the British position.¹¹⁶ Shigemitsu had hinted that such a linkage would be acceptable in his meeting with Halifax, and on 11 April this was made more explicit when Arthur Edwardes delivered a note to Captain J. Knox, the head of the Ministry's Enemy Exports Section, stating Japan's willingness to cease exporting to Germany by ship in return for agreement over the eight ships.¹¹⁷

This meant that the issue of enemy exports was also added to the text of the long telegram on the economic talks which was finally sent to Craigie on 14 April. In Tokyo Craigie was glad to hear that the negotiations were finally to start, agreed with the general aims, and had no objection to the talks taking place in London rather than Tokyo, but he did express a number of reservations about the methods suggested and in particular objected to a passage which read-

'With a view to acquiring the maximum bargaining power in negotiations for

such an understanding with Japan it is proposed that the Allied Government [sic] should temporarily place drastic restrictions on the export to Japan of certain key commodities of which she stands most in need ... excusing their action to her on the grounds of military necessity and domestic needs.'¹¹⁸

Craigie in his reply to the Foreign Office on 16 April warned in the strongest possible terms that any attempt to apply such restrictions on Japan would have a disastrous effect-

'... it would be an error of tact to endeavour to screw the Japanese down too tightly in the matter of rationing. ... Negotiations should take place against the background that we still have a host of enemies in this country who are only waiting for some pretext to stem the current running in our favour and nothing would assist their campaign more than some drastic step calculated to divert to us the present ill-feeling against the United States. ... Drastic action of this kind may well create such a storm here as to render impossible future negotiations along the lines you contemplate.'¹¹⁹

Apart from that complaint Craigie also stressed that he still believed it would be a mistake to intercept any Japanese ships, and noted, in addition, that he did not believe Britain ought to give up the chance of reaching a successful agreement should the United States object, as the latter could always be brought round.

Craigie's views had a considerable impact in London, where they mirrored concerns expressed by the Australian Government to the Dominions Office on the same day. The combined weight of these arguments had the effect of forcing the Ministry of Economic Warfare to back down over the interception of Japanese ships and of once again provoking the Foreign Office into making known its doubts about the wisdom of restricting the sale of commodities to Japan during the talks, with the result that at an inter-departmental meeting on 24 April it was decided to introduce only a very limited curtailment of exports to Japan.¹²⁰ Craigie's influence was thus important in toning down the British negotiating position and making it more palatable for the Japanese, even though he was to have little say once the talks began. Despite his approval there were still further delays in starting the talks, mainly due to the need to consult the Americans and it

was only on 4 May that Lothian finally reported Washington's approval of the British scheme.¹²¹

The delay caused by the need to reassure the Americans that Britain was not on the verge of an East Asian Munich caused irritation in the Foreign Office and with the Japanese. For the latter there was an urgent need to begin the talks because of the link to the enemy exports issue. Their concern was growing because it was apparent in the spring of 1940 that Italy was ^{on} the verge of entering the war and that if this happened the Japanese ships at Italian ports would be caught in a war zone. Shigemitsu took up the cause in London and exerted great pressure on the Foreign Office for the free passage of the ships. In a meeting with Butler on 26 April he expressed his grave displeasure at the delay and said that a request he had received from the Ministry of Economic Warfare for a breakdown of the cargoes of the eight ships was against 'the spirit in which his offer had been put forward'.¹²² A few days later he further demonstrated the gravity of the matter for Japan by getting Edwardes to tell Butler that Japan refused to supply details of the cargo and that if Britain did not allow the ships to pass unhindered then Japan might be forced to send out warships to escort these vessels on their journey home.¹²³ Disturbed by this series of events C. Steel of the General Department of the Foreign Office wrote to Lord Drogheda-

'... we have obviously got to try and reach some settlement more quickly than we previously contemplated and I am inclined to think that to do so over enemy exports would not necessarily prejudice our general negotiations on contraband control, provided we beat them down enough to save face.'¹²⁴

A joint Foreign Office-Ministry of Economic Warfare meeting on 2 May agreed on a compromise under which Britain would not ask for comprehensive documentation on the cargoes and would allow some dyestuffs that Japan admitted ordering after 27 November 1939 to pass. This slight climb-down was communicated to Shigemitsu by Butler on 7 May at a meeting in which the latter, following the news from Washington, finally announced that Britain was now ready to begin the contraband negotiations. Shigemitsu, in typical fashion, tried at this late stage to propose that the talks should be broadened further by bringing in relations in China, but this manoeuvre was

quickly dismissed by Butler.¹²⁵ The interview was followed three days later by a further talk between Shigemitsu, Cross and Leith-Ross at which an *aide memoire* setting out Britain's intentions in the contraband talks was handed to the Japanese Ambassador.¹²⁶ After six months delay the negotiations had finally started.

The subsequent detailed conversations arising from the talks were not carried out at the most senior level but in meetings between Leith-Ross and Counsellor Okamoto. The first of these took place on 14 May when Leith Ross handed over the list of goods that Britain wished to see considered as contraband and Okamoto responded by making known the raw materials which Japan wished to import from the British Empire.¹²⁷ The talk was held in a friendly atmosphere, and seemed to fulfil ~~X~~ the hopes that Shigemitsu had displayed the day before in a meeting with Butler when he had declared- '... we [are] beginning to turn a dangerous corner in Anglo-Japanese relations in a satisfactory manner.'¹²⁸

This sense of optimism was assisted further by yet another British concession over the eight ships, as on 15 May Shigemitsu was informed by Butler that Britain would agree to the sailing of two ships, the *Noto Maru* and *Najima Maru*, which were ready to leave from Genoa, and to consider another, the *Nagaru Maru*, sympathetically when it was ready to depart.¹²⁹

The talks therefore started in a potentially fruitful atmosphere, but soon began to lose their momentum; the problem being that the Japanese considered the British list of contraband goods to be too extensive and the ban on any re-export of goods too wide, and that it should only apply to items imported from the British Empire. The British were equally determined to compromise as little as possible over these vital issues and, in addition, the Ministry of Economic Warfare found themselves unable to agree to the Japanese list of desired commodities, in particular because they clashed with the commitment to the American ~~more~~ ^{pro-alloy} embargo. By the beginning of June after another two meetings between Leith Ross and Okamoto it had become obvious that the talks were approaching stalemate.¹³⁰ This deadlock could not have come at a worse moment, for by this time events in Europe were beginning to cast a disturbing shadow over Anglo-Japanese relations.

The war in Europe and the deteriorating fortunes of the Allied powers had an impact on the position in East Asia as early as April when there was a diplomatic exchange between the United States and Japan over the neutral status of the Dutch East Indies.¹³¹ This was followed on 10 May 1940 by the unleashing of the German blitzkrieg in Western Europe which brought Holland into the European conflict. The Japanese took advantage of Dutch weakness to press the latter into economic talks with a view to increasing Japan's quotas of raw materials from the East Indies, thus reducing the need to rely on trade with the United States and the British Empire. Such a move was, however, by no means enough to satisfy the clamour in Japan, in the wake of the German victories, for a concerted effort to take advantage of the power vacuum appearing in South East Asia. It was apparent to all foreign observers that the Yonai Cabinet was under immense pressure to take a more radical stance with the Western powers and to assert Japanese dominance in the region. At first Shigemitsu typically tried to keep an optimistic attitude in his meetings with Butler and to play down the gravity of the debate in Tokyo. On 12 June he told Butler in relation to the economic talks-

'The spirit in which the Japanese Counsellor had been instructed to negotiate was good, and he hoped that no difficult demands would be put to the Japanese, since he wished the negotiations to reach a successful result.'¹³²

A more realistic assessment of the situation, however, was given the next day when John Keswick of the Ministry of Economic Warfare reported Okamoto as telling him that-

'... news from Tokyo is not good. As the Germans advance in France so does the anti-British party gain strength in Japan. Arita is having a hard time nevertheless Shigemitsu is pressing vigorously. ... [I] see no hope at all of the full MEW demands being even discussed, they are far too wide.'¹³³

In this increasingly chilled atmosphere the contraband talks had no chance of success, and after a last meeting on 28 June between Leith-Ross and Okamoto they were abandoned and it was decided in the interim to limit negotiations to arriving at a Payments Agreement.¹³⁴

Despite the failure to attain a deal over contraband and Anglo-Japanese trade there was progress in another area. The Tientsin talks, as stated

earlier, had stalled in December 1939 due to Chinese opposition to the concessions that had been made over the silver issue. This reluctance on the part of Chiang Kai-shek to agree to the terms negotiated by Craigie continued into the New Year, and the talks had remained in abeyance until late February when the Chinese finally came up with proposals of their own which included the exclusion of the Yokohama Specie Bank from any agreement and an absolute ceiling of £100,000 for flood relief.¹³⁵ Craigie reluctantly communicated these ideas to Vice-Minister Tani on 8 March, and the latter predictably expressed his complete disapproval, stating that he could see no good reason why further withdrawals should not be made beyond the £100,000 ceiling to finance flood relief. Craigie, realizing that the talks were perilously close to collapse, had urged the Foreign Office to compromise over the withdrawals issue, while Clark Kerr proposed a solution to the problem of the Chinese objection to the Yokohama Specie Bank, which was to exclude banks altogether from the deal and instead have the British and Japanese Consul-Generals at Tientsin seal the silver.¹³⁶ On this basis by the middle of April a new consensus was formed and it was agreed that, though there would be an initial sum of £100,000 for flood relief, the Japanese authorities were entitled to request further sums in the future and that these applications would be reviewed by the British 'in the spirit which had led to conclusion of previous agreement.'¹³⁷

The apparent settlement of these problems meant that work could begin on drawing up final formulas over the silver, currency and police issues concerning Tientsin. The last two were completed without much difficulty, as the policing arrangements had been agreed, more or less, during the negotiations in August 1939 and the currency question had been settled, on the basis of free circulation of the FRB currency within the Concession, in January. Problems, however, remained over the silver, where once again the Chinese raised complications.¹³⁸ Craigie, sensing how close he was to settling this crisis which had dominated his life for over a year, was not sympathetic to the new Chinese intervention, and this sentiment was exacerbated by the news from Europe of the German attack in Western Europe. On 10 May Craigie told the Foreign Office that now more than ever the situation demanded a rapid agreement over Tientsin.¹³⁹ The Far Eastern Department did not accept this view and Esler Dening minuted, in a passage

which ably summed up the Department's concerns, that-

'To conclude the Tientsin agreement immediately after the latest German assault would be interpreted by the majority of Japanese as a sign of weakness. ... Far more dangerous would be the effect on American opinion, which so far has been moving rapidly in our favour. We may shortly find ourselves in a tight corner in the Far East. ... We are virtually incapable of defending ourselves by force of arms should the Japanese decide to move, and our salvation therefore depends solely on America.'¹⁴⁰

This was not an attitude that appealed to Craigie, who felt that, now Japan was tempted once more to flirt with the Axis, Britain should redouble its efforts to conciliate Japan and also try to persuade the United States to forego its present hard line towards Japan. In this latter aim Craigie was encouraged by Grew, who ever since the abrogation of the Commercial Treaty in January had felt that the United States policy was threatening to waste the opportunities offered by a moderate Japanese Government. As late as 20 May Grew wrote to Craigie-

'There is evidence in hand, I think, to warrant the conclusion that serious thought is being given to a reorientation of Japanese policy in a constructive direction.'¹⁴¹

Following on from this the two Ambassadors met on 31 May to co-ordinate their opinions, and Grew's record of the conversation reported Craigie as stating that-

'The time is ... becoming increasingly ripe to take the ball away from the Germans who are playing it for all it is worth here and to give the Japanese some hope of solving their economic problems through friendship with the United States and Great Britain.'¹⁴²

Craigie therefore kept up the pressure over the Tientsin question, feeling that it remained as a key issue in which Britain could persuade the Japanese that it was willing to listen to their grievances. The Foreign Office still disliked the idea of a rapid agreement, but their delaying tactics held less conviction after 16 May when the Chinese indicated their reluctant acceptance of the final formula over silver.¹⁴³ On 19 June the Tientsin Agreement was finally signed in Tokyo and the problems that had brought Britain and Japan to the brink of war in 1939 were finally settled.

Craigie felt that this was a great achievement and on 24 June he wrote to the Foreign Office saying-

'... it is undoubtedly a cause for satisfaction that in spite of Allied reverses the Japanese Government should have seen fit to carry the negotiations to their conclusion and the fact that they did so is good evidence that the present Government at any rate are not anxious to be stampeded by the press and by extremist opinion into a completely pro-Axis and anti-British attitude.'¹⁴⁴

If this was a genuine outburst of optimism from Craigie it could not have been more greatly misplaced; the signature of the Tientsin Agreement was the last conciliatory gesture to emerge from the now desperately fragile Yonai Government. On 24 June 1940 the Burma Road crisis broke and with that Anglo-Japanese relations were never to be the same again.

A period was thus ending in which Britain and Japan had come closer to agreement than at any time since the summer of 1937. Finally, however, the two sides had found it impossible to bridge the gap between them. The problem was that both countries had negotiated solely out of self-interest; Arita and Shigemitsu had striven to push Britain towards compromising its position in China and alleviating the effects of the economic blockade, while the British had in turn pressed the Japanese to cut voluntarily a link with a vital trading partner.¹⁴⁵ The common desire for improved relations was therefore buried under the mutual incompatibility of their respective positions. This, however, was not all, for looming in the background throughout these months was the disapproving countenance of the United States. And all of Craigie's warnings that an opportunity was being lost could not change the fact that Britain needed America more than it needed Japan.

NOTES

1. PRO T160/1094 F16244/3 'The War Trade Agreement with Japan and the Attitude of the United States' F. Ashton-Gwatkin memorandum 21 May 1940.
2. See K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads, 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Diplomacy*. (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986) chapters 1 & 2, and M. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares For Total War. The*

Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941. (Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, 1987) pp.148-161.

3. PRO CAB65/1 WM 2(39) War Cabinet conclusions 4 September 1939.
4. PRO CAB65/1 WM 30(39) War Cabinet conclusions 28 September 1939.
5. PRO FO371/23444 F9790/69/10 Sir E. Phipps to Lord Halifax 3 September 1939.
6. For Koiso's initial proposal to Craigie, see PRO FO371/23444 F7586/69/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 June 1939, and for the follow-up in September, see FO371/23444 F10415/69/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 23 September 1939. See also P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia, 1937-1941.* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) pp.108-109.
7. See PRO CAB65/1 WM 26(39) War Cabinet conclusions 25 September 1939, and WM 28(39) War Cabinet conclusions 26 September 1939.
8. PRO FO371/23444 F10597/69/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 October 1939.
9. PRO FO371/23444 F10691/69/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 October 1939.
10. The feeling in the Far Eastern Department was that 'the Ambassador had been led down the garden path on General Piggott's heels.' See PRO FO371/23444 F10691/69/10 R. Howe minute 13 October 1939.
11. PRO CAB66/2 WP(39)56 'Sino-Japanese Hostilities' Chiefs of Staff report 28 September 1939.
12. See PRO CAB67/2 WP(G)(39)92 'Appreciation of Probable Japanese Policy in the Far East' Lord Halifax memorandum 15 November 1939.
13. PRO FO371/23556 F10710/176/23 R.A. Butler minute 22 September 1939. Also quoted in part in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.106.
14. K. Sato, *op.cit.* pp.19-20.
15. PRO FO371/23460 F9845/87/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 5 September 1939. See also K. Sato, *op.cit.* pp.18-19.
16. PRO FO371/23521 F9282/3198/10 Sir R. Vansittart minute 18 August 1939. For the views of the Ambassadors, see *ibid.* F9286/3198/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 August 1939 and F9304/3198/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 22 August 1939.
17. PRO FO371/23460 F10528/87/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 September 1939.
18. PRO CAB65/1 WM 24(39) War Cabinet conclusions 23 September 1939.

19. PRO FO371/23460 F9836/87/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 September 1939.
20. For the handing over of the four men see PRO FO371/23533 F9847/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 September 1939. On the settlement of the Spear case, see the files PRO FO371/23512 and WO208/289, and also F.S.G. Piggott, *Broken Thread. An Autobiography*. (Gale and Polden, Aldershot, 1950) pp.326-330.
21. PRO CAB65/1 WM 24(39) War Cabinet conclusions 23 September 1939. For Craigie's telegram on reopening the talks, see FO371/23533 F10278/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 September 1939. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.129.
22. See PRO FO371/23533 F10600/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 October 1939 and FO371/23534 F10971/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 12 October 1939.
23. See W. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador. Joseph C. Grew and the American Diplomatic Tradition*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1966) pp.294-295, and J. Utley, *Going to War With Japan 1937-1941*. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1986) pp.67-69.
24. On the Shigemitsu interviews, see PRO FO371/23534 F11185/6457/10 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 20 October 1939 and FO371/23461 F11565/87/10 M. Shigemitsu/Sir G. Sansom conversation 28 October 1939. For the terms offered by Katō, see FO371/23534 F11302/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 25 October 1939. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.130.
25. PRO FO371/23534 F11827/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 November 1939. This appears to have been a misinterpretation by Shigemitsu of comments made by Lord Halifax in their meeting on 20 October; certainly Halifax's record of the conversation did not record him as making such a statement.
26. PRO FO371/23534 F11869/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 November 1939. See K. Sato, op.cit. pp.32-33.
27. PRO FO371/23534 F12240/6457/10 R. Howe minute 17 November 1939.
28. PRO FO371/23534 F12122/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 25 November 1939.
29. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry for 27 November 1939, in D. Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*. (G. Puttnam, New York, 1975) p.234.
30. PRO CAB65/2 WM 96(39) War Cabinet conclusions 27 November 1939.
31. PRO FO371/23559 F12088/347/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 November 1939. For the pressures on Japan to seek an understanding with the Soviet Union see C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact, 1939-1940.'

in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Deterrent Diplomacy. Japan, Germany and the USSR 1935-1940*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1976) pp.196-199.

32. PRO FO837/519 G33/3 Vol.1 Captain of Intelligence Staff Far East (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence 19 September 1939. The information appears to have come from a decrypt of a Japanese diplomatic telegram.
33. PRO FO371/23567 F10500/1054/23 A. Edwardes to G. Harrison (Foreign Office) enclosing memorandum from Y. Shudo 23 September 1939. See also W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade Vol.1* (HMSO, London, 1952) p.389, and P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.109-110. For the general affect of the start of the war on Japan's access to raw materials see M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.148-152.
34. PRO FO371/23567 F10429/1054/23 R. Shackle (Board of Trade) to H. Hutchinson (Import Duties Advisory Committee) 23 September 1939. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.106-107.
35. For reports on the two meetings, see PRO T160/1094 F16244/1 E. Hall Patch (Treasury) to T. Bewley (Treasury) 26 September 1939 and E. Hall Patch minute 6 October 1939.
36. PRO FO371/23567 F10708/1054/23 Sir G. Sansom minute 3 October 1939.
37. PRO FO371/23568 F10898/1054/23 M. Shigemitsu/Sir G. Sansom conversation 6 October 1939.
38. PRO FO837/519 G33/3 Vol.1 Sir V. Wellesley minute 28 September 1939.
39. PRO FO371/23568 F11195/1094/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 20 October 1939. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. p.390
40. Ibid.
41. The undated draft memorandum drawn up by the Foreign Office can be seen in PRO FO371/23568 F11899/1054/23; the Ministry of Economic Warfare memorandum also undated is in FO837/519 G33/3 Vol.1.
42. See PRO T160/1094 F16244/1 S.D. Waley (Treasury) to Stephens (Treasury) 20 November 1939.
43. PRO T160/1094 F16244/1 J. Owen (Treasury) to S.D. Waley 25 November 1939.
44. PRO FO371/23568 F12160/1054/23 Sir G. Sansom minute 27 November 1939. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.111, and W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.391.
45. PRO CAB67/2 WP(G)(39)90 'Seizure of Exports From Germany' Sir R. Cross memorandum 15 November 1939.
46. W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.393-395.

47. PRO FO371/23534 F11946/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 November 1939.
48. PRO FO371/23534 F12289/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 2 December 1939.
49. PRO FO371/23534 F12238/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 2 December 1939. On the American-Japanese talks about the reopening of Yangtse see W. Heinrichs, *op.cit.* pp.295-297.
50. PRO CAB65/2 WM 96(39) War Cabinet conclusions 27 November 1939.
51. PRO CAB65/2 WM 104(39) War Cabinet conclusions 4 December 1939.
52. PRO FO371/23534 F12359/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 December 1939.
53. PRO FO371/23535 F12604/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 10 December 1939.
54. PRO FO371/23535 F12663/6457/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 13 December 1939.
55. *Ibid.* Lord Halifax to Sir A. Clark Kerr 17 December 1939. See also P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.131.
56. PRO FO371/23535 F12939/6457/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 December 1939 and F12973/6457/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 23 December 1939. On the delay to the Tientsin talks see K. Sato, *op.cit.* pp.37-39.
57. PRO FO371/23953 W18091/16015/49 M. Shigemitsu/R. Howe conversation 5 December 1939.
58. It appears that the information about the 'secret cargo' came from a decrypted telegram presumably from consular sources, see PRO CAB67/3 WP(G)(39)92 'The Seizure of Enemy Exports. The Case of the Japanese Ship the "Sanyo Maru"' Lord Halifax memorandum 10 December 1939. The 'secret cargo' according to the records of a War Cabinet meeting consisted of magnetic mines, see CAB65/2 WM 111(39) War Cabinet conclusions 11 December 1939.
59. PRO FO371/23954 W18720/16015/49 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax 15 December 1939.
60. PRO FO371/23938 W19101/14844/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 December 1939.
61. PRO FO837/519 G33/3 Vol.2 Sir F. Leith-Ross minute 27 December 1939. For the Waley letter, see T160/1094 F16244/2 S.D. Waley to R. Howe 20 December 1939.
62. On the failure of the Nomura-Grew talks, see K. Usui, 'The Politics of War, 1937-1941.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The China Quagmire. Japan's*

Expansion on the Asian Continent, 1933-1941. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1983) pp.368-372, C. Hosoya, 'Miscalculations in Deterrence Policy: Japanese-U.S. Relations 1938-1941.' in *Journal of Peace Research* 1968 No.2 pp.100-102, and W. Heinrichs, op.cit. pp.297-301.

63. PRO FO371/25108 W71/31/49 Admiralty to Foreign Office 30 December 1939.
64. PRO ADM116/4157 Admiralty to Commander-in-Chief China Station 9 January 1940.
65. PRO FO371/25108 W694/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 12 January 1940, and Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 13 January 1940.
66. PRO FO371/25108 W1205/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 January 1940. On the *Asama Maru* see also K. Sato, op.cit. 44-49, and P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.119-120.
67. PRO FO371/25108 W1207/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 January 1940.
68. PRO FO371/25108 W1281/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 23 January 1940.
69. PRO FO371/25109 W1546/31/49 M. Shigemitsu/C. Steel conversation 26 January 1940.
70. PRO FO371/24723 F433/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 January 1940. For Craigie's favourable assessment of the Yonai government see Sir R. Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*. (Hutchinson, London, 1946) pp.81-82 and K. Sato, op.cit. p.63.
71. PRO FO371/25108 W1397/31/49 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 24 January 1940.
72. PRO FO371/25109 W1547/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 January 1940. For Craigie's own description of the talks see Sir R. Craigie, op.cit. pp.83-84.
73. PRO FO371/25110 W1806/31/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 February 1940.
74. PRO FO371/25110 W2061/31/49 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 8 February 1940.
75. PRO CAB63/177 Lord Hankey Papers, Lord Hankey to Admiral Sir R. Plunket-Ernlé-Erle-Drax 3 February 1940.
76. Viscount Kano to R.A. Butler 1 May 1940, Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB E3/11.
77. PRO FO371/24724 F1044/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 8 February 1940.

78. Ibid. M.E. Denning minute 12 March 1940.
79. PRO FO371/23556 F11063/176/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 13 October 1939.
80. PRO FO371/24724 F2072/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 18 March 1940, but see also FO371/23556 F13005/176/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 21 December 1939, and FO371/24724 F3017/22/23 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 26 April 1940.
81. PRO FO371/24673 F2088/57/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 March 1940.
82. PRO FO371/24708 F1462/193/61 M.E. Denning minute 29 February 1940, on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 29 February 1940.
83. PRO FO371/24724 F2169/23/23 R.A. Butler minute 1 April 1940, on Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 31 March 1940.
84. PRO WO106/2436 M.I.2c minute 4 April 1940, on 'Japan as an Ally' M.O.2 memorandum 31 March 1940.
85. PRO FO371/24724 F2231/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 April 1940. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.51-52.
86. PRO FO371/24673 F2273/57/10 H. Johnson/R.A. Butler conversation 1 April 1940.
87. PRO FO371/24724 F2248/23/23 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 3 April 1940.
88. Ibid, Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 April 1940.
89. PRO FO371/24724 F2354/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 5 April 1940.
90. PRO FO371/24559 F1239/27/10 Domei broadcast 17 February 1940.
91. PRO FO371/24559 F1292/27/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 21 February 1940.
92. On the American decision not to negotiate a new Commercial Treaty and to restrict the sale of ferro-alloys see M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.178-181, W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.367-371, and J. Utley, op.cit. pp.77-79.
93. PRO FO371/23551 F12625/4027/61 Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 9 December 1939.
94. PRO FO371/24708 F297/193/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 January 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.113. On the general problem of how Britain should treat the United States in this period see D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941. A Study in Competitive Co-operation*. (Europa, London, 1981) pp.73-83.

95. PRO F0371/24708 F298/193/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 January 1940. For Chamberlain's interest in this proposal, see F420/193/61 C. Syers (10 Downing Street) to V. Mallet 15 January 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.116.
96. PRO F0371/24708 F297/193/61 M.E. Dening minute 12 January 1940 and Sir G. Sansom minute 15 January 1940 and ibid, F780/193/61 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 4 February 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.113-118.
97. PRO CAB67/4 WP(G)(40)14 'Possibility of United States Cooperation in Preventing Certain Vital Commodities From Reaching Germany, Russia and Japan.' Lord Halifax/Sir R. Cross memorandum 19 January 1940.
98. PRO CAB65/5 WM 21(40) War Cabinet conclusions 23 January 1940.
99. A particular difficulty had arisen over sales of rubber and tin from Malaya and Singapore as the Governor of the Straits Settlement told the Japanese Consul-General in December 1939 that shipments of these commodities could only be agreed to if there was a guarantee for each cargo that it would not be re-exported, see PRO F0371/24731 F330/103/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 13 January 1940.
100. See M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.154-157.
101. PRO F0371/25084 W610/14/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 January 1940.
102. PRO F0837/520 C1211/1 Vol.4 S. Okamoto/Lord Drogheda conversation 10 February 1940. On the issue of the *Muroran Maru* and *Tajima Maru* see W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. p.397.
103. Ibid, Foreign Office/Ministry of Economic Warfare meeting 7 February 1940.
104. PRO F0371/25085 W2720/14/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 February 1940.
105. PRO F0371/25086 W3054/14/49 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax and N. Ronald conversation 20 February 1940.
106. PRO F0371/25085 W2283/14/49 Ministry of Economic Warfare Intelligence Report I.613/1 5 February 1940. This concern was also heightened by evidence from South America that the Japanese were buying supplies of vital commodities on Germany's behalf. The first sign of this came as early as 21 November 1939 when the Consul in Antofagasta, a port in Chile, told the Ministry of Economic Warfare that the Japanese, who had not traded in the town for years, were suddenly buying 1,500 tons of copper, see F0371/23938 W18778/14844/49 R.J. Fowler (Antofagasta) to Ministry of Economic Warfare 21 November 1939. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.405-406.
107. PRO CAB67/5 WP(G)(40)72 'Soviet-German Trade' Sir R. Cross memorandum 11 March 1940.

108. For the agreement of the War Cabinet to the Cross memorandum, see PRO CAB65/6 WM 68(40) War Cabinet conclusions 14 March 1940, and for the subsequent telegram to Craigie, FO371/25074 W4613/8/49 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 21 March 1940. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.324 & 405. For Tani's plan see PRO FO371/25072 W3947/8/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 March 1940.
109. PRO FO371/25075 W5015/8/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 March 1940.
110. For the undated Foreign Office draft telegram to Craigie, see PRO FO837/523 G33/41.
111. PRO FO371/25076 W5849/8/49 Sir F. Leith-Ross to N. Ronald 6 April 1940.
112. PRO FO371/25077 W6205/8/49 R.A. Butler to Sir R. Cross 5 April 1940.
113. A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 27 March 1940, in Butler Papers, RAB E3/5.
114. R.A. Butler minute for J. Sterndale Bennett 5 September 1940, in Butler Papers, E3/5.
115. PRO FO371/25088 W5547/14/49 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 3 April 1940. See W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. p.398.
116. PRO FO837/520 C1211/1 Vol.2 Foreign Office/Ministry of Economic Warfare meeting 9 April 1940.
117. PRO FO837/520 C1211/1 Vol.2 A. Edwardes/Captain J. Knox conversation 11 April 1940.
118. PRO FO371/25077 W6205/8/49 Foreign Office to Sir R. Craigie 14 April 1940.
119. PRO FO371/25077 W6383/8/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 April 1940.
120. For the record of the inter-departmental meeting, see PRO FO837/524 Vol.2. The telegrams from Australia were circulated by Eden as annexes to his memorandum on the subject, see CAB67/6 WP(G)(40)108 'Soviet-German Trade' A. Eden memorandum 17 April 1940. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.406-407.
121. PRO FO371/25078 W7617/8/49 Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 4 May 1940. Lothian had been very worried that the United States, which was at this point taking a very uncompromising line with Japan, would not approve of the British attempt to initiate negotiations unless it could be proved that they were absolutely essential. To this end Lothian requested as many statistics about Soviet-German trade as London could supply so as to impress the Americans; this naturally delayed the start of the Anglo-Japanese talks, see FO371/25077 W6638/8/49 Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 18 April 1940. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.406-407.

122. PRO FO371/25089 W7275/14/49 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 26 April 1940.
123. PRO FO371/25090 W7610/14/49 H. Ashley Clarke minute 29 April.
124. PRO FO837/520 C1211/1 Vol.2 C. Steel to Lord Drogheda 30 April 1940.
125. PRO FO371/24725 F3255/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 7 May 1940.
126. PRO FO371/25078 W7794/8/49 M. Shigemitsu/Sir R. Cross and Sir F. Leith-Ross conversation 10 May 1940. The next day Butler received a note from Shigemitsu saying how pleased he was at the start of the talks. For the economic talks in May/June 1940 see W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.409-411.
127. Ibid, S. Okamoto/Sir F. Leith-Ross conversation 14 May 1940.
128. PRO FO371/24725 F3275/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler Conversation 13 May 1940. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. p.398.
129. PRO FO371/25090 W7849/14/49 R.A. Butler to M. Shigemitsu 15 May 1940.
130. For the records of these two meetings, see PRO FO837/524 G33/3 Vol.3 S. Okamoto/Sir F. Leith-Ross conversations 23 May and 4 June 1940.
131. See J.G. Utley, op.cit. pp.85-86, and K. Sato, op.cit. pp.55-59.
132. PRO FO371/24725 F3284/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 11 June 1940.
133. PRO FO837/524 G33/3 Vol.4 S. Okamoto/J. Keswick conversation 12 June 1940.
134. For the record of the last meeting, see PRO FO837/524 G33/3 Vol.4 S. Okamoto/Sir F. Leith-Ross conversation 28 June 1940.
135. PRO FO371/24649 F1202/5/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 16 February 1940.
136. For Craigie's meeting with Tani, see PRO FO371/24650 F1472/5/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 8 March 1940. Clark Kerr's proposal for keeping banks out of the agreement is in ibid, F1978/5/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 19 March 1940.
137. PRO FO371/24651 F2731/5/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 13 April 1940. As early as 2 April Lord Halifax had rather over-optimistically told the War Cabinet that Tientsin would be solved within a week, see CAB65/6 WM 79(40) War Cabinet conclusions 2 April 1940.
138. On 22 April Clark Kerr reported that the Chinese were now pushing for the Chinese-owned Bank of Communications to be a party to the Agreement, which was, of course, completely unacceptable to the

Japanese, see PRO F0371/24651 F2884/5/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 22 April 1940.

139. PRO F0371/24652 F3247/5/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 10 May 1940.
140. Ibid, M.E. Denning minute 12 May 1940.
141. J. Grew to Sir R. Craigie 20 May 1940 in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687 1940/98.
142. J. Grew/Sir R. Craigie conversation 31 May 1940 in Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Ms Am 1687/3 Vol.5. See also W. Heinrichs, op.cit. p.309. On the growing German pressure on Japan see C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact' pp.204-205,
143. PRO F0371/24652 F3455/5/10 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 16 May 1940.
144. PRO F0371/24652 F3889/5/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 24 June 1940.
145. See also C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact' p.202, where he writes '... the simultaneous pursuit of the New Order and the improvement of relations with Britain and the United States inevitably involved Arita's diplomacy in self-contradiction.'

CHAPTER SIX

'OUR PRESENT HUMILIATING POSITION'

'For our present humiliating position we have to thank our own fatuous F[ar] E[astern] policy of the past 20 years and those who refused to listen to the advice and warnings of those who knew and understood Japan.'

Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry 24 June 1940¹

The direct origins of the tumultuous crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations, which swept away the limited achievements of Britain's policy of conciliation in the summer of 1940, lay in the events in Europe. By June Germany had emerged victorious, with France, Holland and Belgium all defeated, and Britain apparently as the next target. The capitulation of the Dutch and the French and the seemingly inevitable surrender of Britain, whose position was further worsened by the Italian entry into the war, radically changed the balance of power in South East Asia, where their colonies lay virtually unprotected. The Yonai Cabinet, which already faced heavy domestic pressures due to Konoe's reemergence as a potential Prime Minister, was now faced with even more vociferous braying from the Army and the press that Japan should not 'miss the bus' in the Far East, and should seek closer relations with the Axis powers. Arita was therefore forced to adapt his foreign policy to the new conditions, and to strive to achieve his goals of ending the war in China and keeping South East Asia neutral in a more strident fashion than before.²

The change in Japanese policies manifested itself even before the signing of the Tientsin Agreement, when on 11 June 1940 Craigie was summoned to the Gaimushō to be told by the Vice-Minister Tani that, due to the Italian entry into the war, Japan recommended that Britain should withdraw its remaining gunboats and troops from China in order to avoid any clashes with the Italians.³ However, before talks could begin over this issue, the Japanese Army, with a total disregard for diplomatic channels, increased the stakes by unilaterally pushing forward another series of demands. On

19 June Major-General Tsuchihashi Yūichi, the Director of Military Intelligence, told Colonel Bernard Mullaly, Piggott's replacement as Military Attaché, in an abrasive interview-

'Situation is critical and there is now nothing to stop Japan from seizing either French Indo-China, Netherlands East Indies or Hong Kong or all of them ... United States are in no condition to prevent Japan from taking whatever action she likes in Western Pacific. Great Britain now has her last chance and if she takes it positive action by Japan may be averted. Japan's demands are:

- (1) Immediate closing of Burmese frontier with China;
- (2) Immediate closing of Hong Kong frontier;
- (3) Immediate withdrawal of British troops from Shanghai.

Instant and decisive compliance with these demands is the only thing that may yet avert a declaration of war by Japan against Britain.'⁴

These demands had been agreed to by Arita at a Four Minister Conference the previous day, but the Gaimushō plan had been to present them to the British by stressing that if Britain desired improved relations with Japan then it was necessary for the former to cut its links with China rather than using the directly confrontational bluster favoured by the Army. However, once the precedent had been set all the Gaimushō could do was reiterate the demands to Craigie on 24 June.⁵

The Army's actions left Shigemitsu in London in the awkward position of having to clarify the situation to the British. It appears from both the contemporary records and his memoirs that he genuinely deprecated the brutally frank threats of the Army; Halifax certainly took away this impression from the 21 July talk when he noted-

'His Excellency, who was evidently taken aback by the situation with which he was confronted, endeavoured to minimise its importance... [and] went on to say that the extremists in Japan felt they had a fundamental cause of complaint in our attitude towards China. They were simple minded people, and felt they that as they were neutral to us as well as to Germany in the European war, we should equally be neutral towards their war.'⁶

In further conversations that the Ambassador held with Butler over the next few days he reinforced this impression, and at one point the latter recorded Shigemitsu as going so far as to say-

"I cannot speak for my sovereign, but I think you are underestimating the power of the Emperor. I feel that he would never give consent to the military coming to a direct collision with the British; whatever we may do, I do not think we will attack you at Hong Kong." He then said that Japanese military spokesmen had spoken unwisely and wrongly in putting forward the Japanese proposal originally.⁷

This disapproval of the manner of the Army's delivery did not, however, mean that Shigemitsu looked unfavourably upon the demand to close the Burma Road itself. Such a policy suited his conviction that Britain should be discouraged from taking a political role in China but rather be limited to an economic stake. In this light a close study of Shigemitsu's talks with the Foreign Office reveals a different picture, illuminating not his protestations of disapproval towards the Army's actions, but the subtle pressure he put on the British to agree to the Japanese demands. In talk after talk, under orders from Tokyo, Shigemitsu concentrated on stressing the advantages that could be gained from meeting Japan over the Burma Road in terms of a general improvement in relations. On 4 July he stated to Butler reassuringly-

'... Sir Robert Craigie with all his diplomatic skill and ability could discuss the question of the Burma Road and possible solutions with considerable likelihood of success.'⁸

As well as emphasising the advantages he also used the weapon of warning that a refusal could weaken the Yonai government and play into the hands of the hotheads who desired a war. This was a familiar Japanese tactic: to pressure a state into making concessions by implying that not to do so could lead to the Army attempting its own unilateral solution, a device which Shigemitsu had previously used during the Manchurian crisis.⁹

Shigemitsu's hope that Britain could be persuaded to readjust its policy towards China was not, however, the only advantage that he saw as arising from the decline of European power in the East, he was also convinced that Japan should benefit from the power vacuum that had opened up in South East Asia by increasing its political and economic influence in the region. On 19 June, in a telegram to Arita, the Ambassador noted-

'... it is most important for our foreign policy to state that Japan is

gravely concerned with the stability of East Asia (including South Seas), and is resolved that the spread of European war must be prevented, and is taking policy to exclude the conditions destructive to the said stability and also to prevent those who may be destructive, especially to make clear that Japan will not tolerate to leave Orientals (*sic*) and East Asian districts as the plantation and object of trade to be exploited by capitalism of Europe and I think it is our best chance to elucidate our fundamental policy relating to East Asia and Orientals today. ... If the districts of East Asia and South Sea, which is so-called living area ('Lebensraum') should be owned by a certain great power, Japan would be driven to take the risk of war with that country and the stability of East Asia would be deteriorated. Therefore I think it is of necessity to take courage to prevent it today. I believe that Germany and Italy will fully understand this matter. ... As it is evident that the influence of Europe to Orient will be remarkable (*sic*) reduced after the war, Japan had better, I presume, take advantage of this opportunity to establish our position in East Asia firmly.'¹⁰

Shigemitsu's espousal of the need for Japanese dominance over the Greater East Asian region was very close to the sentiments expressed by Arita in his 'Monroe Doctrine for East Asia' speech of 29 June. In the latter the Foreign Minister declared that Japan was responsible for the security of East Asia and the South West Pacific and sought stability and co-existence with these regions; a declaration which at the very least showed Japan's interest in 'indirect empire'.¹¹ Shigemitsu's support of this policy is interesting in that it challenges two key aspects of the self-image that he was later to develop in 'Japan and Her Destiny'. First, it clashes with the impression that Shigemitsu was consistently Anglophile, as the policy he proposed was clearly one designed to undermine Britain's role in the region and one that would never be acceptable to the Foreign Office. Second, it jars with his claim that he was a Pan-Asianist. For example, Shigemitsu stated in his memoirs-

'...if Japan were to become a true leader, it was not right that she should follow in the footsteps of imperialism. Leadership was not to be acquired by antagonizing the Asians. Only if she became their trusted friend would they accept Japan as a guide.'¹²

There is, however, in the telegram more than a hint of an imposed Japanese leadership for the region rather than leadership by request.

Japan's growing interest in the future of South East Asia was not just displayed in Arita's 29 June speech, but was also evident in the growing Japanese pressure on the Netherlands East Indies to make economic concessions and in the demands on the new French regime at Vichy to close the Indochina/Yunnan border and allow it to be patrolled by Japanese Army units. It was in this increasingly threatening environment that Britain had to decide whether or not to accede to Japanese demands and close the Burma Road. In Tokyo, Craigie was aware of and frightened by Japan's renewed belligerency and the signs of a renewed interest in alignment with the Axis and in a long telegram on 22 June, which recalled his previous tirade of 18 June 1939, he implored the Foreign Office to undertake a fundamental change in its East Asian policy in order to parry this challenge-

'I take it for granted that, short of any dishonourable yielding on principle, it is the policy of His Majesty's Government that everything possible should be done to prevent Japan from being drawn into the war on the side of her former Axis partners, but I am doubtful whether this can be achieved without the adoption of some more positive methods than have been adopted hitherto. In wider aspects of policy we have been content to rely on the United States which has favoured a purely negative policy designed so as to wear down Japanese resistance that the army in Japan would be deposed from its paramount position. Whatever merit there may have been in this policy before the French collapse it is now certainly ineffective; long before it could produce results the whole face of things in the Far East may be changed by that very army at which the United States seeks to strike with such puny weapons.'¹³

Craigie proceeded then to espouse his plan to win over Japan, which consisted of the presentation to the Japanese government by Britain and America of a draft understanding, which he envisaged as including-

'(a) joint assistance to Japan in bringing about a settlement with the Chinese Government on the basis of Japan's restoration of China's independence and integrity.

- (b) Japan formally to undertake to remain neutral in the European War and to respect full territorial integrity not only of the Netherlands East Indies but also of British and French and American possessions in the Pacific so long as the status quo of these territories is preserved.
- (c) United States and members of British Commonwealth to give Japan all financial and economic assistance and facilities in their power both now and during post-war reconstruction period.
- (d) Allied Governments to receive full guarantees against re-export to enemy countries.
- (e) Question of future settlements and concessions in China to be left in abeyance until the restoration of peace in Europe and China.'¹⁴

This was certainly a radical and wide-ranging series of propositions designed as an effort to lay the foundations for a complete post-war settlement rather than an attempt to buy a temporary understanding. Craigie was, of course, not unaware of the problems arising from such a policy; he stated that he realized that any such proposals as the above would have to be seen as originating from Japan rather than the West, in order to avoid the accusation of appeasement, and recognised that this was not a policy which Britain could pursue alone, allowing the Americans to remain on the sidelines raining down criticism. Craigie felt, however, that the only alternative, if the United States was not willing to co-operate, was for Britain to put up a rearguard action in the Far East and hope that war could somehow be avoided. He concluded-

'To become involved in a war with Japan without the fullest assurance of active American assistance would be suicidal and I am assuming that His Majesty's Government are not prepared to take even the slightest risk of this in the present circumstances.'¹⁵

On 25 June, following a formal request from Tani that the Japanese demands be met so as to avoid an 'unforeseen dispute' occurring, Craigie dealt more specifically with the issue of the Burma Road and concluded that, as there was only 'one chance in ten' of American support, Britain should accede to the Japanese demand.¹⁶ He did not predict any immediate declaration of war, but postulated that the Japanese response to a negative reply from Britain might be to blockade Hong Kong and/or to bomb the Burma Road from air-bases in South China, a process which could gain its own momentum and

spiral into open conflict. He also felt that for Britain to comply with the Japanese request would help the position of the moderates, for it would show that Britain was willing to come to terms with Japan, while to keep the Burma Road open would favour the pro-Axis extremists who were looking for an excuse to plunge Japan into war with Britain; thus mirroring the arguments used by Shigemitsu. Craigie admitted that to give way might only lead to further demands being made, but deflected this criticism of his views by stating that to pursue a more positive policy as he had outlined on 22 June would make any new demands unnecessary. He thus ended his recommendations with the conclusion-

'I therefore have no doubt in my own mind that we should agree to this Japanese request and do so promptly i.e. before some incident occurs which renders acceptance more difficult.'¹⁷

For the Foreign Office a new crisis in East Asia could not have come at a worse time as Britain was at its lowest ebb in the war with Germany. The first priority before any decision could be made about how to react to the Japanese demands was to discover what support could be elicited from the United States. On 25 June a telegram was sent to Lord Lothian asking him to see Cordell Hull and to enquire as to what action Washington was willing to take, and to also raise the issue of a general settlement on the lines that Craigie had already suggested, and to ask if the Americans would be willing to participate in such an effort.¹⁸ On 28 June Lothian sent back his record of his subsequent conversation with Hull, where the latter stated that Britain should only give way over the Burma Road under *force majeure* and that there could be no guarantee of support from the United States. Over the peace issue Hull was equally non-committal, stating that though he did not object to the idea, Britain should not expect a joint or parallel effort by the United States.¹⁹ The implication was clear, and Craigie was proved to be right, yet again Britain was to be left to fend for itself in East Asia. Lothian himself, however, noted his belief that Craigie's ideas were worth looking into, particularly as he believed that the United States would not go to war in the Pacific on behalf of Britain or in fact for anything West of Hawaii.²⁰

One might expect from the above that the Foreign Office faced with the

threat of war in East Asia with no chance of American support and a desperate position in Europe would agree to Craigie's pleadings for a settlement. This however was not to be the case; influenced by the views of Clark Kerr and Dr Quo, the Chinese Ambassador in London, the Foreign Office strongly opposed any closure of the Burma Road on the grounds that it would irreparably damage Chinese morale.²¹ This was an important consideration, as the consequence of such an effect could be either to drive Chiang Kai-shek into the hands of the Soviet Union or force him to make peace with the Japanese on unfavourable terms, thus freeing the Japanese Army to pursue a policy of southern expansion. The Far Eastern Department also argued that there was a danger that, despite the United States' unwillingness to help Britain, the sacrifice of principle involved in closing the Burma Road would alienate the Americans, which would have repercussions not only in the Pacific but also in Europe. Another factor that influenced the Department in their eventual decision was their opinion of Craigie. As previously in the Tientsin crisis, and to an extent over the *Asama Maru*, the Department felt that Craigie had failed to look below the surface of Japanese blustering, a view summed up by Sir John Brenan when he wrote-

'... our Ambassador in Tokyo has been greatly influenced in his political judgement by Japanese threats and promises, and has shown very little disposition to assess them dispassionately as part of an obvious technique for securing political results at the least possible cost.'²²

In other words Craigie had failed to realize that the Japanese, with their forces too over-stretched by the war in China to contemplate risking a war with Britain, were bluffing.

The opinions of the Department were put together in a memorandum for Lord Halifax to present to the War Cabinet on 29 June.²³ The paper concluded that Britain should not close the Burma Road, but make the small concession of offering to keep trade to the 1939 level of 21,965 tons per annum, and that over Hong Kong, it should be pointed out to the Japanese that, as the border was already closed due to the Japanese occupation of Kwangtung province, the demand for an end to supplies for China was irrelevant. The danger of a completely negative reply to Japanese claims was, however, recognised and it was therefore suggested that as a conciliatory measure

the two brigades of troops stationed in Shanghai should be withdrawn and sent to Singapore. Finally, in line with Craigie's suggestion, it was decided that a comprehensive peace settlement in the Far East should be sought. On 1 July the War Cabinet approved the Foreign Office's recommendations, although New Zealand and Australia had to be consulted before the Japanese could officially be told of the British decision.²⁴

On 2 July Craigie was told of the War Cabinet's decision which, not surprisingly, provoked an immediate reply. The tone of his response on 3 July was couched in apocalyptic terms-

'... the general argument for refusal appears to rest on the assumption that Japan is incapable of carrying out to the full her desires in East Asia so long as Chiang Kai-shek continues to resist, any such assumption I believe to be entirely mistaken.'²⁵

Craigie went on to state that he believed that the chances of war if the Japanese request was refused were over 50%, that if war did take place Britain would in essence not be fighting for her own interests but for China's, and also that he feared Germany was going to use the crisis to influence Japan to enter the war against Britain. Craigie ended the telegram by admitting how distressing the situation was for him-

'It is most repugnant for me to have to urge compliance with this Japanese request, but I do so in the hope and belief that when we have defeated Germany we and the United States will be able to teach Japan a lesson which she will never forget. To precipitate the crisis unnecessarily at this moment will in my opinion mean jeopardizing the prospect of that ultimate re-establishment of a strong British position in the Far East on which I pin all my hopes.'²⁶

On the next day four more telegrams arrived from Craigie, all warning that the threat of an inexorable slide into war was very real.²⁷ In these tirades he used various arguments; he stated in one telegram, in contrast to the view he expressed on 3 July that Japan could be punished in the future, that he still believed a Sino-Japanese settlement was possible, and that in the wake of such an agreement Anglo-Japanese relations would improve, but that failure to close the Burma Road would endanger any such progress.²⁸ The Foreign Office was not impressed by this diplomatic

barrage, and when on 6 July Craigie himself noted that for him to propose at one stage future war against Japan and at another to suggest a future improvement in relations may appear inconsistent, Denning minuted-

'It is at least interesting that the "apparent inconsistencies" have been noted by Sir R. Craigie himself. The fact is that he employs any argument which occurs to him at the moment to prove his case.'²⁹

In addition to the telegrams from Craigie, the Foreign Office was also subjected to pressure for acceptance of the Japanese demands from reports sent by Colonel Mullaly to the War Office, which were at Craigie's request subsequently forwarded to the Department. This form of persuasion was seen as 'distinctly improper', as the Military Attache was supposed to desist from interfering in political matters, and Mullaly's efforts only earned him the type of comments that had previously been reserved for Piggott.³⁰

Although not impressing the Foreign Office, Craigie and Mullaly's telegrams did have an effect on the Chiefs of Staff and the service departments who were decidedly uneasy about the way the Far Eastern situation was developing. The attention of the Services was naturally at this stage centred on the situation in western Europe and, in particular, on Britain's prospects of survival without France as an ally, and they were obviously loathe to see a crisis emerging in the East. As early as 25 June, Admiral Godfrey, the Director of Naval Intelligence, noted-

'It is vital for us not to add the Japanese to our list of enemies. We have got to win this war in Europe and it seems obvious that all we can do in the East is to save what we can of our possessions and prestige and, if it is in any way possible, improve our relations with Japan.'³¹

The Chiefs of Staff, however, only decided to intervene directly in the debate on 3 July, when there arose the very real fear, after the Royal Navy's bombardment of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir on that day, that the Vichy regime might side with Germany. As Dill stated at the Chiefs of Staff meeting on the morning of 4 July-

'... the arguments against taking any action which would involve us in war with Japan had become more cogent in the light of the events of the past twenty-four hours, which pointed to the possibility that we might find ourselves at war with France.'³²

Against this strategic background the Foreign Office's arguments and their dedication to principles and insistence that Britain could not afford to alienate the United States seemed irrelevant and dangerous. On 4 July Vice-Admiral Tom Phillips, the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, minuted- 'The Foreign Office are again throwing their weight about in the Far East, like they did last year before the Tientsin incident, but this time we have even less to throw about than we had then. ... We know quite well that we cannot take on Japan in addition to the rest of the world at the present time, and every sign goes to show that the United States will not back a strong policy in the Far East by force.'³³

In contrast to the Foreign Office line Craigie's proposals seemed to be the voice of common sense, not only because he warned of the potential crisis that could ensue from British intransigence, but also because he appeared to offer in his peace plan a long term solution to the East Asian problem. To the over-stretched British military such suggestions were very welcome, as it was obvious that the neutralization of East Asia would allow more of Britain's military power to be directed against Germany and Italy. The feeling of the Services was aptly summed up in a memorandum for the Chiefs of Staff by the Joint Planning Committee on 29 June which noted-

'We should make it clear to Chiang Kai-shek that, in our present situation, the best help we can give him would be to act as an intermediary in arranging peace terms between him and the Japanese Government. We think that he would appreciate the honesty of our purpose.'³⁴

Influenced by these views on 4 July the Chiefs of Staff prepared a memorandum for the War Cabinet in which they outlined their fears. It stated plainly that there was no way that Britain could risk a war in the Far East at the present time, that there was no fleet available to be sent to Singapore, and that war would mean the diversion of Australian and New Zealand troops to South-East Asia ~~rather than~~ ^{from} the Middle East, where they were urgently needed to bolster Egypt against Italian attack. The Chiefs of Staff concluded by saying they considered a peace settlement in the Far East must be reached as soon as possible.³⁵ This memorandum was not greeted with much enthusiasm in the Foreign Office, where Denning, seemingly oblivious to the effect that the severity of Britain's military position had on the Chiefs of Staff, blamed their cautious line on Craigie's

unsubstantiated warnings-

'... the alarming tone of his telegrams, and the forceful manner in which he has expounded his views, appear to have convinced the Chiefs of Staff as well as many others that we are in very grave danger of total war.'³⁶

In the War Cabinet meeting of 5 July Halifax, influenced by the Department's and Cadogan's opposition to caving in to the Japanese demands, clung to the idea that Britain should refuse to close the Burma Road and only agree to set a ceiling on the amount of goods.³⁷ This plan for a limited compromise was, however, undermined when Leo Amery, the Secretary of State for India and Burma, dismissed the idea which had been raised at the previous meeting of a strict rationing of supplies as hopelessly impracticable. This left Halifax, with Amery's backing, supporting a line of no concessions at all over the Burma Road, which contrasted sharply with the warnings from Craigie and the Chiefs of Staff. The deadlock was broken by Churchill who stressed that he felt the United States ought to take more of the strain in the Far East, but as it was obvious that this was not possible, Britain would have to make a unilateral decision. The minutes of the meeting then record Churchill as stating simply that-

'In the present state of affairs he did not think that we ought to incur Japanese hostility for reasons mainly of prestige.'³⁸

The War Cabinet decided in the light of these remarks that the best policy was to let Craigie try to find a compromise over the Burma Road issue, while gaining time and giving away as little as possible. In the last resort it was agreed, however, that he was not to surrender any British rights, but only to give way under *force majeure*. The limitations on Craigie's freedom of action demonstrated that this was a decision, which, although heavily influenced by Craigie's warnings of war, was not designed as an acceptance of the 'New Order in East Asia' or as a means of bolstering the position of the Japanese moderates. It was almost wholly the result of the singularly dire strategic position of Britain in July 1940 and was seen only as a temporary measure to allow Britain a breathing space in East Asia.

The War Cabinet's orders for Craigie to find a compromise reached him on 7 July and he immediately proceeded to engage in talks with Arita, who showed

interest in the British offer of good offices to seek a peace settlement with China but was displeased that Britain still refused to close the Burma Road.³⁹ On 9 July Craigie reported to the Foreign Office that Arita felt talks could only last a week and that after that time the situation would again become menacing. Craigie was not encouraged by Arita's attitude, but he did make his own suggestion for a new negotiating position-

'Would you be prepared to consider following compromise: Agreement on our part to suspend transit of war material through Burma Road for a period of three months (i.e. during rainy season) on the understanding that during this time special efforts will be made to bring about ... "just and equitable peace" in Far East ... Should these efforts fail, His Majesty's Government to remain free to permit transit trade to be resumed at the end of three months period.'⁴⁰

Craigie saw many advantages in this suggestion: it allowed Britain and the United States to push for a Sino-Japanese settlement; the actual loss of material to China would be negligible, as the Burma Road was largely impassable during the rainy season; and lastly Britain could very well be in a better international position by October and therefore better able to resist Japanese demands to extend the agreement.

On 10 July Halifax presented Craigie's proposal to the War Cabinet, who, with the added incentive of Australian pressure for a more realistic policy to be pursued in the Far East, decided to approve negotiations on these lines.⁴¹ On 12 July Craigie presented the British terms to Arita who agreed to them in principle. The task then was to tackle details such as which goods were to be stopped, the rights of inspection of the Japanese Consul-General at Rangoon to ensure that Britain was complying fully, and Arita's initial desire to keep the promise to pursue a peace settlement separate from the actual Burma Road Agreement. Over the next few days progress was made on the minutiae of the Agreement, but Craigie's work was threatened on 16 July when the Yonai Cabinet fell from power due to the resignation of the Army Minister General Hata Shunroku. It had been clear for some time that the Government had been losing its grip on power and that the next Cabinet would be considerably more extreme with Prince Konoe Fumimaro once again as Prime Minister and possibly the fiercely pro-Axis Shiratori replacing Arita as Foreign Minister.⁴² In such a situation

Craigie decided to press for the signing of the Agreement as soon as possible in order to avoid the reopening of the issues with a new government. With War Cabinet permission, on 17 July Craigie and Arita signed the Burma Road Agreement, which banned the transport of war materials including petrol to China until 18 October.⁴³

News of the Agreement was greeted at home and abroad with cries of dismay that the British Government had appeased Japan and in particular there was strong criticism in the United States and China. In the former the closure of the Road led Hull to declare that the British action constituted 'unwarranted interpositions of obstacles to world trade', although he later declared that the criticism had been directed against Japan for pressuring Britain into closure.⁴⁴ This comment was not well received in British official circles, who knew that an important motive behind the agreement with Japan had been the lack of American support.⁴⁵ This resentment seems to have amused Craigie who in a letter to Viscount Simon, the Lord Chancellor, noted-

'... the Americans are for ever inciting us to assume an attitude of utmost firmness towards Japan, only to tell us, when the inevitable crisis comes, that they are of course not in a position to use force. I have been aware of this tendency from the start but the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office have been less wary - or perhaps less well-acquainted with American methods - than I have been.'⁴⁶

In China criticism of the agreement was chiefly levelled at the peace initiative and it was believed that the Burma Road had been closed as a direct means of pressuring the Kuomintang to make peace. In Britain too, much of the alarm expressed ⁱⁿ Parliament and in the press was directed at the idea of a peace settlement, which was ironic because as Sterndale Bennett, the head of the Far Eastern Department, noted this part of the agreement had only been put in to justify the closure, which otherwise appeared as a completely unprincipled action.⁴⁷

The fact that the War Cabinet and the Foreign Office viewed the issue of peace proposals as a cover showed clearly that the decision to appease Japan had not been taken with the intention of leading to a permanent readjustment of Britain's position in the Far East. Churchill himself,

wrote to Lord Halifax on 17 July-

'I have never liked the idea of our trying to make a peace between Japan and China. I am sure that all this talk of a "just and equitable peace" is moonshine and known to be so. I think it is a great pity to use it. It might act as some palliation for the action which has been forced upon us by the plight in which we lie. I have yielded to it but it is certainly not in our interests that China and Japan should end their quarrel, and I am delighted that Chiang Kai-shek should rest his objections to our conduct so largely upon our references to peace.'⁴⁸

The majority of Foreign Office opinion concurred with this view and felt that Britain's priority for the next three months was to build up the defences in the Far East so that Britain could resist Japanese pressure for an extension in October.

The idea of investigating the possibilities of a peace settlement did, however, still have supporters in the shape of the Chiefs of Staff, R.A. Butler, Lord Lothian, and, of course, Sir Robert Craigie. On 14 July the latter expanded on his original proposals of 24 June and began by stating-
'In general I agree with the underlying ideas; Powers having possessions in East Asia should be prepared to make concessions to Japan as a means of purchasing a generous peace for China.'⁴⁹

He then outlined what he saw as the grievances which Japan would raise in any general talks on East Asia which included the rejection of the racial equality clause in the League of Nations Covenant, the United States' Immigration Act of 1924, the Imperial Preference policy decided at the Ottawa Conference of 1932, and the general refusal of credits to Japan. He proceeded to declare that the most important measure the West could take was to make trade concessions, particularly in the area of access to raw materials, which he held to be more vital to Japan than territorial aggrandizement. Again Craigie stressed that if there was to be any meaningful progress over these issues then it was vitally necessary for the Foreign Office to get in touch directly with the Americans so that joint proposals could be drawn up.

The Far Eastern Department's reaction to these proposals was to treat them with great caution as they believed that discussion of peace terms would

only inflame American indignation at Britain's lack of principles. This inactivity and unwillingness to approach Washington soon came to the notice of Butler who in exasperation minuted on 25 July his conviction that-
'... a much more frank exchange of views must be held with the U.S.A. We cannot go on with this drawing room diplomacy.... We may well go to the grave chanting that we must be polite to the Americans, but we shan't save our civilization like this.'⁵⁰

Under this pressure the Department finally put its views on paper, and on 10 August sent a letter and memorandum based on Craigie's views to related government departments in order to elicit their attitudes to a peace settlement.⁵¹ The answers to the Department's paper and Craigie's suggestions were not enthusiastic. The Dominions Office explained that Australia and New Zealand would never agree to make concessions over immigration, and the Colonial Office stated that an influx of cheap exports from Japan would only succeed in damaging the fragile economies of the colonies.⁵² More important, the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Economic Warfare pointed out, as they had done on previous occasions, that to make any trade concessions to Japan would only result in the diversion of resources away from Britain, which would damage the war effort against Germany with no guarantee that Japan would be pacified.⁵³ Craigie's peace initiative was, however, not hindered only by opposition within Whitehall, it was also compromised by the continuing crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations.

The chances of Japan collaborating in a general peace for East Asia had been fairly slim even under the Yonai administration but the appearance of the Kono Cabinet on 22 July with General Tōjō Hideki as Army Minister and Matsuoka Yōsuke as Foreign Minister, made any co-operation even less likely. The only comfort that Britain could take was that at least Shiratori had not been appointed as this would have been a clear signal that Japan was preparing to enter closer relations with the Axis powers. The choice of Matsuoka was more ambiguous. The latter, who, since leading the walkout of the Japanese delegation from the League of Nations Assembly in February 1933 had gone on to become the chairman of the South Manchurian Railway, was an ardent nationalist, who it could be assumed would pursue only policies that reflected Japan's self-interest.⁵⁴

Shigemitsu, who was a close acquaintance of Matsuoka, was encouraged by his appointment, and in a conversation with Butler on 19 July the latter reported the Ambassador as stating that-

'M. Matsuoka would be a very good Minister for Foreign Affairs. He, Shigemitsu, was closer to M. Matsuoka than any other member of the Japanese Foreign Office, and had worked with him in the past. Japan's new Minister for Foreign Affairs had the advantage of appreciating the economic importance of the United States of America and Great Britain to Japan.'⁵⁵ Craigie was initially more cautious about welcoming the appointment and noted on 22 July-

'New Foreign Minister is said to desire revenge for Japan's treatment at the hands of the League of Nations and for this reason, though anti-foreign, generally is more likely to be favourably disposed towards Germany than towards us as mainly responsible for the League's policy.'⁵⁶

On 26 July Craigie had his first interview with the new Foreign Minister, who said he felt that the British position in the Far East was diametrically opposed to the Japanese 'New Order in East Asia', but that he was for peaceful change. Craigie responded by informing Matsuoka that he felt that there were no insuperable problems in Anglo-Japanese relations, and stressed that Japan should base its policies on the assumption that Britain was going to win the war in Europe. It was predominantly a friendly meeting, and Craigie felt afterwards that Matsuoka's view that no agreement could be reached with Britain might have been shaken.⁵⁷

However, the hopes of Craigie and Shigemitsu were soon shown to be misplaced by a series of Japanese actions in late July and August which clearly demonstrated the new administration's desire to increase the pressure on the Western European colonial powers. Within days of taking power, the Konoe government went a considerable step further than even Yonai had envisaged in his 29 June speech, by declaring on 1 August in a press release, its intention to set up a Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere which would include the Netherlands East Indies and French Indochina.⁵⁸ At the same time rumours abounded that the Japanese were planning an economic mission to go to Batavia to press the Dutch into further concessions over commodity quotas for Japan. In Indo-China the pressure was even more palpable; already the French Governor-General,

General Catroux

~~Admiral Jean Decoux~~, had agreed on 20 June to close the border with China, but in early August the stakes were raised when Japan demanded free passage for her troops through Tonkin province and the use of air-bases around Hanoi.⁵⁹

This expansion of Japanese influence into South East Asia was a matter of concern for Shigemitsu. It might seem logical to conclude, considering the position that Shigemitsu had taken in his 19 June telegram, that he would support Matsuoka's efforts in early August; this, however, ignores the fact that, just as Japanese circumstances had changed, so had the situation in the West. During June and July 1940 when it was unclear whether Britain would or could continue the fight against Germany the United States held back from offering support to the Churchill government, and it had made sense in such a situation for Japan to pressure Britain into concessions in the East. By late July, however, Washington's sympathies towards London became more pronounced largely as a result of Britain's clear determination to fight on in Europe. As part of this tendency Morgenthau, the Secretary of the Treasury, and other hawkish colleagues in the Cabinet persuaded Roosevelt on 25 July of the need to restrain Japan from applying further pressure on Britain by banning the export of high quality scrap iron and high octane aviation fuel.⁶⁰ To Shigemitsu this was an important change and a symptom that eventually America would openly side with Britain against Germany and that this combination would eventually lead to the latter's defeat.

Such an assessment had important implications for Japan's policy in East Asia and in particular was relevant to the debate between the Army and Navy about whether or not Britain and the United States should be treated as inseparable. Shigemitsu's view on this subject was that it depended on the circumstances, and in a long telegram to Matsuoka on 5 August he observed- 'The policies of Britain and the US are not joint but parallel. So far these parallel policies have not necessarily been in accord in aim or conduct. That depends upon our attitude. If we carry out our Greater East Asian policy with a responsible, fair and square attitude, we may properly expect Anglo-American obstacles to be removed in the natural course of events. As to our attitude toward Britain and America, we need to consider

fully the actual benefits, while considering at the same time our principles and position.'⁶¹

From this standpoint he went on to warn that there were those in the West, and in particular on the left, who were keen to draw Japan into a confrontation with Britain and the United States, and that this too showed the need for caution. He concluded-

'In short, though the main object of our policy is to establish a powerful political and economic position in Greater East Asia, I believe that to show a liberal-minded attitude towards settling the China problem expresses, not weakness, but strength on our part. In view of our present high international position, it would be improper for us to be victimized by other countries... I believe it to be the cardinal principle of diplomacy to assert what our country requires and believes and at the same time to prevent untoward losses in complicated diplomatic relations and to devise all available means towards every country alike within the limits of their personal utility. Needless to say, it is necessary to sweeten our relations with the Soviet Union and also to proceed with scrupulous consideration and prudence in our relations with Britain.'⁶²

These views did not mean that Shigemitsu had abandoned his hope that Japan could build up its influence in South East Asia, but it did indicate that he was concerned about how this aim should be achieved. The basis of his policy was that if Japan proceeded slowly in its expansion and concentrated its pressure on the smaller powers such as France and Holland then the West would be willing to acquiesce, but that to advance on all fronts and to directly threaten Anglo-American interests would lead to confrontation. This was a cautious policy that was out of step with thinking in Japan in the late summer of 1940, and contrasted sharply with the decision made at a Liaison Conference on 27 July to pursue expansion in South East Asia even at the cost of war with Britain.⁶³

The first crisis caused by the new administration came on 27 July when a British subject was arrested in Japan, followed the next day by the detention of seven others. By 1 August fourteen Britons were in custody, all well respected members of the British community, some even holding the position of Honorary Consul for other countries such as Sweden and Greece.

The orders for these arrests originated with the Military Police, the Kempeitai, and may have been directed at curtailing the activities of the British Secret Intelligence Service's (SIS) harbour-watchers who reported on the movements of Japanese and German shipping.⁶⁴ The situation was made worse on 29 July with the news that the first man to be arrested, Melville Cox, the man who had replaced Captain Malcolm Kennedy as Reuters correspondent in Tokyo, had fallen to his death from a third floor window while in custody.⁶⁵ The first reaction was to suspect foul play, but it soon became clear that Cox had committed suicide, although it was certain that this had been brought about by the terrible conditions in which he been kept and the incessant questioning to which he had been subjected. The situation caused Kennedy, who ^{was} by this stage working at Bletchley Park, to note in his diary on 29 July that he was very lucky not to have been in Japan himself and to reflect that-

'Whether or not he (Cox) and the others are guilty, the fact 10 have been arrested and other arrests are threatened wd. seem to indicate that Japan is either making, or considering, plans for action against this country and is therefore taking precautionary measures to prevent well-informed Englishmen from passing on information.'⁶⁶

The outrage felt in Britain at the arrests was even more intense than that over the Burma Road issue. The reason for this was that, as in the case of the Tientsin crisis, the incident involved the welfare of British nationals overseas, which was always a sensitive subject for the British public. Also calls for a tough British response were influenced by the fact that this crisis followed so shortly after Britain had appeased Japan in the hope of achieving an easing of tensions, and that now those concessions had been shown to be worthless. The result was that the arrests rather than the Burma Road issue can be seen as the point where Britain decided that the policy of conciliation towards Japan had run its course. The prevailing sentiment was summed up by Sir Alexander Cadogan when he noted in his diary-

'Those Jap savages have arrested 11 Britishers. One has committed suicide, we can't stand this ... we really *must* stand against them now. Surely even Winston will realise that we can't "appease" any further.'⁶⁷

The crucial effect of the arrests can be seen in that they did not simply influence opinion in London, but also deeply affected Sir Robert Craigie. He was outraged by these events and interpreted this move, which appeared at the same time as a series of anti-British tirades in the Japanese press, as a deliberate attempt to intimidate Britain. This impression was reinforced by information from a secret source that the order for the arrests had come directly from General Tōjō.⁶⁸ Craigie's initial reaction was to tell the Foreign Office on 30 July that there should be no attempt to settle the dispute by negotiation but instead to recommend that Britain should prepare to take reprisals against Japan; such as the progressive detention of Japanese in Britain, India and the South East Asian colonies, the ending of all negotiations in progress, economic reprisals, and a demand that a Colonel Suzuki, who everyone knew to be a Japanese intelligence officer, be asked to leave Hong Kong.⁶⁹ This change of attitude on Craigie's part came as a welcome sign to the Foreign Office and directly influenced the War Cabinet's decision on 1 August to arrest ten Japanese subjects who were already under suspicion of spying in retaliation.⁷⁰

Craigie's telegram, however, obviously raised the prospect of greater retaliation than simply tit-for-tat arrests, as he had basically called for the suspension of all efforts to conciliate Japan. This led in Whitehall to a reassessment of British policy which affected many areas of policy. The first important issue raised was that of the remaining British garrisons in China, who, like the British nationals in Japan, were a hostage to fortune should Anglo-Japanese relations deteriorate even further. This matter had been left in abeyance during the latter half of the debate over the Burma Road as there was no desire for Britain to be seen as too appeasing. The Far Eastern Department had felt all along that, as the number of troops concerned was so small a Japanese attack on the British garrisons could not be effectively resisted, they should be withdrawn no matter what the effect on Britain's prestige in China. The arrests caused the issue to be reopened, and the War Cabinet asked for Craigie's views on the matter to be ascertained. On 5 August Craigie wrote to London-

'As long as the late Government remained in power I had reason to hope

that they would not press this question of withdrawal of troops from Shanghai. The new Government will, however, press it and seek to make our ultimate compliance as humiliating as possible. From this point of view, the more quickly the withdrawal is effected the better.'⁷¹

This view, as in Craigie's response to the arrests, showed that his initial caution towards the new administration in Japan was very rapidly turning into deep pessimism. The War Cabinet concurred with Craigie's view, and the decision to withdraw the British troops was finally announced on 9 August.⁷²

The most important issue to be discussed, however, was Craigie's proposal that economic reprisals should be taken against Japan. On 14 August an inter-departmental meeting was held at the Foreign Office to discuss the introduction of unobtrusive measures and subsequently a letter was sent to each department asking them to draw up their own suggestions.⁷³ It was also deemed necessary to consult Craigie further about this issue and on 14 August a telegram was sent to Tokyo which asked for the Ambassador's judgement on the following scenario-

'If ... Japan is now determined to embark upon her programme of southward expansion ... then it seems that we are faced with two alternatives: either to stand idly by and watch the situation deteriorate until we ourselves are in serious danger, or to adopt some sort of reprisals short of war which would retard the pace of Japan's advance and so gain valuable time. In the latter event our object would be to try to convince Japan by example that aggression does not pay, and that, though she may gain control of territories, the resultant loss of goodwill ... will, on balance, only increase her economic difficulties even if it improves her strategic position.'⁷⁴

Craigie's response to this enquiry was very carefully balanced. The position he held, once the initial furore over the arrests had died down, was that Britain had to discontinue the policy of conciliation but at the same time not move into a position of outright hostility. This meant that he approved of a tough stand over current negotiations and agreements, and in this context he wrote to the Foreign Office on 18 August-

'...we should be entirely unhelpful in regard to any Japanese requests on

any subject now under consideration; also in regard to any request made.'⁷⁵
A practical example of this was that Craigie advised the Foreign Office to take a harsh line over the case of the Japanese ship the *Nagara Maru*, which it was revealed on 15 August was intending to leave Italy for Japan carrying goods which had not been cleared by the Ministry of Economic Warfare.⁷⁶

At the same time he realised that there were still strict limits to Britain's freedom of action so that in his answer on 26 August to the Foreign Office's telegram of 14 August he took a more cautious stance-
'... the type of demonstration of pressure mentioned in your telegram would merely convince extremists here that there is no time to lose in reinsuring themselves in the South against loss of resources in the West.'⁷⁷

He then went on to explain-

'I have always ventured to recommend the prosecution of a dual policy, by which is meant formulation of two alternatives, one disagreeable and the other potentially agreeable to Japan. But for such a policy to be successful we require at least the full co-operation of the Dominions and preferably also parallel action by the United States. Neither unfortunately seems assured to us and I regret that I can hold out no hope of success in the Far East along any other lines, until the war in Europe has turned definitely in our favour.'⁷⁸

Craigie's opposition to a purely coercive policy was influenced not merely by his conviction that Japan would react violently to economic sanctions, but also ~~was~~ by his belief that the wave of extreme nationalism sweeping Japan was due only to the momentarily enthralling prospects offered by the power vacuum in South East Asia, and that this phase would pass once Britain had shown that it could stand up to Germany, and the moderates would then be able to reassert their influence.⁷⁹

Craigie's advice was heeded during August and no moves were made to put pressure on Japan apart from the retaliatory arrests and the refusal to allow the *Nagara Maru* to carry a consignment of Italian mercury to Japan. There was, however, an issue that by the end of the month required immediate attention and that was to decide whether or not Britain should continue with the Burma Road Agreement. There was from the first a general

consensus in London that, as Japan had not honoured their part of the deal, Britain should reopen the Burma Road on 18 October, but that this should be done without any fanfares so that Japan would not have any grounds for taking retaliatory action. It was also agreed that in the interim British defences should be improved and that efforts should be made to ensure American support so that a reasonable deterrent to Japanese retaliation existed.⁸⁰ In Tokyo Craigie had come to more or less the same conclusion and on 30 August he reported that-

'It is devoutly to be hoped by that date [18 October] the situation will be such that we can refuse to renew our Agreement without incurring the risk of war or precipitating that southward advance by Japan which it is our purpose to avoid.'⁸¹

Craigie's approval for the re-opening of the Burma Road was greeted with satisfaction in the Department and was subsequently referred to in a Foreign Office memorandum to the War Cabinet on 2 September, which outlined the case for re-opening and influenced that body to agree to the preparation of a climate in East Asia favourable to an easy abrogation of the Burma Road Agreement.⁸²

Craigie was still very cautious about how Britain should go about terminating the Agreement and, though he recognised that the threat of Japanese military action had diminished, he held on to the view that it would be beneficial not to act until Japan had actually rejected the still awaited British peace proposals.⁸³ This was not a view that was accepted by the Foreign Office as it had become obvious to them on receiving the views of the other concerned departments that there was little desire to proceed with the drawing up of a peace package. This opposition to Craigie's soft line was also influenced by the appearance of a tougher American stance towards the 'aggressor' nations. Already on 3 September the Destroyer for Bases agreement had been signed and by mid-September Cordell Hull, in conversations with Lord Lothian, had begun to talk of further sanctions against Japan and a possible joint declaration with Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Holland to uphold the status quo south of the equator.⁸⁴ This new drive towards co-operation on Washington's part reversed one of the key factors that had forced Britain to sign the Burma

Road Agreement in the first place and suggested that a decision to re-open could be taken without too great a concern about Japanese retaliation.

Craigie was not enthusiastic about encouraging America to pursue this path and in a telegram of 19 September he raised important doubts about the wisdom of allowing a Japanese-American confrontation to develop, and warned-

'I [am] ... impressed by need to work out some concrete Anglo-American alternative to negative policy of a return to status quo which leaves Japan no hope of solving her economic problems or redressing her political grievances except through recourse to force. ... However gratifying may be increasing American disposition to collaborate with us in Far East, it remains as true as ever that actual American involvement in hostilities with Japan would in present circumstances mean a serious weakening of America's power to assist us in Europe.'⁸⁵

Over this issue Craigie came up against heavy opposition, not just from the Foreign Office, but also from Churchill himself and when in a further telegram he stated that it was only 'likely' that Britain would enter an American-Japanese war, it led to a sharp minute being sent to Lord Halifax from the Prime Minister-

'This shows the very serious misconception which has grown in Sir R. Craigie's mind about the consequences of the United States entering the war. He should surely be told forthwith that the entry of the United States into war either with Germany and Italy or with Japan is fully compatible with British interests.

That nothing in the munitions sphere can compare with the importance of the British Empire and the United States being co-belligerent, that if Japan attacked the United States without declaring war on us we should at once range ourselves at the side of the United States and declare war upon Japan.'⁸⁶

Here lay the germ of the argument that led to the eventual clash over Craigie's Final Report.

Craigie's belief in the need to avoid a hard line with Japan was, however, severely challenged in September by a series of events that showed that Japan was still seeking to expand its influence in South East Asia and that

it was veering ever closer to the Axis powers. The first cause of concern was on 11 September when it was officially announced by Japan that an economic mission led by Kobayashi Ichizō, the Minister for Commerce and Industry, had been sent to Batavia to discuss closer economic relations with the Dutch.⁸⁷ This was followed by even more serious developments in Indo-China, where Admiral Decoux's intransigence in the face of the ever growing Japanese demands led on 19 September to a virtual ultimatum from his opposite number, General Nishihara. On 22 September Decoux finally capitulated and signed an agreement in which 25,000 troops were to be allowed free passage into Tonkin province and four air-bases were allocated for use by the Japanese.⁸⁸ These two acts of intimidation towards European powers in South East Asia were followed on 27 September by the news of the signing in Berlin of a Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan. The Pact, which pledged that each signatory would go to war if either of the others was involved in a conflict with a third power, was obviously aimed at the United States and designed to deter Washington from entering either the European or East Asian conflicts by threatening America with a war on two fronts.⁸⁹

These developments naturally outraged Western opinion and led to consideration of possible means of retaliation. On 26 September as a response to the occupation of north Indo-China the United States expanded its embargo of goods to Japan by banning the export of all scrap metal and of all petroleum that could be processed into aviation fuel.⁹⁰ Craigie meanwhile recommended to the Foreign Office-

'Repudiation of the Burma agreement is most tempting immediate means of hitting back at Japanese for their Indo-China aggression. I presume however that before His Majesty's Government take any action in this sense they will make sure that it would suit book of the United States government to precipitate a crisis now rather than to await expiration in three weeks time.'⁹¹

The signing of the Tripartite Pact reinforced the view that Britain ought to repudiate the agreement and Craigie stressed that inaction on Britain's part would only help to create the impression that Britain had been frightened by the signing of the Pact.⁹²

In the Foreign Office Craigie's suggestion of repudiation won immediate support, but raised the problem of whether this might be too provocative. A solution was drawn up by R.A. Butler, who suggested that instead of repudiation Britain should announce an early decision not to renew the Burma Road Agreement. Halifax duly presented this plan to the War Cabinet on 3 October, where it was unanimously endorsed. The minutes of the meeting also noted-

'It was significant that Sir Robert Craigie, who three months ago had thought that Japan would declare war on us, if we did not close the Road, was now in favour of the termination of the agreement.'⁹³

The decision of the War Cabinet was communicated to Craigie, who on 8 October informed Matsuoka that the Burma Road would be reopened on 18 October.⁹⁴

The British were not the only people to be exasperated by Japan's aggression in the late summer of 1940; in the Japanese Embassy in London there was also consternation at Matsuoka's diplomacy. The first shock for Shigemitsu had been the arrests, which had occurred within a few days of his assurance to Butler that the new Foreign Minister would help to improve Anglo-Japanese relations. On 31 July he was called to the Foreign Office to explain Japan's actions to Lord Halifax, which he attempted to do as convincingly as possible, while hiding his own embarrassment. Shigemitsu's real feelings were, however, recorded in a letter from Arthur Edwardes to Butler on the same day, which recorded that in contrast to the official posture taken by the Ambassador-

'The inner atmosphere of the Embassy is very different and the word resignation has passed several lips. H.E. [Shigemitsu], however, refuses to accept defeat and he is determined to fight on and make everybody else fight on. His bitter comments to me on his Government are not such as he could make to the S. of S. [Halifax].'⁹⁵

This impression was supported the next day when Shigemitsu held an informal talk with Butler, in which the Ambassador was recorded as stating that-

'He was himself more embarrassed about them [the arrests] than he had liked to confess to you [Lord Halifax] officially.'⁹⁶

Despite the crisis over the arrests, Shigemitsu still felt that a general improvement in Anglo-Japanese relations was possible. His thinking about this subject was still naturally based on the idea of mutual concessions and in a talk with Butler on 9 August he declared-

'... he had always looked forward to a new order in the Far East in which the aims of America, Japan and ourselves coincided as far as possible but that just as we disliked Japan being in collusion with the enemies of Britain, so the Japanese objected to the British helping the enemy of Japan.'⁹⁷

To this end, while pressing Butler to cut aid to China, he also encouraged Matsuoka in the latter's intention to make a general review of relations with Britain.⁹⁸ Unfortunately this exercise resulted only in a further setback, and led Arthur Edwardes to note in one of his 'secret' letters to Butler that-

'H.E. has been somewhat disappointed last week by the receipt of a message summing up the result of Matsuoka's studies. The message states that the friendliness of our intentions has never been made clear or expressed on any occasion at the Foreign Office in Tokyo.'⁹⁹

This outcome seemed to block any official approach to the British Government and therefore Shigemitsu decided instead to work for an understanding unofficially through two members of Churchill's Government who were sympathetic towards the Japanese moderates. On 11 September at a private lunch at the Savoy, Shigemitsu held discussions with Lord Lloyd, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, and Lord Hankey, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The intermediary in this liaison was Major-General Piggott who was still doing his best to work for an Anglo-Japanese rapprochement. At this first meeting, which had the approval of Lord Halifax, there was only the most general of conversations, but at a second meeting on 25 September Shigemitsu put forward a concrete plan. His proposal was one that the Japanophile group in London had been espousing ever since April which was that a British Cabinet Minister should go to Japan as the head of a British Government Mission with the aim of improving relations and of countering the growing German influence in Tokyo. The two Cabinet ministers found the idea appealing and Lord Lloyd promised to consult Lord Halifax.¹⁰⁰

The events of the preceding days did not, however, promise a favourable response. On the same day as the second meeting Shigemitsu was called to the Foreign Office to explain the Japanese occupation of north Indo-China. Shigemitsu defended this action by stating that it did not portend any move towards British territory, but was a purely anti-Chinese manoeuvre.¹⁰¹ Also at this meeting the issue of Japanese-German relations was discussed and Shigemitsu was recorded as saying that-

'... he doubted whether the Japanese Government would at this stage take any final step in company with Germany, although they might have conversations defining their respective interests.'¹⁰²

This comment, as well as other evidence, suggests that the Ambassador knew nothing of the negotiations that led two days later to the signing of the Tripartite Pact in Berlin. Kase Toshikazu, the Second Secretary at the Japanese Embassy in London, noted later in his memoirs that-

'... it was but one day before the publication of the pact that our embassy was informed from Tokyo about the impending announcement. That was the first official information we received about the alliance. From London we had been persistently warning the home government against a hasty commitment to the Axis, stressing the need to cultivate ~~the~~^{the} cordial relations with the democratic powers. Such warnings were regarded by the Army as pure nuisances. That was perhaps why news of the alliance was kept from us until the last moment.'¹⁰³

The fact that news of the Pact was kept from Shigemitsu for so long is important for a number of reasons. First, it clearly shows the chaotic nature of Japanese diplomacy in this period that such a senior figure could be left in the dark about information that so seriously affected his post. Second, it implies that Shigemitsu's opinions on this subject were of little concern to Matsuoka, and that the Ambassador's previous comments on the warmth of his relationship with the Foreign Minister held little conviction. Third it sheds some light on the curious fact that Shigemitsu was one of the few ambassadors to escape the purge of the Gaimushō instigated by Matsuoka in August 1940. The reason why Shigemitsu survived is by no means clear and is made even more puzzling by the fact that his Counsellor Okamoto was a victim.¹⁰⁴ To some the Ambassador's continued presence in London can be explained by the fact that he was and always had

been a confirmed expansionist and was thus acceptable to Matsuoka and the Army. To others his survival was due to his being recognised by the Gaimushō as a very capable Ambassador and the realization that his removal would antagonise and perhaps frighten the British. This would certainly have been an accurate assessment of British sentiment as on 2 September, when news of the purge reached London, M.E. Denning of the Far Eastern Department noted-

'It would be a pity if Mr. Shigemitsu were to leave us because he is an able Ambassador. And we have quite enough evidence to show that he has served his country very well. ... the Ambassador, the Counsellor and Kase are the best type of Japanese.'¹⁰⁵

The lack of information that the Ambassador received from the Gaimushō over the Tripartite Pact, a clearly anti-British move, would tend to favour the idea that he was kept on largely because of his acceptability to London.

Although in his official capacity he had to defend and justify the signing of the Pact, it is clear from a number of sources that Shigemitsu deeply deplored the decision. In a number of private conversations with Western acquaintances he talked of his personal response to the Alliance. At the Tokyo War Crimes Trial the American Ambassador in London in 1940, Joseph Kennedy, in an affidavit for Shigemitsu's defence, testified that that he had heard from William Hillman, head of the International News Bureau in Europe, that-

'Shigemitsu ... told him that it [the Tripartite Pact] was one of the worst blows he had suffered in his career as it threatened to kill the object of his mission in London which was Anglo-Japanese reconciliation ... that he had been tempted to resign on the first impulse, but then on second thoughts decided to remain in London as long as it was possible to mitigate the effects of the conclusion of the pact and by diplomacy to prevent its being implemented.'¹⁰⁶

As well as this Shigemitsu in *Japan and Her Destiny* recorded that-

'To those like myself who had consistently opposed the Alliance it passed human understanding. ...that the Alliance had placed Japan in a position from which she could never recover and I was plunged into the depths of despair.'¹⁰⁷

He thus saw the Pact at the time and in hindsight as a turning point in

Anglo-Japanese relations. The reason for his despondency was that the fears that he had begun to harbour in August about the growing co-operation between Britain and the United States were becoming more justified with every day, and that in addition the RAF's victory in the Battle of Britain had shown that there was no guarantee that Germany would triumph in the war in Europe. The danger had therefore arisen that Japan had backed the loser and that in the long run the Anglo-Saxon powers would make Japan pay for this mistake. Shigemitsu's desire to build better Anglo-Japanese relations therefore became more urgent than ever.

For Craigie too, the events of the summer of 1940 were to be a turning point in his mission as Ambassador. He had ever since the start of the European War felt that if Britain was willing to make sensible compromises then the problem of having to divert vital forces from Europe and the Mediterranean to defend Britain's East Asian interests could be solved. This had been the basis of his support for a War Trade Agreement, the Tientsin talks, his speech of 28 March 1940, and for attaching the idea of a general peace to the Burma Road Agreement. In August and September, however, the policies of Konoe and Matsuoka forced him to re-evaluate this policy and he came to the conclusion that this was a Government with which it was impossible to negotiate. He noted in a telegram to the Foreign Office on 11 October that-

'The pro-British faction has been driven still further to ground by the recent espionage campaign against the British community and is now powerless to exert any influence whatsoever. Japanese foreign policy will continue to be dominated by the extremists until such a time as the Axis powers meet with a decisive reverse in Europe or until the peril of an unwanted war with the United States becomes so great that a decisive change in popular opinion begins to make itself felt.'¹⁰⁸

Craigie therefore had to reluctantly admit that his favoured policy of trying to improve relations was dead and until Matsuoka's removal as Foreign Minister in July 1941 he was to take a bellicose attitude towards Japan.

The crisis was also important for Craigie in terms of his relationship with the Foreign Office. The latter in reviewing the Burma Road Agreement

continued to maintain the idea that Britain had been duped into compromising by Japanese bluff and that it was Craigie who was chiefly responsible for this, as he had grossly overstated the risk of war and that only through his pressure had the decision to close the Road been finally taken. Much of this criticism is unfair to the Ambassador: while recognizing that he perhaps exaggerated the risks, it is only right to acknowledge the fact that had Britain tried to call Japan's bluff and found that Japan was truly ready to attack it would have been a disaster of the greatest magnitude, occurring simultaneously with the lowest ebb of British fortunes in the West. It is also necessary to ~~be~~ point out that Craigie's observations were only a contributory factor to the final decision, of much greater importance was Britain's dire strategic position in Europe. One must also acknowledge what Cadogan wrote in his diary of 13 July-

'Craigie has given away 110%. I was against it. We've been bluffed. But it was Winston who resolutely refused to call it.'¹⁰⁹

The decision to close the Burma Road can thus not solely be blamed on Sir Robert Craigie; it was finally a decision that was made by the War Cabinet, who also had the opinions of Lothian, Clark Kerr, the Far Eastern Department and the Chiefs of Staff on which to base their judgments. In hindsight it was obviously a decision that did not bring much honour to the British government at the time of its signing or in relation to Japanese behaviour over the next three months, but it was the correct choice; the alternative was too awful to contemplate.

Nevertheless the result of the Burma Road Crisis and the subsequent events were to discredit Craigie's pleas for conciliation and when he returned to this policy in autumn 1941 it was the example of the Burma Road that was used to belittle his opinions. The Foreign Office convinced itself in the wake of the crisis of the summer of 1940 that appeasement of Japan was no longer acceptable in any form. A policy of conciliation had been acceptable when Japan had been undecided about its course, but now that Japan had decided to align itself openly with the Axis and had begun a campaign to dominate the affairs of South East Asia, the only avenue left to Britain was to forge a policy of deterrence, hopefully in league with the United States. From this point onwards the influence of both Craigie and

Shigemitsu was on the wane and there was little that they could do to stop the drift towards war.

NOTES

1. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry 24 June 1939, in Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University, Diary 4/35.
2. On the change in Japan's foreign policy in June 1940 see K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Diplomacy*. (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986) p.58-59, C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact, 1939-1940.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *Deterrent Diplomacy. Japan, Germany and the USSR 1935-1940*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1976) pp.204-212, M. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares For Total War. The Search For Economic Security, 1919-1941*. (Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, 1987) pp.158-161, and A. Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (Longman, London, 1987) pp.99-101.
3. PRO FO371/24665 F3392/16/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 June 1940.
4. PRO FO371/24725 F3432/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 June 1940. Also quoted in K. Sato, op.cit. p.61.
5. For the background to the decision to ask for the closure of the Burma road see C. Hosoya, 'The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact.' and I. Hata, 'The Army's Move into Northern Indochina' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice. Japan's Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1980) pp.32-33 & 40, and pp.158-159 respectively.
6. PRO FO371/24725 F3432/23/23 M. Shigemitsu/Lord Halifax conversation 21 June 1940. See also M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny. My Struggle For Peace*. (Hutchinson, London, 1958) p.190-191.
7. PRO FO371/24730 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 4 July 1940.
8. Ibid.
9. See D. Jordan, *Chinese Boycotts Versus Japanese Bombs. The Failure of China's "Revolutionary Diplomacy" 1931-1932*. (Univ. of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991) pp.190 & 267-268.
10. M. Shigemitsu to H. Arita 19 June 1940, in R.J. Pritchard and S.M. Zaide (eds.), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.IV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.9692.
11. On Arita's speech see S. Nagaoka, 'Economic Demands on Dutch East Indies.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice*, C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact' pp.206-207, and K. Sato, op.cit. p.65.

12. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.178-179.
13. PRO FO371/24725 F3465/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 June 1940. See also S. Olu Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy In Britain: Sir Robert Craigie Versus the Foreign Office.' in *Modern Asian Studies* 1983 Vol.17 No.1 p.508.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. PRO FO371/24666 F3479/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 25 June 1940. See also P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study in British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941.* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) p.141.
17. Ibid.
18. PRO FO371/24725 F3465/23/23 Lord Halifax to Lord Lothian 25 June 1940. See also K. Sato, op.cit. p.62.
19. Ibid. Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 28 June 1940. For the American refusal to sanction a British concession over the Burma Road see R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945.* (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1979) pp.238-239, and A. Iriye, op.cit. p.100.
20. Ibid. Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 25 June 1940. This telegram is particularly interesting in the light of Lothian's previous warnings to the Foreign Office about the need to be cautious in making diplomatic initiatives to the Japanese lest Washington take offence. See also S. Olu Agbi, op.cit. p.509.
21. PRO FO371/24725 F3450/23/23 Sir A. Clark Kerr to Lord Halifax 24 June 1940, and FO371/24666 F3528/43/10 Dr. T-C Quo/Lord Halifax conversation 28 June 1940.
22. PRO FO371/24726 F4184/23/23 Sir J. Brenan minute 28 August 1940, on Captain Winterborn (War Office) to M.E. Denning 21 August 1940.
23. PRO CAB66/9 WP(40)234 'Policy in the Far East' Lord Halifax memorandum 29 June 1940.
24. PRO CAB65/8 WM 189(40) War Cabinet conclusions 1 July 1940. See also D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-1941. A Study in Co-operative Competition.* (Europa, London, 1981) p.134 and P. Lowe, op.cit. p.142.
25. PRO FO371/24666 F3544/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 3 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.143.
26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 July 1940, Telegrams 1154, 1156 and 1158. It is interesting to note that Craigie's assessment of the seriousness with which the crisis was viewed in Japan was supported by a report from M.I.6's chief agent in Tokyo that arrived in London on 6 July after the decision to seek a compromise had been made, see WO208/854 M.I.6 Political Report CX37502/82 6 July 1940.
28. Ibid. Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 July 1940, Telegram 1154.
29. Ibid. M.E. Denning minute, 7 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.145-146.
30. Ibid. M.E. Denning minute 8 July 1940, on Colonel B. Mullaly to War Office 4 July 1940.
31. PRO ADM116/5757 Admiral J. Godfrey minute 25 July 1940. For the Admiralty's view of the Burma Road crisis see A. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941*. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981) pp.77-81.
32. PRO CAB79/5 COS(40) Chiefs of Staff 207th meeting 4 July 1940. The risk of France entering the conflict was so high that on 5 July the War Cabinet were told that Charles Corbin, the long standing French Ambassador in London, had resigned rather than face the task of handing over a declaration of war, see CAB65/8 WM 194(40) War Cabinet conclusions 5 July 1940. For further details on Anglo-French tensions see CAB69/1 DO(40) Defence Committee (Operations) 19th Meeting 3 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.143-144, which is one of the few texts to realise how crucial Anglo-French relations were in influencing the decision to negotiate over the Burma Road.
33. PRO ADM116/5757 Rear-Admiral T. Phillips minute 4 July 1940.
34. PRO CAB80/15 COS(40)506(JP) 'Policy in the Far East' Joint Planning Committee memorandum 29 June 1940.
35. PRO CAB 66/9 WP(40)249 'Policy in the Far East' Chiefs of Staff report 4 July 1940.
36. PRO FO371/24725 F3565/23/23 M.E. Denning minute 4 July 1940.
37. PRO CAB65/8 WM 194(40) War Cabinet conclusions 5 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.144.
38. Ibid.
39. PRO FO371/24666 F3544/43/10 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 6 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.146-148.
40. PRO FO371/24667 F3568/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 9 July 1940. See also K. Sato, op.cit. p.63.
41. PRO CAB65/8 WM 199(40) War Cabinet conclusions 10 July 1940. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.148.

42. PRO FO371/24723 F3593/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 July 1940. On the collapse of the Yonai Cabinet see K. Sato, op.cit. pp.65-66.
43. PRO FO371/24667 F3606/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 17 July 1940.
44. Ibid, Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 16 July 1940.
45. Ibid, B. Gage minute 20 July 1940. See also the letter from Neville Chamberlain to his sister Hilda of 20 July 1940 quoted in D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.134.
46. Sir R. Craigie to Viscount Simon 1 August 1940, in Simon Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Mss Simon 86.
47. Ibid, J. Sterndale Bennett minute 20 July 1940.
48. PRO FO371/24660 F3572/27/10 W. Churchill to Lord Halifax 17 July 1940.
49. PRO FO371/24725 F3465/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 July 1940.
50. PRO FO371/24708 F3633/193/61 R.A. Butler minute 25 July 1940. On Butler's support for Craigie's plan for a general settlement see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.154-156, and D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.135.
51. Ibid. R.A. Butler to Treasury, Ministry of Economic Warfare, Colonial Office, Dominions Office, India Office, Burma Office and Petroleum Department 10 August 1940.
52. PRO FO371/24709 F3859/193/61 N. Archer (Dominions Office) to R.A. Butler 27 August 1940, and J. Calder (Colonial Office) to R.A. Butler 17 August 1940. For the inter-departmental debate see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.157-160, and S. Olu Agbi, op.cit. p.510.
53. PRO FO371/24709 F4108/193/61 J. Keswick (Ministry of Economic Warfare) to R.A. Butler 2 September 1940.
54. Matsuoka Yōsuke is one of the most fascinating figures to appear in Japan at this time. The traditional account of him as simply pro-Axis and anti-Western has been subject to some revision. For two essays on him see J. Huizenga, 'Yosuke Matsuoka and the Japanese-German Alliance.' in G. Craig & F. Gilbert (eds.), *The Diplomats 1919-1939. Vol.2.* (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, N.J., 1953), and B. Teters, 'Matsuoka Yosuke. The Diplomacy of Bluff and Gesture.' in R. Burns and E.M. Bennett, *Diplomats in Crisis, United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941.* (ABC-CLIO Inc., Santa Barbara, Calif., 1974) pp.275-296.
55. PRO FO371/24667 F3590/43/10 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 19 July 1940.

56. PRO F0371/24723 F3593/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 July 1940.
57. PRO F0371/24725 F3671/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 27 July 1940.
58. W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987) p.227, and K. Sato, op.cit. p.74.
59. For Japanese policy towards South East Asia in summer 1940 see C. Hosoya, 'Miscalculations in Deterrent Policy: Japanese-U.S. Relations, 1938-1941.' in *Journal of Peace Research* 1968 No.2 pp.108-109, W.G. Beasley op.cit. pp.227-229, K. Sato, op.cit. pp.70-75, and M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.162-165.
60. For the change in American policy see J. Utley, *Going To War With Japan 1937-1941*. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn. 1986) pp.97-100, I. Anderson, *The Standard Vacuum Oil Company and United States East Asian Policy, 1933-1941*. (Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, 1975) pp.131-146, C. Hosoya, 'Miscalculations in Deterrent Policy' p.108, M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.187-191, and D. Reynolds, op.cit. pp.136-138.
61. M. Shigemitsu to Y. Matsuoka 5 August 1940, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial, Vol.IV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.9713. Also quoted in part in C. Hosoya, 'Britain and the U.S. in Japan's View, 1937-41' in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) p.65.
62. Ibid.
63. See K. Sato, op.cit. pp.72-74.
64. For the history of this crisis see the file PRO F0371/24738, and also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.76-77. For more on the British 'harbour-watchers' see J.W.M. Chapman, 'Japanese Intelligence 1918-1945: A Suitable Case For Treatment.' in C. Andrew & J. Noakes (eds.), *Intelligence and International Relations 1900-1945*. (Exeter Univ. Press, Exeter, 1987) p.151, and J.W.M. Chapman (ed.), *The Price of Admiralty. The War Diary of the German Naval Attaché in Japan 1939-1943 Vol.1 25 August 1939-28 August 1940*. (Sussex Univ. Press, Lewes, 1982) p.170.
65. PRO F0371/24738 F3669/653/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 29 July 1940.
66. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry 29 July 1940, in Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University Library, Diary 4/35.
67. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry 29 July 1940, in D. Dilks, (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945*. (Puttnam, New York, 1971) p.317. For the change in British attitudes see K. Sato, op.cit. pp.75-76.

68. PRO FO371/24738 F3685/653/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 31 July 1940.
69. PRO FO371/24738 F3680/653/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 30 July 1940. The Suzuki issue posed a serious problem for the British, as before action could be taken against him, the last British language officer in Japan, Captain J. Ridsdale, had to be removed in case he became the object of Japanese retaliation. Eventually the Japanese Consul-General at Hong Kong admitted that Suzuki was an intelligence officer, and the latter subsequently left the Colony on 31 December 1940. See W0193/193 for details.
70. PRO CAB65/8 WM 217(40) War Cabinet conclusions 1 August 1940.
71. PRO FO371/24655 F3697/16/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 5 August 1940.
72. PRO CAB65/8 WM 220(40) War Cabinet conclusions 6 August 1940.
73. PRO FO371/24733 F3900/103/23 Minutes of Inter-departmental Meeting 14 August 1940.
74. PRO FO371/24735 F3267/205/23 Lord Halifax to Sir R. Craigie 14 August 1940.
75. PRO FO371/24739 F3944/653/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 18 August 1940.
76. PRO FO371/25090 W9706/14/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 August 1940. The *Nagara Maru* had been given permission to sail from Italy by the Ministry of Economic Warfare on 29 July, but on 15 August the Japanese Counsellor in London, Okamoto, revealed it was now intended that the ship should carry an extra 1000 tons of cargo including 400 tons of Italian mercury which could be used for military purposes. This raised the question of whether Britain should refuse to allow the new cargo to pass.
77. PRO FO371/24730 F4030/66/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 August 1940. For the British decision to reopen the Burma Road see P. Lowe, *op.cit.* pp.167-175, and K. Sato, *op.cit.* pp.84-85.
78. *Ibid.*
79. As late as mid-September Craigie was still arguing that should the tide turn in Europe Matsuoka would be the first to explore better relations with Britain, see PRO FO371/24723 F4712/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 September 1940.
80. PRO FO371/24669 F4009/43/10 M.E. Denning minute 24 August 1940.
81. PRO FO371/24669 F4074/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 August 1940.

82. See PRO CAB66/11 WP(40)348 'Reopening of the Burma Road' Lord Halifax memorandum 2 September 1940, and CAB65/9 WM 239(40) War Cabinet conclusions 2 September 1940.
83. PRO FO371/24669 F4074/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 30 August 1940. For his assessment of the military situation see FO371/24669 F4238/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 8 September 1940.
84. PRO FO371/24709 F4290/193/61 Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 16 September 1940. On the growing Anglo-American co-operation see D. Reynolds op.cit. pp.121-144, P. Lowe, op.cit. p.170, and R. Dallek, op.cit. pp.241-248.
85. PRO FO371/24670 F4328/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 19 September 1940.
86. PRO FO371/24729 F4634/60/23 W. Churchill to Lord Halifax 4 October 1940. Also quoted in D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.142.
87. For the Dutch-Japanese economic talks see S. Nagaoka, op.cit. pp.142-145, M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.165-167, and I. Anderson, op.cit. pp.146-155.
88. For the background to the Japanese occupation of north Indo-China see S. Murakami, 'Indochina: Unplanned Incursion.' in H. Conroy & H. Wray (eds.), *Pearl Harbor Reexamined. Prologue to the Pacific War.* (Univ. of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1990) p.142, I. Hata, op.cit. pp.172-193, and A. Iriye, op.cit. pp.117-118.
89. On the making of the Tripartite Pact see J. Duffler, 'The Tripartite pact of 27th September 1940: Fascist Alliance or Propaganda Trick?' in I. Nish (ed), *The Tripartite Pact of 1940: Japan, Germany and Italy.* (LSE STICERD International Studies Series 1984/III) pp.1-24, C. Hosoya, 'The Tripartite Pact 1939-1940.' pp.214-257, K. Sato, op.cit. pp.81-83, and A. Iriye, op.cit. pp.113-116.
90. On the United States decision to implement further sanctions see C. Hosoya, 'Miscalculations in Deterrent Policy' p.110, M. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.193-194, D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.140, and J. Utley, op.cit. pp.106-107.
91. PRO FO371/24720 F4441/3429/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 26 September 1940.
92. PRO FO371/24709 F4518/193/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 1 October 1940.
93. PRO CAB65/9 WM 265(40) War Cabinet conclusions 3 October 1940. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.85-86.
94. PRO FO371/24670 F4596/43/10 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 8 October 1940.

95. A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 31 July 1931, in Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB E3/5.
96. PRO FO371/24738 F3693/653/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 1 August 1940.
97. PRO FO371/24655 F3776/16/10 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 9 August 1940.
98. A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 2 September 1940, in Butler Papers E3/5.
99. Ibid.
100. Lord Hankey affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, Defence Exhibit 3547, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Vol.XIV* (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34512. The idea of a British mission to Japan to counter the effects of the German Saxe-Coburg mission of spring 1940 had first been mooted in PRO FO371/24724 F2993/23/23 A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 18 April 1940.
101. PRO FO371/24709 F4488/193/61 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 25 September 1940.
102. Ibid.
103. T. Kase, *The Eclipse of the Rising Sun*. (Jonathan Cape, London, 1951) pp.18-19. This contention is supported by a letter from Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to R.A. Butler 3 October 1940, in Butler Papers E3/17.
104. For Okamoto's recall see A. Edwardes to R.A. Butler 2 September 1940 in Butler Papers, RAB E3/5. In this letter Edwardes also noted 'The inner history of the "purge" would almost be childish, if it did not represent a danger to Japan's diplomatic service.
105. PRO FO371/24729 F4055/63/23 M.E. Dening Minute 2 September 1940. See also K. Sato, op.cit. p.80.
106. Joseph Kennedy affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, Defence Exhibit 3551, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.XIV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) pp.34533-34534.
107. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.264.
108. PRO FO371/24737 F5295/626/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 11 October 1940.
109. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry 13 July 1940, in D. Dilks (ed.), op.cit. p.313.

CHAPTER SEVEN

'RAPIDLY INCREASING TENSIONS'

'News from Japan reaching the F.O. increasingly disconcerting the last few days and, unless something unexpected comes along to ease the situation in the present rapidly increasing tensions between our two countries, it looks as though we shall be at war with Japan very shortly.

Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry 12 February 1941¹

It is tempting to portray the fourteen months from the re-opening of the Burma Road to the start of hostilities in the Pacific as a period which saw close co-operation between Britain and the United States to contain the threat of Japanese expansionism. Any such impression would, however, be largely false; it was in reality not until July 1941 that the Anglo-Saxon partners forged a truly joint policy, although even then the British until early December had no guarantee that America would come to their aid should war break out. This meant that the period between October 1940 and June 1941, instead of being one in which Britain could concentrate on the war in Europe, was one of acute concern in Whitehall about East Asia as, while Britain turned its back on conciliation and started to construct a policy of deterrence, Washington continued to lag far behind. This was a dangerous position for Britain to be in, but the Burma Road Crisis and the signing of the Tripartite Pact had shown that there was very little choice. If war with Japan was to be avoided this could only be achieved by a tightrope policy of deterring Tokyo from a further southern advance while at the same time not acting so harshly as simply to provoke a new Japanese offensive.

The remarkable fact about the development of this policy was that for virtually the first time since Craigie had gone to Tokyo there was a consensus about which approach to take. Even Craigie himself, who had long championed a policy of moderation, now agreed that deterrence was necessary. The appearance of this consensus was a reflection of a number

of convictions that were held in common by Craigie and the Foreign Office. First it was deemed obvious, after the events of the summer of 1940, that Japan needed to be resisted in order to thwart its desire to expand its influence into South East Asia and to counter its close links with Germany and Italy, which threatened to increase the level of trade along the Trans-Siberian Railway. Second, it was believed that the United States was beginning to take a more active role in the Pacific and that this afforded the opportunity for Britain to take a firmer line and also a chance to impress the Americans and appear as a worthy potential ally. Third, it was held that after the victory in the Battle of Britain had been won, and ~~with~~ *when* the position in the Middle East ~~had~~ somewhat eased, Britain could afford to be more stalwart in East Asia.

There were, however, two other motives for a policy of deterrence that were not held in common. The first of these was that in London and Singapore there were elements, of whom Churchill was the most important, who were convinced that the Japanese would never attack, and that, even if they did, it would pose a nuisance rather than a direct threat to the future of the Empire. To this group deterrence was largely a matter of being severe with Japan but not backing up this harsh policy with the deployment of military forces. Craigie felt strongly that this line represented a gross underestimation of Japan's intentions and abilities. He himself had another reason for supporting a tough policy; believing that it would serve the purpose of proving to the Japanese people that the extremists who controlled their foreign policy were only exposing the country to danger, and that this would encourage the moderates to attempt to return to power before it was too late; a motive that garnered little support in the Foreign Office. The consensus was therefore not built on the most solid of foundations and in the heightened atmosphere of the summer of 1941 the contradictions between Craigie and London would begin to tear it apart.

The toughening of British policy manifested itself just as the Burma Road crisis came to its conclusion. To a large extent much of the impetus for this change came from the hardening in late summer of America's stance towards the Japanese with the introduction of the scrap iron embargo and their apparent desire to increase co-operation with the British as

demonstrated by the offer from Hull to Lothian on 30 September for staff talks.² These two initiatives galvanized Britain into action and the former led to a study of how the still very limited economic restrictions on Japan could be increased. Already in early September 1940 the Ministry of Economic Warfare had responded to the call made by the Foreign Office on 14 August for reprisals against Japan by declaring that they had always disliked the Foreign Office's leniency towards the Japanese, and that-

'... it would do little harm to adopt a stiffer attitude towards Japanese requests wherever the merits of the case justify it. We would suggest that henceforward we should treat each case on its own merits, and not attempt to give the Japanese unduly favourable treatment for political reasons.'³

With the American example on 26 September it now appeared that it would be possible to apply such a policy.

The development of a programme of harsher economic restrictions took place in a new co-ordinating body set up in early October, the War Cabinet Far Eastern Committee which was chaired by R.A. Butler.⁴ In proposing the establishment of this Committee to the War Cabinet, Lord Halifax noted that its policy should be based on the line that-

'... in the near future there might be several ways in which we should be able to cause inconvenience to the Japanese without ceasing to be polite.'⁵

This clearly set down the parameters of British policy; that the aim was to deter so that a war in the East could be avoided. The result of this was that the discussion of economic sanctions rested not on the need to bring Japan to its knees, but rather, as R.A. Butler put it in a report for the War Cabinet, to have-

'... the double object of preventing the Japanese from assisting our present enemies and from building up stocks themselves.'⁶

To achieve this end it was decided to widen the range of commodities put under export licence and to restrict exports to Japan to normal trade levels, which it was deemed consisted of 75% of the 1939 figures. The actual implementation of this policy was, however, slow as it involved complex co-ordination with the Dominions, India, and the Colonies.⁷

As Britain began to develop this fairly comprehensive list of restrictions, the United States in turn started to retreat from its forward policy. The

first indication of this came on 9 October when, in a talk with Lothian, Hull indicated that staff talks could not be held until after the Presidential election in November, and that for the present all Washington could do was to send Admiral Ghormley to Britain to liaise with the Admiralty.⁸ American reticence was further demonstrated by the State Department's refusal to agree to conversations in the immediate future about co-operation in economic restrictions against Japan.⁹ The result of this was that in the autumn of 1940 there was only limited evidence of Anglo-American co-operation rather than the broad sweep which Britain had hoped for, although it is worth noting that a U.S. observer did secretly attend the Anglo-Australian Conference at Singapore in October, and in November Commander T. Wisden, the deputy commander at the FECB, was sent to Manila to meet his counter-parts in the U.S. Asiatic Fleet.¹⁰ News of the American retreat did not lead to the cancellation of Britain's new policy but it did lead to an air of caution.

The need for a guarded approach was underlined by reports from Craigie, who, though recognising that his policy of conciliation was no longer valid, was aware that the mood in Tokyo was fraught and that it would not take much to provoke Japan. This led him to emphasize in a telegram on 14 October the great necessity for Britain not to go beyond the measures taken by the United States, on the grounds that-

'As long as responsible Japanese quarters continue to think that the United States will in no circumstances go to war to resist attack on any non-American territory in the Pacific, danger remains that Japan will make some tragic mistake as Germany did in 1914 when she counted on British abstention.'¹¹

On 16 October he went further by observing that, though his personal preference for co-operation with Washington was in the military field rather than in the area of economic restrictions, any joint action should be considered very carefully, and be judged in the light of the fact that-

'... we should at present avoid measures which would only be to our advantage if war with Japan is absolutely imminent, until we are convinced that war is imminent. Otherwise we and America may find ourselves, as a cumulative result of our actions and the provocations of those of the Japanese, in a position where war is imminent whether we are ready for it

or not.'¹²

These views were broadly in agreement with those being expressed within Whitehall, and British policy was therefore composed in the knowledge that it could not afford to be too provocative.

Despite these pleas for caution, Craigie was far from advocating a return to a policy of conciliation. The major factor that influenced his shift to supporting a hard line was the character and policies of Matsuoka. Although Craigie had initially displayed some enthusiasm for the appointment of a politician renowned for his straightforward style and forthright views, this had soon evaporated. The succession of events since Matsuoka took the helm obviously indicated a dramatic expansion of Japan's ambitions and Craigie felt particular concern over the Foreign Minister's clear desire to draw ever nearer to Germany and the Soviet Union, which threatened to lead to the formation of an anti-democratic camp to rival the West. Apart from his obviously anti-British policies, Matsuoka also contributed to the worsening of relations through his personal style, unlike his predecessors he did not try to cajole listeners into agreement with his views, his tactic was to harangue and bluster at great length. The poor relationship between the two men was clearly displayed in one particularly interminable meeting on 9 November which left Craigie so greatly dispirited that he noted to the Foreign Office-

'Like all interviews with the Minister of Foreign Affairs this one consisted of a long monologue in the course of which I found it difficult to get in my word.'¹³

It was not just Matsuoka's long-windedness that Craigie found objectionable, even though that habit made a mockery of the purpose of such interviews, but that within a short space of time the Foreign Minister proffered his 'honest' hopes for peace and then proceeded to take another tack by declaring-

'... he had no intention of offering assurances he could not keep, and it was from this point of view that he asked us to regard the expression of his fervent desire to avoid war with either Great Britain or the United States. Nothing would provoke this except American entry into the European war or some serious provocation such as the visit of a powerful American squadron to Singapore.'¹⁴

Craigie's doubts about Matsuoka's intentions were intensified in December due to an accumulation of evidence that suggested German-Japanese relations were becoming much closer, such as the announcements that naval and military missions were travelling to Europe and that General Ōshima was to be re-appointed as Ambassador to Germany. In addition there were also reports clearly suggesting that Japan was giving assistance to German commerce raiders in the Pacific which had been attacking Allied shipping.¹⁵

Craigie responded to this news by warning the Foreign Office-

'... I do not think we can be too impartial about such an accumulation of evidence, particularly in view of the Minister of Foreign Affairs recent remark to me that we must be prepared for further action by Japan that might appear to us as un-neutral.'¹⁶

These events and insinuations were not worrying merely because they implied that Japan was ready to enter the European War should tensions in the Atlantic lead to a clash between Germany and the United States, but also because they coincided with a further rise of tensions in South East Asia.

By the autumn of 1940 the situation in South East Asia was increasingly complex, for not only had the fall of France inspired Japanese pressure on Indo-China, it also led to Thailand making territorial claims on the French colony. This irredentism provided Japan with the opportunity not only to put its New Order principles into action by claiming its right to intervene in the dispute, but also to use its intervention to expand its influence over the two countries and thus gain a firm foothold in the region without having to resort to war.¹⁷ To the Foreign Office the prospect of Japan being poised to strike at Singapore, and at the same time having free access to the vital raw materials produced in Thailand and Indo-China, such as rubber and tin, was too awful to contemplate. However, Britain's dilemma in this situation was that to support either side in the Thai-French dispute had its disadvantages: to back France would certainly drive the Thais into Japan's sphere, while support for Thailand would only help to weaken French resistance to further Japanese encroachments into Indo-China and open up the colony's rubber to re-export to Germany. The difficulty in deciding on a firm policy was made all the harder by the unwillingness of the United States to take any sort of lead over the dispute apart from stating that to satisfy Thailand's claims would be

tantamount to appeasement. Britain was therefore put in a very difficult position, hindered by Washington from making a diplomatic intervention and too weak unilaterally to use military pressure to dampen down the growing tensions.¹⁸

As had been the case so often before, the result of British weakness was that policy was left to drift and no concerted effort was made to contain the crisis. Finally on 28 November war broke out, and almost immediately the two combatants were subject to intense pressure from Japan and Germany to mediate. This seemed, especially in the light of the other evidence of their increased co-operation, to indicate a concerted effort by the Tripartite powers to establish Japanese dominance over the region and raised the possibility that Japan might synchronise the unleashing of its forces against the British colonies to coincide with a German offensive in Europe. In December Craigie raised this fear by writing-

'It seems possible that Japan is taking no further action in a southerly direction until she sees what is the outcome of her negotiations with the French regarding Indo-China, but that meanwhile she is taking steps with her German ally to ensure full co-operation when, and if time comes, for further developments in the south.'¹⁹

The situation facing Britain was thus steadily growing more desperate and the question of how it could be eased became ever more pressing.

In the Foreign Office, R.A. Butler saw the only solution to be the strengthening of British defences in the region and he prompted Lord Halifax to write to A.V. Alexander, the First Lord of the Admiralty, in late November urging him to send a naval squadron to Singapore by arguing that-

'There is an urgent need to strengthen our defences in the Far East, not only with the object of offering successful resistance to any attack which may be made, but even more for the purpose of showing Japan by our preparedness that she would be unwise to make the attempt, and also of strengthening the courage and stiffening the resistance of the territories which Japan seeks to penetrate.'²⁰

This plea was, however, dismissed by Alexander who pointed out, that despite the British success at Taranto, the Royal Navy was so over-

stretched that it could not afford to send out any forces to the East, and noted-

'Surely the real deterrent to Japanese aggression in the Far East can only be found in the willing and open co-operation of the United States.²¹

This was a stance which had the full support of Churchill who consistently believed that the diversion of any forces to defend against a potential enemy, Japan, rather than using them against actual enemies, Germany and Italy, was a dangerous indulgence.²²

The need for a greater American presence in East Asia was a view also shared by Craigie, who noted in a long telegram to London on 4 December-

'... given no deterioration in the situation in Europe, Japan would make no further advance southwards if her leaders could once be convinced that the United States would accept the challenge as well as ourselves. This is the crux of the question.'²³

In particular Craigie was very keen on the idea that had been pursued by the Foreign Office in early October of Anglo-American co-operation being visibly displayed to Japan through the visit of an American naval squadron to Singapore. In early December when the Foreign Office ordered Lord Lothian to renew the pressure over this issue, Craigie immediately indicated his approval and noted his hope that some of the ships that Washington was sending to reinforce the Philippines would visit the British base.²⁴ However, any hope of decisive action by the United States was misplaced; the State Department was not willing to see American ships visit Singapore and believed that the small-scale reinforcement of the Philippines would be enough to deter Japan from any further move into South East Asia.²⁵

The effect of American inaction and British military weakness was to force the Foreign Office to rest its containment of Japan almost entirely on the policy of economic restrictions in order to wear down Japan's ability to wage war and reduce the supplies available for aiding the German war effort. Even here it was recognised that Britain's freedom of action was restrained by the passivity of the State Department. Despite efforts in Washington to persuade the Americans to expand their licensing system the sanctions introduced by the Roosevelt administration were still very

limited.²⁶ In a Far Eastern Committee report to the War Cabinet on 17 December, which described the American policy as an 'improvisation', R.A. Butler was reduced to noting on the subject of British sanctions-

'The screw will have to be applied, more or less firmly, in proportion as the Japanese control their wayward tendencies, or as our hand grows stronger in Europe and the Middle East, or as the United States Administration interests itself more in the Far East.'²⁷

However, this did not mean that the British economic restrictions were completely innocuous. In particular Britain was now less concerned than before about the consequences of taking strong action against Japanese merchant ships carrying merchandise and commodities destined for the Axis powers. In comparison to the first half of 1940, when such a policy had largely been avoided in order not to antagonize Japan, Japanese ships were now subject to frequent searches and an increasing number of cargoes were seized.²⁸ Craigie raised no objections to this policy, and even showed great disappointment in November 1940 when the Canadians refused to intercept the *Kozui Maru*, which was carrying a cargo of copper for the Italians, and was prompted to note to the Foreign Office-

'Particularly if action were taken by the Canadian Navy, the Japanese Government would be reluctant to encourage public outcry here and might well decide on their own to discontinue traffic, thus helping to plug this hole in our contraband control system.'²⁹

The contrast with the concerns that he had expressed earlier in the year could hardly be greater.

Nevertheless, despite the general toughening of British policy and the desire to avoid any compromises with Japan, diplomatic negotiations between the two sides had not ceased entirely. Though the discussions over a Trade Agreement had long since lapsed, talks had continued over the possibility of a Payments Agreement between the two countries, even during the Burma Road Crisis. The idea of such an Agreement had been mooted as early as November 1939 by the Foreign Office as a means of regulating Anglo-Japanese trade and of hindering the Japanese from selling sterling for dollars on the free market.³⁰ The Japanese had at first been somewhat wary of this proposal seeing it as very limited in scope and not aiding them in their

main aim which was to gain greater access to British controlled raw materials. Consequently when the idea was mentioned by Butler to Shigemitsu on 4 April 1940, the latter showed some unwillingness to proceed on these lines believing that the wider trade negotiations about to start were more firmly in line with Japan's interests.³¹ Nevertheless talks on this matter did begin in spring 1940 and the Treasury offered Japan a more advantageous deal than had been offered to other neutrals, which included a commitment by Britain to convert monthly 20% of the Japanese sterling account in London into gold.³²

With the collapse of the Okamoto/Leith-Ross negotiations, the Payments Agreement remained as the only economic negotiations in progress and therefore became more significant as a barometer of Anglo-Japanese relations. The British position over the summer of 1940 was slowly to reduce the benefits to Japan which been offered at first, as a response to the increasingly bellicose attitude of Japan. In August a new draft was handed by S.D. Waley of the Treasury to Okamoto, which still promised that 10% of the Japanese sterling account in Britain would be converted into gold, but the lack of any reply to this proposal soon convinced the Treasury to toughen their position further.³³ From Tokyo Craigie warned that this was dangerous and that it was still necessary to be flexible in this field as to become too harsh risked alienating the Bank of Japan and the Ministry of Finance, two organizations still opposed to the Government's pro-Axis policy.³⁴ In December a Japanese response to the Treasury draft of August finally arrived expressing general agreement with the British terms but including a number of amendments of which the most important was a proviso that-

'... no unreasonable prohibitions or restrictions shall be imposed on exports from the British Empire to Japan, in other words, that the export of commodities from the British Empire to Japan shall be facilitated to the utmost possible.'³⁵

This made it clear that the new Japanese enthusiasm for these talks was not because they felt that a Payments Agreement had an intrinsic value of its own, but rather that they saw an agreement as a means to overturn Britain's economic restrictions. This was clearly unacceptable to the Treasury and

the Foreign Office and there was an increasing danger that these negotiations like their predecessors were doomed to deadlock.

These talks were, however, seen by Shigemitsu as one of the last hopes for improving Anglo-Japanese relations. In the autumn of 1940 the Japanese Ambassador was becoming increasingly despondent about the direction of Japanese policy and tried his utmost to overcome the dire impression left by the Tripartite Pact and show that Japan had not decided to come out into open opposition to Britain. In pursuit of this he tried in his weekly talks with Butler to argue, yet again, that Japan's relations with Germany only mirrored the support that the Western powers had given to China and therefore hinted that the withdrawal of British support for Chiang Kai-shek could lead to Japan drawing away from the Axis. On 2 December he told Butler in one of their meetings that-

'He appreciated the unfortunate effect of the Tripartite Pact on the work which we had been doing together. But two months study of the situation since had only confirmed in his mind ... that it was not designed to bring Japan into war. So far as Japan was concerned, it was designed to facilitate her task in China.'³⁶

He then went on, in response to a remark by Butler that both sides must be careful not to take actions which were likely to provoke the other, to state despondently that-

'To him it seemed that we should go further and try and work out, as we should have done ten years ago, the fundamental points on which we had interests in common. ... If however we were simply to put the Chinese question at one side and at the same time allow public feeling in our two countries to become irritated ... he feared that our collaboration would not go very far.'³⁷

The problem was that Shigemitsu's sentiments seemed to have very little relation to the threats emanating from Matsuoka or to Japan's actions in South East Asia, and this only confirmed to the British that he was becoming ever more isolated from his own Government. This suspicion was underlined when it became apparent in late November, after a series of talks in which the Ambassador had tried to persuade Butler to change British policy on the China issue, that Shigemitsu had not even been

informed by Tokyo of the terms of the Nanking Agreement between Japan and the Wang Ching-wei Government.³⁸

The Ambassador's assurances of Japan's pacific intentions therefore had very little impact on the Foreign Office, and he was left only with the alternative of improving Anglo-Japanese relations by continuing the informal talks he had started in September with Lord Lloyd and Lord Hankey. In this direction he still had the enthusiastic support of Piggott, who, despite the signing of the Tripartite Pact, was as keen as ever to work for a *rapprochement*; indeed only three days after the signing of the Pact, Piggott had pressed Hankey to act on Shigemitsu's proposal of 26 September for a cabinet minister to visit Japan by writing-

'I am more than ever convinced that if you and I went to Japan in the very near future we could do much to prevent some disasters happening to humanity. ... Our presence, especially yours, would be of the greatest encouragement to Craigie, and the British community; and my innumerable friends in all circles, Government and private, would undoubtedly tell me many things which Craigie and his staff could never hear.'³⁹

Hankey who was, of course, aware of the change in British policy could only respond to this by replying that such a plan would be unacceptable to the Foreign Office and that the idea should be put on ice until a more favourable climate appeared.⁴⁰

Shigemitsu was, however, still keen to pursue this line and he arranged for a further meeting to be held with the two ministers on 20 November. At this lunch Lloyd suggested that, instead of an official government mission to Japan, it might be possible to improve relations through the sending of a group led by Hankey under the auspices of the British Council.⁴¹ The Ambassador responded by expressing considerable enthusiasm for this idea saying that he thought that it could be very beneficial, and it was decided that Lloyd would make enquiries at the Foreign Office to see if this was acceptable.⁴² The Colonial Secretary subsequently wrote to Halifax on 4 December laying out his plan. The reply, as one might have expected, was not favourable and noted bleakly-

'It might be welcomed by those whose views are suppressed and unheard and who may indeed be on our side, but, merging as it would into the political

field, it would risk being misunderstood as a gesture designed to conciliate those who every day take steps to prejudice ourselves and our interests. ... I am convinced that it is only by showing a combined American and British firm front that we shall restrain the extremist elements from taking extreme measures.'⁴³

Shigemitsu's hopes had thus reached another dead end.

There were then insurmountable obstacles to any attempt at improving Anglo-Japanese relations; the mood of the times rather leant towards a steady escalation of tensions. Events in South East Asia were the chief catalyst in this process and in the early winter of 1941 they began to approach a climax. During January the tide of events swung further away from Britain, for while the Foreign Office tried forlornly to persuade the State Department that the situation could only be saved by joint Anglo-American mediation, the Japanese pressure on the combatants to make peace under Japan's auspices markedly increased. The lack of any notable military success on land, allied to the French victory at sea in the battle of Ko Chang island, drove the Thais further towards the Japanese. With Thailand now favouring mediation, the Japanese began to hint to the French of the serious consequences that would arise if they continued fighting, ~~Not~~ surprisingly, considering the lack of support from the United States, Vichy quickly acquiesced, and on 29 January armistice talks began in Saigon.⁴⁴

Simultaneously with the exertion of diplomatic pressure came an escalation of the Japanese military and naval presence in the region. This policy was approved in Japan at a Liaison Conference on 19 January and was designed to intimidate the Thais and French into making peace, and to force them to agree to the Japanese conditions for mediation which were that both countries should agree to closer political, military and economic ties with Japan.⁴⁵ The Army and Navy, however, had rather different plans from those of the Gaimushō; they wished to use the military build-up as an opportunity to seize bases in the region as a preliminary to a southward advance into the Dutch East Indies and Malaya. This led to disagreements with Matsuoka, who believed that only military exercises were necessary and that the use of military force could drag the British and Americans into the crisis and that this could lead to war. As a consequence of this division over aims

the signals from Japan about its intentions became confused and even at times contradictory and it was this uncertainty that greatly contributed to the crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations that surfaced in February.⁴⁶

The British were well aware of the build-up of Japanese diplomatic and military pressure in the region. Through the use of radio direction finding equipment at Singapore the FECB was able to follow the deployment of Japanese naval forces into the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam, which included indications that Japan was beginning to operate in the vicinity of Cam Ranh Bay, the best anchorage in Indo-China.⁴⁷ To this ~~was~~ *were* added disturbing decrypts of telegrams sent from Tokyo to the Japanese Consul-General in Singapore which included one intercepted on 20 January that was summarised as stating that-

'... future intelligence and propaganda policy will be "mainly directed southwards in order to secure supplies of war commodities". Promotion of agitation, political plots, propaganda and intelligence (particularly naval and military) must be expedited and intensified so that new order in greater East Asia may be expedited.'⁴⁸

This evidence was also supported by decrypts of telegrams passing between the Japanese Minister in Bangkok and Tokyo which clearly indicated the Japanese interest in bases as a *quid pro quo* for assistance in mediation, and by information from the Dutch intelligence community in Bandung, with whom co-operation over Japanese cyphers and the activities of local Japanese agents had begun only recently.⁴⁹

The indications of impending crisis were reinforced ^{by} a number of bellicose speeches and interviews by Matsuoka in January, which included the assertions that the Tripartite Pact was the central pillar of Japan's foreign policy and that Japan counted the European colonial empires of South East Asia as falling within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In addition to this Craigie was reporting back the details of the rumours sweeping Tokyo about coming events, and identified a general tense air of expectation. On 27 January he observed-

'There is a general feeling amongst the Japanese that the crisis in the Far East will come within the next few weeks.'⁵⁰

He followed this a week later with an even more alarming telegram in which

he pointed to the grave dangers that would arise if the Japanese were able to establish themselves in Thailand, and again urged the Foreign Office to renew the pressure for an American commitment to Singapore. He concluded by observing ominously-

'... unless Thailand, Indo China and the Netherlands East Indies can be made to feel now that full strength of British Empire and United States will be behind them in resisting further aggression, the pass will be sold and our recent gains in the Mediterranean will be offset by steady undermining of our whole strategic position in the Far East and Indian Ocean.'⁵¹

This warning and the accumulation of evidence hinting at some imminent advance by the Japanese, meant that Britain obviously had to make some sort of response. However, the problem was deciding what sort of threat Britain was faced with, what exactly Japan's intentions were and when any strike would be likely to take place? On 5 February the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee synthesised the evidence from all available sources and concluded-

'... Japan will take advantage of her role as mediator in the dispute between Thailand and French Indo-China so as to gain naval, military and air bases which would enable her to threaten Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, North Borneo, and possibly Burma. Of these objectives we believe that she will probably select, in the first instance, the Netherlands East Indies, and that she intends to move against this territory in the near future.'⁵²

The situation therefore at this point did not suggest to London any imminent attack on British territory, but there was some concern that Japan was planning an attack which could take place over the next few months, and that it would be timed to coincide with a new German offensive in Europe or even an invasion of Britain. Overnight, however, the British assessment of Japan's timetable changed and a report drawn up the next day by the Chiefs of Staff noted-

'The gravity of the situation in the Far East, to which the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee have drawn our attention in their report, is now reinforced by a most secret intelligence report.

Briefly it appears that the Japanese have decided upon a policy which

they realise may involve them in war with the British Empire in the near future.'⁵³

The obvious question is what information inspired this drastic reassessment? What could have made them believe that Britain was now the intended target of Japanese aggression? The answer is almost certainly that the source alluded to in the Chiefs of Staff report was the operation for bugging the telephones at the Japanese Embassy in London. On 5 February the operator responsible for translating the telephone conversations within the Embassy reported that staff had been ordered to cut off all fraternization with British officials and to be prepared to leave Britain at short notice, this was followed the next day by news that some kind of action was expected shortly.⁵⁴ These reports suggested, and were interpreted by Whitehall as indicating, that a Japanese offensive was far more imminent than originally thought, and that the target of Japanese aggression was not simply going to be the Dutch but could also be Britain itself. On 6 February Sir Alexander Cadogan noted in his diary- 'Some more very bad-looking Jap telephone conversations, from which it appears that they have decided to attack us.'⁵⁵

In one sense this was obviously deeply disturbing news as the Services were clearly too weak to defend Britain's East Asian possessions, and furthermore these reports had arrived simultaneously with indications that Germany was preparing to launch a new offensive into South East Europe.⁵⁶ At the same time, however, the 'war scare' was seen as somewhat fortuitous, because, despite the obvious dangers, it also provided an opportunity for Britain to increase its security in the region. The thinking behind this strategy was that if propaganda could be used to build up an atmosphere of crisis and to stress Britain's apparent readiness to resist any advance, Japan, with America still as an unknown quantity, might be deterred not only from war with Britain, but also from pressing on Thailand and Indo-China its claims for military bases. As well as this the crisis also offered the chance to bring to America's attention the increasingly tense climate in South East Asia, and pave the way for a more forward American policy.⁵⁷

One crucial aspect of the propaganda campaign was to use the media to print and broadcast reports that war with Japan was thought to be imminent; an activity which was co-ordinated by a sub-committee of the Far Eastern Committee.⁵⁸ However, there was also a diplomatic element comprising ~~of~~ two aims; first to persuade the United States to exert diplomatic pressure on Japan, and second to present Japan with the image of a country prepared for any eventuality. An approach to the Americans was first made on 6 February by Butler to Roosevelt's close confidant, Harry Hopkins, who was at this time in London on a mission to report on British morale. In this talk Butler made clear the British position and told Hopkins that-

'... we now felt that the Americans were lagging behind in their understanding of Japanese ambitions in the South Seas...'⁵⁹

Hopkins responded by noting unofficially that he was convinced that the United States would 'react immediately' to any further Japanese advance in the region; a reaction which naturally encouraged the Foreign Office to press their case even harder in Washington.⁶⁰

The initial move in relation to Japan came on 7 February when Eden called Shigemitsu to the Foreign Office to protest at the deterioration of Anglo-Japanese relations. A meeting had, in fact, already been scheduled before the telephone intercepts had appeared. The reason for this was that Cadogan had been gravely displeased with, what was in his eyes, the bland explanation Shigemitsu had given Butler on 31 January when asked to comment on Matsuoka's recent speeches, and thought that Eden should see the Ambassador to impress on him Britain's strong dislike for the Japanese Foreign Minister's ^{pronouncements} ~~pronouncements~~. If Cadogan had reacted less forthrightly, he might, however, have discovered that Shigemitsu's comments hinted at the real cause of the mixed signals coming from Japan, for the latter had observed to Butler that-

'... the crisis in Japan was as much on internal as on external issues ... and the anxiety of Japan's leaders could be seen by Prince Konoye's statement acknowledging his responsibility for the disasters in Japan.'⁶¹

The meeting between Eden and Shigemitsu on 7 February began with the Foreign Secretary stating that, since Matsuoka had entered the Japanese Government, relations had steadily worsened and that they had come to a new

low with the Japanese mediation of the Thai-French dispute. He then continued by noting that Craigie had forwarded evidence of widespread rumours in Japan that a crisis was expected during the next few weeks, and proceeded to ask if there was any substance to this. Shigemitsu was, not surprisingly, rather taken aback by this sudden outburst and tried to convince Eden that the situation was not as serious as the Foreign Secretary had made it out to be.⁶² He also reacted to Eden's criticisms by launching into his own survey of Anglo-Japanese relations which included the usual observation that just as Japan could be accused of aiding Germany so Britain had aided Japan's enemy, China, and also that-

'... it is geographically quite natural that Japan should hold the leading position in East Asia, and this cannot be helped. It is no different from the special interests which Britain and the United States of America feel in the neighbouring geographical countries. ... In stating the crisis in Anglo-Japanese relations, you do not try to understand the other party's standpoint but rather find fault with the Japan's policy [*sic*] and lay the blame on Japan. Do you think that such an explanation will serve to avert the impending crisis?'⁶³

It may appear from the above, considering what Britain knew of the information received at the Japanese Embassy, that Shigemitsu was displaying the most flagrant duplicity in this interview. In fact, however, he was genuinely surprised by Eden's protestations; the impression gained in British circles of an atmosphere of crisis in the Japanese Embassy had been all along the result of bad intelligence. The agent responsible for the interception of the telephone calls was a foreign journalist who only knew colloquial Japanese and it appears that he either accidentally mistranslated or, as M.I.2c later thought more likely, distorted messages deliberately to exaggerate his own importance.⁶⁴ However, it was only in May 1941 that M.I.2c came to this conclusion and throughout the course of the crisis the information from this source was assumed to be reliable. Other indicators could have shown from the start that Japan did not intend war in the immediate future, the most obvious being that the Japanese merchant fleet had not been called back into home waters, but this information was only related by the Director of Naval Intelligence to other departments on 12 February, when the decision had already been taken to use

the propaganda weapon.⁶⁵ The British were therefore labouring for about a week under the false premise of an imminent assault, although there is a distinct element in this of wilful ignorance.

To Craigie, as well as the Japanese, the spiralling of the situation into a full-scale war scare was difficult to understand and, in particular, he was puzzled at a message sent on 11 February ordering British merchant ships over 4000 tons not to proceed into waters north of Hong Kong.⁶⁶ He observed to the Foreign Office on 14 February-

'This would seem to be indicative of fear of some more immediate outbreak of hostilities in Far East than would be justified by anything I have said in my recent telegram. Possibly ... action is based on disturbing information contained in your most secret telegrams... No evidence available in Tokyo suggests however that Japanese are preparing for an immediate attack on British territory either in conjunction with German offensive elsewhere or independent of it...'⁶⁷

Craigie's concern was heightened further by the fact that due to Eden's talk with Shigemitsu he had been presented to the Japanese as the source of Britain's sudden panic. In a talk with Ōhashi Chūichi, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 12 February, he was faced with vigorous denials that Japan had any intention of going to war with Britain and received a stern questioning about the authenticity of his reports.⁶⁸ In London too, there were some doubts about whether the press campaign was letting the crisis get out of hand, which led Butler to note to Eden on 14 February-

'Now that the press has had its first fling on the Far East, we are trying to control it, particularly over the weekend. We do not want it to go too far.'⁶⁹

By 15 February, however, it was generally felt in London that the crisis was beginning to pass. To some degree this impression was influenced by a conversation that day between Craigie and Matsuoka where the latter had strongly confirmed the assurances given to the British Ambassador three days earlier by Ōhashi that Japan had no intention of going to war with Britain.⁷⁰ A more important factor was that evidence of a Japanese retreat was provided by further reports arising from the interception of the Japanese Embassy's phone conversations. Information obtained from the

Embassy source suggested that a telegram that had been expected had not arrived and that the Japanese were climbing down; the operator recorded-
'T. [presumably the Military Attaché, General Tatsumi Eiichi] ... could not understand how Britain had become aware of what was likely to happen ... but said the Amb. [Shigemitsu] seemed relieved and was like a man who had a load lifted from him.'⁷¹

These signs were backed up by further evidence which included knowledge of Matsuoka's intention to visit Europe in the near future, presumably obtained from interception, either by the Americans or Bletchley Park, of cables on the Tokyo-Berlin circuit.⁷² This helps to explain Churchill's deeply cryptic message to Cadogan on 16 February, in which he noted-

'These conversations and the delayed telegram have the air of being true, and make one feel the earlier conversations were real. If so, there is a decided easement, and the danger for the moment seems to have passed. The delayed telegram strongly favours this as naturally if they were not going to act, they would try to make amends to the Germans and Italians by sending their man on a diplomatic demonstration. Altogether I must feel very considerably assured. I have always been doubtful whether they would face it.'⁷³

The belief that the worst was over was fortified in the next few days by a number of decrypted telegrams from the British equivalent of the American MAGIC information (which were referred to as BJ's) confirming that the Gaimushō's sincerity when they assured Craigie that no attack was planned, which included one from Tokyo to the Consul-General Sydney, summarised by the FECB as stating that-

'All talk of impending crisis in Far East is nothing more than British propaganda aimed at winning over American public opinion, checking Japan's southward advance and hindering improvements of her relations with Thailand and Indo China; no action by Japan is indicated.'⁷⁴

The apparent decision by Japan to postpone the next phase of its southern advance was believed in London to be a triumph for the policy of publicising Japan's activities and for the effects of American pressure. Even from Tokyo Craigie observed to the Foreign Office on 20 February-

'... the situation is today easier than it was a week ago, and that the combined firm stand by the United States, Australia, the Netherlands and

ourselves has had a most salutary effect in calling bluff of the Japanese military is the opinion unanimously held by all colleagues with whom I am in contact.'⁷⁵

However, this was a rather dangerous lesson for Britain to draw from the crisis, for what the British authorities did not know was that the pressure exerted by the Western powers had only led to Japanese indecision because of the internal divisions within Japan itself. In particular splits had appeared within the Imperial Japanese Navy over the issue of whether to use military force to seize bases, with moderates such as Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, now the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, still convinced that any action which risked war with America should be avoided. British ignorance of the internal debate in Japan was, of course, not altogether surprising, and even if Craigie had reported on it the Foreign Office would on past form have probably doubted its significance. The result nevertheless was that Britain took away the false belief from this crisis that Japan could be deterred from further action by propaganda.⁷⁶

The 'war scare' was an important watershed in Anglo-Japanese relations and on the road to the Pacific War; it was the last crisis that Britain had to face more or less alone and the manner in which it been solved had important ramifications for the balance of power in East Asia. The chief effect was that it finally pushed the United States into taking the lead in the region and co-operating more fully with Britain. As indicated above this had been one of the major British aims in publicising the Japanese threat, and progress was made in a number of fields. In the area of military relations, although there was no promise to station the American fleet at Singapore, there was a greater willingness to get involved in joint planning and co-operation in the field of intelligence.⁷⁷ It also provoked Washington in the economic field into increasing the range of raw materials put under licence and generally exerting greater pressure on Japan. In particular the increasing seriousness with which the United States viewed its role in standing up to the aggressor states was seen in its policy towards the Latin American countries where during the spring of 1941 it brokered agreements for the pre-emptive buying of raw materials.⁷⁸

Another development in Anglo-American co-operation was the discussion of a joint declaration, which would also include the Dutch, designed to warn Japan that any further advance south would be treated as a matter of great concern. This was originally a British proposal which in early March, much to the surprise of Lord Halifax, was received favourably by Cordell Hull, with only the proviso that it should not be termed as an 'unqualified threat'.⁷⁹ The willingness of the Secretary of State to agree to such a move was greeted enthusiastically by Craigie who thought that the optimum time for such an announcement would be while Matsuoka was in Berlin as a means of countering Axis propaganda.⁸⁰ Unfortunately by May Hull began once again to shy away from joint action and nothing came of this plan, although from intercepts the British were well aware how disturbed Japan was at such a proposal, as Matsuoka had told Shigemitsu in one telegram 'to squash the idea.'⁸¹ The war scare had thus led the United States to take a more active role in East Asia, but did not yet mean that the Americans were ready to agree to the establishment of a 'tripwire', which if crossed would ensure a military response.

Another important effect of the crisis in February was that it led to the exchange of a series of letters between Matsuoka and Churchill. This correspondence was initially begun by the Japanese Foreign Minister who on 15 February communicated a message for Shigemitsu to pass to Eden. Matsuoka's letter, which in Eden's absence was passed to Churchill on 16 February, set the tone for his half of the subsequent correspondence, consisting largely of vague axioms; its only substantial proposal being a totally unacceptable plan for Japan to mediate a European peace settlement.⁸² The lack of substance in Matsuoka's letter did not come as any surprise to the Foreign Office and this impression was confirmed by a telegram from Craigie which noted-

'Most of my colleagues consider interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs on general questions of policy to be a waste of time. Certainly he has nailed his colours so firmly to the Axis mast that no amount of argument appears likely to achieve much result.'⁸³

Churchill, however, saw Matsuoka's letter as an opportunity to bring home to the latter the consequences of a Japanese alignment with Germany and on 24 February handed his reply to Shigemitsu.⁸⁴

Over the next month the Japanese Ambassador acted as the postman for this correspondence, which brought him into close contact with Churchill, who formed a positive impression and noted at the end of his report on the first of their conversations that-

'His whole attitude throughout was most friendly and deprecatory, and we have no doubt where he stands in these matters.'⁸⁵

Shigemitsu once again in these conversations with the Prime Minister raised the issue of British support for China, but to as little avail as before. The talks and the letters passing between Churchill and Matsuoka only helped to confirm the impression he had gathered from the war scare which was that Anglo-Japanese relations were beginning to approach the point of no return. This had the effect of making Shigemitsu increasingly despondent about the future and in a number of talks with Butler he began to express an almost fatalistic view. The most curious episode resulting from this tendency came in a talk with the Dutch Minister in London, Jankheer Michiels, when Shigemitsu advised that-

'... the Dutch negotiators in the Netherlands East Indies should be careful not to make any concessions to the Japanese delegation but should stand up to them with determination.'⁸⁶

Shigemitsu's distress was not lost on the British and when the head of the Far Eastern Department, John Sterndale Bennett, criticised the Ambassador for being insincere in espousing better Anglo-Japanese relations, R.A. Butler responded by producing a very accurate pen-portrait-

'This is not a quite correct picture of S's mind ... I consider S's views are of a different Northern and anti-Soviet school as opposed to the Southern expansionists. He may have to make the best of the Southern school but he doesn't like it. Nor does he want to fight America + ourselves though he may have to.'⁸⁷

Shigemitsu had not, however, completely given up on his aim of achieving an improvement of Anglo-Japanese relations, and on 10 March, in reporting a speech in London by the Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies in which the latter had proposed that 'difficulties in the Pacific be overcome through the frank exchange of views', he noted to Tokyo-

'... I think that we can take this speech of Menzies as a gesture of friendship from Great Britain who earnestly desires peace in the Pacific

Ocean.'⁸⁸

This hope inspired Shigemitsu to reopen the link with Hankey in an effort to find common ground. A meeting subsequently took place on Saturday, 22 March, at General Piggott's home in Ewhurst, and minutes of the meeting were taken by Piggott.⁸⁹ The main content of the discussion rested on the Ambassador's complaint that Britain was not doing enough to help improve relations with Japan, and that this ~~that~~ was allowing the Axis powers to exert great influence over Japanese policy. To support this point Shigemitsu referred to a letter he had received from Kurusu Saburo, the former Japanese Ambassador to Germany, which stated that the former's work had progressed so slowly that-

' "whereas a hundred yen might have saved the situation before the Pact, many thousands would be necessary now to put matters right."⁹⁰

The Ambassador was under no illusion as to where the present trend in Japanese foreign policy could lead, openly admitting that there could be war in the Pacific. He was also not blind to the fact that it would be a war that in the long run Japan could not win. The conversation was useful and frank but it was the events of the next day which were more significant.

After pondering the discussion that had taken place, Shigemitsu came to the conclusion that one solution to the current difficulties was to take up a suggestion that had been made by Matsuoka's private secretary, Kase Toshikazu, previously Second Secretary at the London Embassy, and meet with Matsuoka while the latter visited Europe. He believed that this would be of use because he felt that one reason for the deterioration of relations was that the Foreign Minister had either not seen or not taken seriously his reports on the likelihood of British victory in the European war and thus had banked too heavily on an Axis triumph. Therefore on the Sunday morning, with Hankey now gone, Shigemitsu came round once more to talk to Piggott and suggested that it would be a good thing for both sides if Matsuoka could return to Japan from his European trip via London. Piggott passed this suggestion on to Hankey, while Shigemitsu himself wired back the idea to Konoe in Tokyo.⁹¹ The problem was that it soon transpired that Matsuoka had firmly decided on the need to return through the Soviet Union, and thus a visit to Britain could not be fitted into his schedule.

Shigemitsu responded to this obstacle by proposing that instead he should meet the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Europe, and suggested that the most suitable place would be Berne at the time when Matsuoka would be returning from Italy to Germany.⁹²

Once this proposal had been agreed upon, the problem was how Shigemitsu would be able to get from Britain to the rendezvous point in war-time Europe. The only way that this could be achieved was if Shigemitsu could get a priority-passage flight from the British Government to travel to Lisbon and then another flight from Portugal to Barcelona and from there to Berne by train. To arrange permission for the first stage of his journey Shigemitsu explained his intentions to Butler, and asked Hankey to forward his request to Churchill. Both men subsequently wrote letters to the Prime Minister requesting permission for the flight on Shigemitsu's behalf and supported their case by praising the Japanese Ambassador. In his letter of 28 March Butler observed-

'The only objection I can see is that he might take out material with him which would be of value to the enemy, but the great advantage of his giving to M. Matsuoka a proper view of the British war effort and the state of Europe outweighs the other risk. We have every reason for believing that M. Shigemitsu has a proper idea of our war effort and a true appreciation of the certain outcome of the war.'⁹³

Hankey meanwhile on 31 March noted in support of the mission that-

'Shigemitsu who professes (genuinely I think) to believe in the certainty of our victory is by no means certain that his reports are sufficiently read or taken to heart by Matsuoka and that is one reason he wants to make this contact.'⁹⁴

Churchill too, looked favourably on the idea of Shigemitsu meeting Matsuoka, not only for the above reasons, but also because the Ambassador could act as a direct messenger to Matsuoka for the latest letter from the Prime Minister, and therefore on 31 March Churchill persuaded the War Cabinet to agree to provide a flight to Lisbon.⁹⁵

The hopes for a meeting were, however, to be dashed late on 31 March when a telegram from Matsuoka stated that once again he had changed his schedule and had decided to leave Italy earlier than originally planned. He would

now be leaving Italy on 3 April and returning directly to Berlin. At such short notice it was impossible for Shigemitsu to get to Berne, a journey which he had found out would take him almost a week. In this situation Matsuoka suggested that Shigemitsu see him in Berlin, a proposal that was firmly rejected by the latter as it would clearly have been unacceptable to the British Government.⁹⁶ The end result was that on 1 April Shigemitsu with some regret had to inform Butler that the proposal had been aborted, and Butler noted that in his report on the conversation-

'Mr. Shigemitsu seemed to realise that the Japanese have messed things up and that he was losing a good opportunity of communicating with his own Foreign Minister.'⁹⁷

Shigemitsu's disappointment at this episode was made all the more profound over the coming days with the news from Moscow on 13 April that Matsuoka on his return trip to Japan had signed a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union. This event, which must have been most distasteful for Shigemitsu with his finely tuned distrust of the Russians, did not augur well for Anglo-Japanese relations as it appeared to relieve Japan of the threat of a war on two fronts, and free her for a further campaign of southern expansion.⁹⁸ Consequently Shigemitsu, who was also aware of the effect that German successes in Yugoslavia and Greece would have on the extremists, sent on 18 April a very carefully balanced cable to Japan which stressed the need for continuing caution-

'Assuming it is our duty to join this war, we should choose the moment judiciously. For us to plunge precipitately into the struggle at the present moment would not be to the best interests of the Axis powers.... However, when it appears that the war is reaching a conclusive stage, we should join the fight. I mean to say that when both England and the United States have exhausted their national strength and when the situation would be made decisive by Japan's participation we should certainly take the plunge...

In a word, the exercise of our basic policy must be determined first and foremost by our national strength. That is the primary consideration. Nations who now plunge hastily into this war, and I mean even the United States, are going to dissipate their stamina. Countries that remain aloof like Soviet Russia, and none save these, occupy a favourable position.

Every indication points to this. I think this last point merits our most profound consideration.'⁹⁹

On 7 May he expanded further on this argument by noting that the rigours of the European conflict were already exacerbating the racial divisions within the British Empire and that by encouraging the aspirations of Britain's Asian subjects Japan could achieve its aim of an Asia free of European power without the need to recourse to war. He also warned-

'The exhaustion and destruction of the war are becoming grave. If we enter the war our national strength will be spent. The Italian defeat is an example. As time goes on, the British and American interest in the Far East will decline.'¹⁰⁰,

Despite the logic of Shigemitsu's argument, his pleas for restraint were undermined by one major factor, namely that it appeared in Japan as if the Western powers were set upon a policy of encirclement and in particular of using their economic power to curb Japanese ambitions. The Ambassador was, of course, not unaware of this belief but still held out the hope that the impression of an economic siege could be overcome by persuading the British to take a more conciliatory line over the proposed Payments Agreement, and in particular to accept the draft that had been presented in December 1940, which would pave the way for a reopening of Anglo-Japanese trade. This optimism was once again misplaced, as British interest in a Payments Agreement had dwindled with the increase of restrictions on trade with Japan which had curbed the flow of sterling into Tokyo, and also the cessation of the market in sterling at Shanghai.¹⁰¹ The British were also wary of signing an agreement because of the uncertainty of the foreign reaction and in a meeting of the Far Eastern Committee on 8 May a general discussion agreed that-

'... any agreement with the Japanese at the present juncture would be likely to be misunderstood both in China and in the United States of America and would arouse suspicions (however groundless) that H.M. Government were embarking on a policy of appeasement vis à vis Japan.'¹⁰²

The decision to bring the talks to an end was communicated by Butler to Shigemitsu at a meeting on 16 May when he told the Ambassador that-

'... I did not think his Government could expect us to discuss the

improvement of trade relations between us, against the background of recent decisions of Japanese policy, which were punctuated by the unfriendly utterances of the Japanese Foreign Minister.'¹⁰³

In response Shigemitsu asked whether a Payments Agreement could be concluded if the Japanese dropped the clauses in their draft linking sterling to a commitment to withdraw restrictions, and settled instead for merely a verbal agreement over the latter issue. In support of this proposal the Ambassador told Butler that-

'... he found in the Payments Agreement the only opportunity for maintaining discussion of any sort between our two Governments in a period of crisis.'¹⁰⁴

This was, of course, grasping at straws and Butler was unable to agree to any such proposal. Shigemitsu's bitter reaction to this latest setback and to British policy in general was evident in a further talk with Butler at the end of the month, when he stated-

'... the China incident and the economic policy of Great Britain and America were both considerable impediments to any progress being made in Anglo-Japanese relations ... that our economic policy towards Japan was vindictive.'¹⁰⁵

With the failure to initiate any new trade negotiations Shigemitsu's position in London looked increasingly hopeless; he was faced with the situation where he had a Foreign Minister who was concerned solely with flirting with the Axis powers and who ignored his advice, and with a host country whose attitude towards Japan was getting ever more rigid: the gap in Anglo-Japanese relations was thus widening, despite all his efforts. It was patently clear in this environment that there was little likelihood that he would be able to persuade the British to take a more conciliatory line, and he therefore noted in 'Japan and her Destiny' that it was at this point that he decided that the most useful contribution he could make to the cause of continued peace with the West was to return to Tokyo. There he would be able to fulfil his desire, which had been frustrated in April, of meeting Matsuoka and persuading him that the threat of war had become increasingly serious, and thus hopefully precipitate a decisive volte-face in Japanese policy away from the Axis and towards the Democracies.¹⁰⁶

Shigemitsu's telling of this story is, however, somewhat economical with the truth; far from returning to Japan to tell Matsuoka what was on his mind, the reality was that he had been recalled. On 22 May he had received from Tokyo a telegram informing him of Matsuoka's decision to relieve him and he was told-

'Your Honor will never return to your post, so please make arrangements with that in mind. Great Britain made an inquiry and in reply I informed Craigie that while in Europe, I had no opportunity to confer with Your Honor and consequently now am ordering you to return to get first hand reports from you. Will you please give the same explanation to the British Government.'¹⁰⁷

As a result of these orders Shigemitsu saw Butler two days later and informed him that he had decided to return to Japan as he put it-

'... to report personally to Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs about the position in this country, and the attitude which he thought Japan ought to take to Great Britain.'¹⁰⁸

He then asked for facilities to be provided for him to return to Japan in June via the United States.

This display did not fool the Foreign Office, who, due to their ability to read the Japanese diplomatic code, knew full well the real motive for Shigemitsu's departure. It was decided in the Foreign Office that the best policy in the circumstances was to fête Shigemitsu before he left and, after a request passed on from Arthur Edwardes that the Ambassador be allowed to see the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister before he left, Eden wrote to Churchill suggesting that the latter should have a talk with the Ambassador, and noted-

'I have reason to believe that he does not at present intend to return to this country. As you know, he is personally a good friend of ours, so we may as well buttress him with a little attention here before he leaves.'¹⁰⁹

This obviously brings into play the question of how Britain knew that Shigemitsu was genuinely friendly. It must be presumed that this was not simply based on the warm praise of Britain's war effort that he had expressed to Butler on a number of occasions, but more likely on information derived from the BJ source. In relation to this it is interesting to note that in his diary entry for 14 May 1941 Captain Malcolm

Kennedy, who by this time was stationed at Bletchley, noted that Piggott had told him that-

'... both Shigemitsu and Tatsumi ... have been very outspoken in their criticism of Matsuoka and his policy. This, of course, serves to bear out and amplify what one has learned from other sources.'¹¹⁰

The assessment of Shigemitsu as a 'friend' made Churchill agreeable to a meeting and also led to a farewell luncheon being arranged at the Foreign Office on 9 June which was attended by Eden, Butler and Lord Moyne, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Shigemitsu at this lunch made a last forlorn attempt to persuade his hosts to compromise over the trade issue, but to no avail.¹¹¹ The Ambassador also bade farewell to other senior British figures in his last week in Britain, and this round of engagements included a lunch with Hankey at the Savoy where he told the latter, according to Hankey's diary, that he valued his 'opinion and friendship more than that of any other man in this country.'¹¹² On 12 June he met Leith Ross for the final time and engaged in his last bid to persuade Britain to relax its economic restrictions. Although he began by reiterating the usual Japanese line, towards the end of the conversation he veered towards what appears to be a more personal line and, according to Leith Ross's summary of the talk, he said that-

'[Japan] had made many mistakes in her policy towards China, but now both the civilians and the military were agreed that peace should be made without territorial gains and without indemnities. ... [H]e ... regretted that collaboration with us had not been arranged at the time when I went out to China.'¹¹³

Shigemitsu finally left Britain on a flight to Lisbon 17 June and his departure was marked by an officially inspired editorial in the Times praising his efforts for peace.

Shigemitsu's fears for the future of Anglo-Japanese relations were to a lesser degree mirrored in the spring and summer of 1941 by Craigie. The British Ambassador's doubts began to emerge after the 'war scare' largely as a result of the ever tightening economic noose being drawn around Japan. Like the Japanese Ambassador, he viewed the policy of economic restrictions as having the greatest potential to cause conflict; this did not mean,

however, that he was opposed to sanctions but rather that he was worried about the range of goods that they covered and the degree to which they were implemented. It would therefore be a mistake to contend that any fundamental difference over policy separated him from the Foreign Office during the period between March and June, the position was more subtle than that, but nevertheless the views that Craigie expressed over these months did anticipate the arguments that led to the deep split that developed in the autumn.

In the initial wake of the crisis in February Craigie kept up the tough stand towards Japan which he had espoused since October 1940. In a telegram of 22 February, when it still appeared possible that Japan would demand bases as payment for its mediation of the Thai-French dispute, he urged that Japanese control over Cam Ranh Bay or Saigon should be met by reinforcements for Malaya and the strengthening of economic sanctions.¹¹⁴ When subsequent to this the Ministry of Economic Warfare suggested the blacklisting of Okura, Mitsubishi and Mitsui, Craigie immediately notified them of his assent.¹¹⁵ He also continued in his hostility to Matsuoka, believing that the Foreign Minister's visit to Europe was clear proof of the latter's pro-Axis attitude, and even went as far as to suggest to the Foreign Office on 18 March that-

'I ... hope that it may be possible to air raid Berlin during Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs visit. In his conversations with me he has always tended to take my statements in regard to growing power of the R.A.F. with a grain of salt and I consider the effect of heavy raid would be very salutary.'¹¹⁶

Craigie also took a very severe view of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, which he saw as further evidence of Japan's ambition to expand southward, and he noted to London on 15 April-

'... we must now, more than ever, be on our guard against a Japanese move southward... . It is the moment to keep our powder dry; to make it clear that our policy in Far East has not been affected in the slightest by this development; and, while abstaining from unnecessary provocation and in particular from any further publicity in regard to our reinforcements in Malaya and Burma, to stiffen if anything our general attitude towards this

country.'¹¹⁷

On the surface this reads as a call to arms, but in fact the most important feature to notice in explaining Craigie's attitude at this point is the proviso that British actions should avoid being provocative. This was to be the crux of the divisions between Craigie and London in the spring and summer of 1941.

There were a number of issues over which this split developed. As noted in the quotation above, one of these was the policy pursued by the Ministry of Information of loudly publicising the arrival of each new batch of reinforcements in Malaya. Craigie felt this was mistaken, because he believed that those the British wanted to impress with their strength, the Japanese Army and Navy, would learn of the arrival of these forces whether it was publicised or not, and that to make a big event out of reinforcements only contributed to the impression that either Britain was bluffing about its strength in the region or that the Western powers were intent on encircling Japan. To Craigie these constituted needless provocations, but in London the policy was viewed as a valuable weapon in restraining the Japanese, and Craigie was seen as being too sensitive to Japanese feelings.¹¹⁸

Craigie also became involved in another defence controversy at this juncture, concerning the American decision in May 1941 to transfer part of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor to the Atlantic. On 7 May, after being asked to forward his views on this matter, Craigie argued that any such American action would be taken in Japan as indicating that the United States was preparing to enter the European War, and that-

'... the belief in extremist circles that Japan could attack us without becoming involved with the United States would be greatly strengthened.'¹¹⁹

The Far Eastern Department broadly concurred in this opinion, and on 8 May Eden used Craigie's critique at a War Cabinet meeting to show the doubts that existed about the American proposal. This argument did not, however, convince Churchill, who was determined not to oppose any American suggestion for fear of antagonizing Washington and who subsequently decreed that the telegram should not be forwarded to the Dominions.¹²⁰ Thus for a second time the Prime Minister and Craigie had clashed over American policy

in the Pacific, and just as in October 1940, the division between them had been due to Churchill's earnest desire to get the Americans into the war and his downplaying of the likelihood of Japan entering the war.

The chief focus of Craigie's fears was not over the military side of deterrence but over its economic manifestations. His first real doubts in this field came in March 1941 when Vice-Minister Ōhashi complained to him about the Canadian decision to put licence restrictions on the export of wheat.¹²¹ Craigie took the Vice-Minister's complaint very seriously and consequently noted to the Foreign Office-

'... it may have unnecessarily harmful effects here, particularly as there is no reason to suspect enemy destination [Germany]: to give Japanese pretext, however faint, for shifting to our shoulders, the blame for growing food shortage in Japan would be to play into German hands, so I suggest that restrictions on exports of food ... should as far as possible be avoided.'¹²²

The doubts engendered by this issue were expanded further after another talk with Ōhashi on 11 April in which the Vice-Minister had challenged Craigie about the motives for British trade restrictions, and the Ambassador consequently ^{had} to reply with the official line that they were only designed to preserve vital raw materials for the war effort and to prevent the re-export of commodities to Germany, and not as sanctions against Japan.¹²³ This unconvincing explanation of British policy allied with the dangers caused by the unilateral Canadian action over wheat made Craigie believe that the policy of economic sanctions was in urgent need of rationalization.

The result was that on 30 April Craigie sent a memorandum to London, drawn up with his Canadian and Australian colleagues in Tokyo, that attempted to set out clearly the aims of British policy and the methods by which they could be achieved.¹²⁴ The memorandum began by clearly differentiating between sanctions designed to influence Japan not to expand southwards and those to be introduced as reprisals against any further Japanese *fait accomplis*. In relation to the first scenario Craigie warned against the use of too provocative restrictions, and with the case of the Canadian wheat in mind, he stressed that it must be made clear to the Japanese as an

incentive for peace that-

'... provided that Japan does not go further in her policy of southward expansion or in seeking a privileged position in Eastern Asia, there is no intention of interfering with the available food supply and raw materials for internal consumption in Japan or for supply of Japan's normal peacetime industry.'¹²⁵

Over the issue of how to react in the face of another crisis, Craigie proposed that the best idea was to respond with a 'slight turn of the screw', so that Japan would be aware of the cost of further expansion, and then, if Japan still moved forward, to take firmer action, but in the realization that it could lead to war. Craigie felt that these proposals would provide Britain with greater flexibility in its sanctions policy and allow for stricter co-ordination within the Empire and he concluded the memorandum by noting that-

'The Japanese realisation that such machinery had been perfected, combined with the knowledge that we were at present using our powers with discretion and moderation, would in itself constitute one of the best deterrents against unwise or hasty action by Japan in South Eastern Asia.'¹²⁶

The reaction in the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare to Craigie's memorandum was to argue that the issues it raised, such as co-ordination, had been dealt with already in the Far Eastern Committee, and that the difference he postulated between the two types of sanctions was artificial and unconvincing. John Troutbeck, the head of the Japan desk at the Ministry, noted in relation to the latter-

'The only limitation to our action should be the danger of forcing Japan to violent reactions, and that danger remains whether Japan makes a move or not. ... [W]e must get away from this false antithesis of a comparatively good Japan and a possibly bad Japan. Japan is already bad, and our whole policy is based on this obvious fact... '¹²⁷

Another disagreement that London had with Craigie's thinking was over his assertion that Britain should not restrict supplies of foodstuffs or raw materials designed solely for Japanese consumption. The Foreign Office told Craigie of their reservations in a telegram to Tokyo on 21 May, which informed him-

'We can only agree not to interfere with foodstuffs in so far as they are

genuinely needed for internal consumption and not intended either for exports to the enemy or to replace exports to the enemy. Fats is a case in point. ... [O]ur attitude to raw materials must also be qualified by our desire to make Japan draw on her accumulated reserves as well as by our desire to make her feel the effects of ranging herself against the Democracies.¹²⁸

The issue of fats raised in the Foreign Office telegram was particularly important at this time because Britain had begun within the last month or so to restrict exports to Japan of copra (coconut oil) from its Pacific islands and North Borneo. This was part of an attempt to force Japan to cut back on the export of soya bean oil to Germany, which was woefully short of fats, as copra was used widely in Japan as a cooking oil. Craigie was, however, not convinced by this argument of strategic necessity and believed instead that this action was highly dangerous, because, like wheat, it could be presented by the Japanese Government to the people as clear evidence of the West's attempts to force Japan to its knees and thus with an opportunity to justify retaliation.¹²⁹ Again he pressed the Foreign Office to show some leniency, advising that at the very least small consignments be allowed to reach Japan, but he received no satisfaction, as the Ministry of Economic Warfare refused to compromise.¹³⁰

The dispute between Craigie and London over sanctions occurred simultaneously with a renewed atmosphere of crisis in South East Asia. By the end of May 1941 it was apparent that the Dutch-Japanese economic talks in Batavia were close to collapse, and that this could only lead to a further worsening of Japan's economic position. On 22 May, in anticipation of this event, Matsuoka asked Craigie to see him to discuss whether it would be possible to use Britain's good offices to rescue the talks. Craigie did not support Matsuoka's proposal, but he did feel that the situation raised an opportunity for Britain and the Netherlands to make a joint enquiry to the Japanese about the quantities of each commodity that they wished to import and whether they were willing to give a guarantee against re-export.¹³¹ The Foreign Office reaction to this idea was little short of consternation, and Henry Ashley Clarke of the Far Eastern Department noted-

'... bitter experience has shown that to engage in negotiations with the Japanese on a sore point, e.g. Customs (1938), Tientsin (1939), Burma Road (1940), so far from delaying or attenuating a crisis, usually precipitates one and relations with Japan become strained to the utmost.'¹³²

When Craigie was informed that the Foreign Office deprecated any effort to negotiate, he quickly responded by arguing that-

'Admittedly, it would be difficult to secure these guarantees in the present circumstances, particularly if Japan is likely to be in a position to obtain her full supplies despite our efforts: but I am unable to appreciate the force of the argument against even making the attempt.'¹³³

His pleas, however, fell on deaf ears, for what he was proposing clashed with the new basis of British policy which was that sanctions would, in fact, have to become harsher so that Japan would have to draw on the stockpiles collected in the autumn and winter of 1940/1 as a result of American tardiness in introducing proper restrictions.

There was then an accumulation of disputes between Craigie and London over the nature of economic sanctions in the summer of 1941 arising from their increasing range and effectiveness. This series of issues helped to concentrate Craigie's doubts about the growing severity of the economic restrictions and led him to warn the Foreign Office in his reply to their telegram of 21 May that the sanctions policy was becoming ever more dangerous; in one passage he noted prophetically-

'To extend restrictions on Japanese imports to an extent that would force Japan to draw on her reserves on any considerable scale would at present be liable to produce those very reactions we wish to avoid. The elements here in favour of violent measures would be able to point out that we had in fact embarked on a policy of withholding normal current supplies from Japan, and that it was therefore essential to secure those supplies from sources outside our control.'¹³⁴

The warnings emanating from Craigie did not have any great effect on Whitehall. On 12 June the Far Eastern Committee considered his 30 April memorandum but his ideas were dismissed as being largely outdated and greater appreciation was shown a little later for a Ministry of Economic Warfare memorandum summarising the developments in the field of economic sanctions since October 1940. This paper noted the growing scale of the

restrictions, the expansion of co-operation with the United States, the Dominions and the Dutch, and the steady easing of Japan out of Latin American markets, and concluded-

'The Japanese are, it may be hoped, finding it more and more difficult to avoid drawing on their reserves. In every part of the world they are meeting with obstruction ultimately caused either by British or United States action... While it would be foolish to claim that they are as yet seriously weakened, it would be equally foolish to deny that they are becoming increasingly alarmed.'¹³⁵

This memorandum was correct in assessing that the Japanese were becoming alarmed; it was, however, wrong in its implication that this would lead to a less aggressive Japan. Increasingly in Japan, once it was clear that the Dutch talks had collapsed, there were calls from within both the Army and the Navy for a renewal of the southern advance in order to secure access to the strategic raw materials on which the 'self existence of the Japanese Empire' depended. On 16 June at a Liaison Conference the Army Chief of Staff, General Sugiyama Gen, with the support of the Navy Chief of Staff, Admiral Nagano Osami, insisted that south Indo-China must be occupied by the end of July so that Japan would have the option of a military advance later in the year if the present level of economic pressure had not ceased.¹³⁶ This was the beginning of the final phase in the path to the Pacific War, and the development that both Shigemitsu and Craigie had feared would arise from the economic stranglehold that was developing around Japan. For as they had warned London, the policy of sanctions was not deterring the Japanese extremists from action it was rather provoking them to launch new adventures that would greatly increase the prospects of war.

NOTES

1. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry for 12 February 1941, Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University Library, Diary 4/36.
2. See D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-1941. A Study in Competitive Co-operation*. (Europa, London, 1981) pp.137-141, and M.A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares For Total War. The Search For*

Economic Security, 1919-1941. (Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, N.Y. 1987) pp.192-197.

3. PRO CAB96/1 FE(40)3 Ministry of Economic Warfare to R.A. Butler 5 September 1940.
4. The idea for the setting up of the Far Eastern Committee originated with J. Sterndale Bennett, the head of the Far Eastern Department in the Foreign Office who felt that the Burma Road crisis showed the need for greater co-ordination, see PRO FO371/24670 F4489/43/10 J. Sterndale Bennett Memorandum 1 October 1940. For the work of the Far Eastern Committee see P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941.* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) Appendix C pp.292-294, and W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade Vol.2.* (HMSO, London, 1959) p.68.
5. PRO CAB65/9 WM 264(40) War Cabinet conclusions 2 October 1940.
6. PRO CAB66/14 WP(40)484 Far Eastern Committee report 17 December 1940.
7. See W.N. Medlicott, *op.cit.* pp.70-72.
8. PRO FO371/24722 F4626/4605/61 Lord Lothian to Lord Halifax 9 October 1940. See also R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945.* (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1979) p.242, and A. Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific.* (Longman, London, 1987) pp.121-122, and D. Reynolds, *op.cit.* p.141.
9. PRO FO371/24710 F4888/193/61 N. Butler to Lord Halifax 23 October 1940. See also M. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares For Total War.* p.195, and W.N. Medlicott, *op.cit.* p.71.
10. On the American presence at the Singapore Conference see PRO CAB79/7 COS(40) Chiefs of Staff 360th meeting 26 October, and for the visit of Commander Wisden to the Philippines see ADM199/1477 Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) to Commander-in-Chief China Station and Captain on Staff 22 October 1940, and Commander-in-Chief China station to Director of Naval Intelligence 3 November 1940.
11. PRO FO371/24710 F4710/193/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 14 October 1940.
12. PRO FO371/24736 F4811/626/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 16 October 1940.
13. PRO FO371/24726 F5063/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 9 November 1940.
14. Ibid, see also K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads, 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Diplomacy.* (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986), and P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.219.
15. A list of disturbing developments in German-Japanese relations is included in PRO FO371/24737 F5696/626/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 21

December 1940. For information on British suspicions of Japanese collaboration with the activities of German raiders in the Pacific see the files FO371/25162, FO371/28814 and ADM1/10294. British ire was particularly raised by the bombardment of the island of Nauru on 27 December 1940 by a raider which had approached the island flying the Japanese flag and calling itself the *Nanyo Maru*. It was thought very likely that the raider had recently taken on provisions in the Marshall Islands, which were a Japanese Mandate. See also J.W.M. Chapman (ed.), *The Price of Admiralty. The War Diary of the German Naval Attaché in Japan 1939-1943*. (Univ. of Sussex Press, Lewes, 1984) entries for 28-30 December 1940, pp.343-344.

16. PRO FO371/24737 F5696/626/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 21 December 1940. Matsuoka had made his vague warning to Craigie eleven days earlier see FO371/24726 F5542/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 9 December 1941.
17. On the background to the Thai-French dispute and the attitude of the Powers see S. Nagaoka, 'The Drive into Southern Indochina and Thailand' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice. Japan's Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939-1941*. (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1980) pp.209-221, N. Brailey, *Thailand and the Fall of Singapore. A Frustrated Asian Revolution*. (Westview, Boulder, Col., 1986) pp.93-97, and E.T. Flood, 'The 1940 Franco-Thai Border Dispute and Phibun Sonkhraam's Commitment to Japan.' in *Journal of Southeast Asian History* Vol.10 No.3 pp.306-327.
18. On British and American differences see G.R. Hess, 'The Emergence of U.S. Influence in Southeast Asia' in A. Iriye and W. Cohen (eds.), *American, Chinese, and Japanese Perspectives on Wartime Asia 1931-1941* (Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, DE, 1990) pp.187-192.
19. PRO FO371/24737 F5695/626/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 21 December 1940.
20. PRO FO371/24711 F5359/193/61 Lord Halifax to A.V. Alexander 26 November 1940. See also A.J. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941*. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981) pp.138-139.
21. Ibid, A.V. Alexander to Lord Halifax 29 November 1940.
22. In one particular episode in January 1941 Churchill reacted violently to a proposal contained in a draft letter from the Chiefs of Staff to the Commander-in Chief Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, for air reinforcements to Malaya, by arguing that he could see no reason for the diversion of such large forces. See PRO PREM 3 156/3 W. Churchill to General H. Ismay 13 January 1941.
23. PRO FO371/24726 F5173/23/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 December 1940.
24. PRO FO371/24711 F5426/193/61 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 4 December 1940. See also A.J. Marder, op.cit. p.138.

25. PRO FO371/24711 F5732/193/61 N. Butler to A. Eden 25 December 1940.
26. PRO FO837/530 T33/65/Z Vol.1 N. Butler to Ministry of Economic Warfare 24 December 1940. See also W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.72-73.
27. PRO CAB66/14 WP(40)484 Far Eastern Committee Report 18 December 1940.
28. A particular target of the Ministry of Economic Warfare was the trade between Latin America and Japan, and a number of ships such as the *Kanto Maru* and the *Ana Maru* were stopped at Cape Town. The British, however, did not have such great success in ships that opted to travel via the Panama Canal as the Americans were opposed to contraband control in the Caribbean and the Canadians were reluctant to agree to interceptions in the Pacific. See PRO FO371/20581 for details on the particular cases.
29. PRO FO371/20581 W12072/8/49 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 29 November 1940.
30. PRO T160/1094 F16244/2 S.D. Waley to R. Howe 20 December 1939.
31. PRO FO371/24732 F2335/103/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 4 April 1940.
32. PRO FO371/24733 F3242/103/23 S.D. Waley memorandum 27 June 1940.
33. PRO FO371/24733 F4013/103/23 S.D. Waley to S. Okamoto 26 August 1940.
34. PRO FO371/24734 F4484/103/23 Sir R. Craigie to Lord Halifax 22 October 1940.
35. PRO FO371/24734 F5433/103/23 S. Kamimura to S.D. Waley 16 December 1940.
36. PRO FO371/24711 F5397/193/61 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 2 December 1940.
37. Ibid, Shigemitsu also raised the issue of British policy towards China in a talk with Butler on 1 November; for an account of this latter conversation see P. Lowe, op.cit. p.217.
38. PRO FO371/24711 F5283/193/61 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 22 November 1940. On the Nanking Agreement which followed the failure of Japan to entice the Kuomintang into talks see K. Usui, 'The Politics of War, 1937-1941.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The China Quagmire. Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent, 1933-1941.* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1984) pp.394-435, and A. Iriye, op.cit. pp.123-126.
39. PRO CAB63/177 Hankey Papers, Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Lord Hankey 30 September 1940,
40. Ibid, Lord Hankey to Major-General F.S.G. Piggott 8 October 1940.

41. PRO FO371/27901 F234/27/23 Lord Lloyd to Lord Halifax 4 December 1940. See also Lord Hankey affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, Defence Exhibit 3547, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Vol.XIV* (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34512.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid, Lord Halifax to Lord Lloyd 17 December 1940.
44. For details on the tide of events in January 1941 see S. Hatano & S. Asada, 'The Japanese Decision to Move South' in R. Boyce & E.M. Robertson, *Paths to War. New Essays on the Origins of the Second World War*. (Macmillan, London, 1989.) pp.392-394. S. Nagaoka, op.cit. pp.222-231, and A. Iriye, op.cit. pp.131-132.
45. See S. Nagaoka, op.cit. pp.227-228, and K. Sato, op.cit. p.96.
46. For the split between the Gaimushō and the Services see J. Tsunoda, 'The Navy's Role in the Southern Strategy' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice*. op.cit. pp.283-295.
47. PRO WO208/892 Captain of Intelligence Staff (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) 24 January and 25 January 1941. See also ADM199/411 War Diary of Admiral Sir G. Layton, January and February 1941. For general accounts of the February 'war scare' see C. Hosoya, 'Britain and the US in Japan's View of the International System, 1937-1941' in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) pp.66-70, A.J. Marder, op.cit. pp.185-187, and P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.220-225.
48. PRO WO208/892 Captain of Intelligence Staff (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) 23 January 1941.
49. Ibid, BJ 087213 Japanese Minister (Bangkok) to Tokyo 28 January 1941, no decryption date. One of the 'straws in the wind' that led to the crisis in February was a report from the Dutch that they had intercepted a telephone conversation in East Java between two Japanese who had talked of an attack to be launched on 10 February, see PRO FO371/27962 F523/523/23 Consul E. Meiklereid (Sourabaya) to Captain of Intelligence Staff (Singapore) 1 February 1941. On the general exchange of intelligence between the Dutch and the British see ADM199/1477. There was, however, a great deal of confusion about what exactly Japan was planning; on 24 January Lt. Col. D. Mackenzie of M.I.2c minuted after reading BJ 087059 [not traced] 'The Japanese do not seem to have made up their minds what policy to follow.', see WO208/1901.
50. PRO FO371/27760 F454/9/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 27 January 1941.
51. PRO FO371/27760 F540/9/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 3 February 1941. This telegram was recommended for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff to the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee on 5 February 1941, see CAB79/9 COS(41) Chiefs of Staff 43rd meeting 5 February 1941 10.30 AM.

52. PRO PREM 3 156/6 'Japanese Intentions' Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee report 5 February 1941. Also quoted in A.J. Marder, op.cit. pp.186-187.
53. PRO CAB80/25 COS(41)73 Annex 1 'Measures to Avert War With Japan' Chiefs of Staff report 6 February 1941.
54. PRO WO208/855 Entry for 5 February, in Summary of Intelligence 5 February to 25 February 1941, M.I.2c undated report. This information was forwarded to Washington and Tokyo on 6 February, see FO371/27962 F523/523/23 A. Eden to Lord Halifax 6 February 1941, Telegrams 714 and 727. Churchill refused, however, to let these telegrams be forwarded to the Dominions, although there is no clear reason mentioned for this decision.
55. Sir A. Cadogan diary entry for 6 February 1941 in D. Dilks (ed.), The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan, 1938-1945. (Puttnam, New York, 1971) p.353.
56. See WO208/882 Lt. Colonel K.W.D. Strong to Director of Military Intelligence 8 February 1941. This report also noted that a reliable source had reported that the German build-up in S.E. Europe was a cover for a surprise attack on Britain.
57. The proposal to initiate a propaganda campaign came from the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, see 'JIC(41)61 'Possible Action Against Japan' 7 February 1941, enclosure in appendix to PRO CAB79/9 COS(41) Chiefs of Staff 46th meeting 8 February 1941. The policy of pressing the Americans to restrain the Japanese was officially suggested by the Chiefs of Staff in a report on 6 February and discussed by the Chiefs with Eden the next day, see PRO CAB80/25 COS(41)73 Annex 1 'Measures to Avert War With Japan' Chiefs of Staff report 6 February 1941, and CAB79/9 A. Eden/Chiefs of Staff meeting 7 February 1941. On the general issue of how Britain used propaganda to manipulate the crisis for its own purposes see C. Hosoya, op.cit. p.70 and K. Sato, op.cit. p.101.
58. The proposal for a Propaganda Sub-Committee was made at a meeting of the Far Eastern Committee on 6 February, see PRO CAB96/2 FE(41) 6th meeting 6 February 1941. The Propaganda Sub-Committee subsequently produced a report for the full committee, see CAB96/3 FE(41)38 Ad-hoc Sub-Committee report 11 February 1941.
59. H. Hopkins/R.A. Butler conversation 6 February 1941 in Butler Papers, Trinity College, Cambridge, RAB G/12.
60. Ibid. Arising out of the meeting between Eden and the Chiefs of Staff a long telegram was subsequently sent to Washington describing in detail the calamitous effect a war with Japan would have on Britain's strategic position, see FO371/27886 F677/17/23 A. Eden to Lord Halifax 11 February 1941, telegram 693.
61. PRO FO371/27878 F529/12/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 31 January 1941. This then led to Cadogan minuting on 3 February- 'Like

all Japanese, he [Shigemitsu] thinks he can put over the most blatant nonsense, and I think he wants taking up gently when he does this.', see F0371/27886 F648/17/23 Sir A. Cadogan minute 3 February 1941.

62. PRO F0371/27886 F648/17/23 M. Shigemitsu/A. Eden conversation 7 February 1941. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.222, and K. Sato, op.cit. pp.98-99.
63. M. Shigemitsu to Y. Matsuoka 8 February 1941, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.IV* (Garland, New York, 1981) pp.9792-9793. In the Foreign Office record of the talk Shigemitsu's comments are only summarised briefly.
64. PRO W0208/855 Minutes by Major J. Chapman and Lt. Colonel D. Mackenzie 16 May 1941. In these minutes the two officers implied that this apparently false information had not significantly changed Britain's assessment of Japanese intentions, but this does not tally with the information from other sources quoted above, which suggest that the telephone intercepts did raise the level of British concern. The file is also interesting because Chapman tantalisingly notes at one point that 'At the time (5-21 Feb.) the PM's opinion was the whole story was a very clever Japanese "plant".'
65. PRO F0371/27887 F1173/17/23 Director of Naval Intelligence to Far Eastern Department (Foreign Office) 12 February 1941. The Navy Department in Washington had informed the Australian Minister, Richard Casey, in January 1941 that they did not foresee a Japanese attack in the foreseeable future as the Japanese merchant fleet was 'still scattered over the globe', see CAB122/5 R. Casey/Admiral R. Turner and Admiral R. Ingersoll conversation 14 January 1941.
66. A summary of the order can be seen in PRO ADM199/411 The War Diary of the Commander-in-Chief China Fleet, diary entry for 11 February 1941.
67. PRO F0371/27785 F947/161/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 14 February 1941.
68. PRO F0371/27886 F895/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 12 February 1941.
69. R.A. Butler note for A. Eden 14 February 1941, in Butler Papers, RAB G12.
70. PRO F0371/27878 F1009/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 15 February 1941. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.224.
71. PRO W0208/855 Entry for 15 February, in Summary of Intelligence 5 February to 25 February 1941 M.I.2c undated report.
72. Ibid, J.R. [Captain Julian Ridsdale ?] note 15 February 1941, this note stated- 'It has been reported that Mr. Matsuoka is to visit Europe... ', it then listed what was believed to be his intended itinerary.

73. PRO PREM 3 252/6A W. Churchill to Sir A. Cadogan 16 February 1941.
74. PRO WO208/892 Captain of Intelligence Staff (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) 1 March 1941, but see also WO208/896 'Short Summary of Recent BJ's on Japan' Major J. Chapman report 26 February 1941. This information raises the important question of how early could Britain read the Japanese diplomatic code. The decrypted (or BJ) material up until February 1941 appears mainly to be from consular and other low-grade ciphers, but by late in the month some BJs are clearly from high level cables. The earliest dated BJ from the Tokyo-London circuit in the PRO files is BJ 087976 Tokyo to London 21 February 1941, in WO208/892.
75. PRO FO371/27887 F1159/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 20 February 1941.
76. For more detail on Japan's hesitation in February 1941 see J. Tsunoda, op.cit pp.284-286, S. Hatano and S. Asada, op.cit. p.394, and S. Nagaoka, op.cit. pp.232-234.
77. See R.J. Leutze, *Bargaining for Supremacy: Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1937-1941*. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1977) pp.234-266, A.J. Marder, op.cit. pp.195-196. P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.191-208, and D. Reynolds, op.cit. pp.225-229.
78. On the American expansion of economic restrictions, see J. Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941*. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1985) pp.121-122, M.A. Barnhart, op.cit. pp.221-222, and W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. pp.96-99 & 129-131.
79. PRO FO371/27888 F1627/17/23 Lord Halifax to Foreign Office 5 March 1941.
80. PRO FO371/27888 F1764/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 7 March 1941.
81. PRO WO208/892 BJ 089788 Tokyo to London 11 April 1941, decrypted 14 April 1941. For Hull's backing down over the joint declaration see FO371/27891 F3612/17/23 Lord Halifax to A. Eden 4 May 1941.
82. PRO FO371/27787 F1069/17/23 Y. Matsuoka memorandum 16 February 1941. On the Matsuoka-Churchill correspondence see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.225-230, and K. Sato, op.cit. pp.100-103.
83. PRO FO371/27878 F1072/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 17 February 1941.
84. PRO FO371/27887 F1239/17/23 W. Churchill memorandum 24 February 1941.
85. Ibid, M. Shigemitsu/W. Churchill conversation 24 February 1941. Also quoted in P. Lowe, op.cit. p.227.
86. PRO FO371/27888 F1670/17/23 J.E. Michiels Van Verduynen/ R.A. Butler conversation 6 March 1941.

87. PRO FO371/27889 F2522/17/23 R.A. Butler minute 26 March 1941. For an account of Matsuoka's visit to Europe see C. Hosoya, 'The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact.' in J.W. Morley (ed), *The Fateful Choice*. pp.71-74, and K. Sato, op.cit. pp.106-111.
88. *The Magic Background to Pearl Harbor. Vol.1.* (Department of Defense, Washington D.C., 1978) No.389 London to Washington (to Tokyo) 10 March 1941 p.204.
89. PRO CAB63/177 Hankey Papers Major-General F.S.G. Piggott record of M. Shigemitsu/Lord Hankey conversation 22 March 1941. See also Lord Hankey affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, Defence Exhibit 3547, in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide, *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.XIV.* (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34512. See also M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny.* (Hutchinson, London, 1958) pp.215-216, and F.S.G. Piggott, *Broken Thread.* (Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1950) pp.350-351.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid, Major-General F.S.G. Piggott to Lord Hankey 30 March 1941. See also M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.215-216.
93. PRO PREM 3 252/6A R.A. Butler to W. Churchill 28 March 1941.
94. PRO CAB/177 Hankey Papers, Lord Hankey to W. Churchill 31 March 1941.
95. PRO CAB65/18 WM 33(41) War Cabinet conclusions 31 March 1941.
96. M. Shigemitsu to Lord Hankey 2 April 1941. Enclosed in Lord Hankey Affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.34519-34520
97. PRO PREM 3 252/6A R.A. Butler to W. Churchill 1 April 1941.
98. For the details of the Neutrality Pact see C. Hosoya, 'The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact.' pp.74-82.
99. *Magic Background Vol.1.* No.306 London to Washington (to Tokyo) 18 April 1941 p.160.
100. *Magic Background Vol.1.* No.307 London to Washington (to Tokyo) 7 May 1941 p.161.
101. PRO T160/1033 F15194/026/4 S.D. Waley to Wilson Smith 26 April 1941.
102. PRO CAB96/2 FE(41) Far Eastern Committee 16th meeting 8 May 1941.
103. PRO FO371/27907 F4156/69/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 16 May 1941.
104. Ibid.

105. PRO F0371/28020 F4737/4564/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 30 May 1941.
106. M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny*. p.216.
107. *Magic Background Vol.III*. No.491 Tokyo to London 22 May 1941 p.243.
108. PRO F0371/27907 F4658/4564/23 M. Shigemitsu/R.A. Butler conversation 24 May 1941.
109. PRO PREM 4 20/1 A. Eden to W. Churchill 27 May 1941. It is also worth noting that when Craigie reported in June that Matsuoka had told him that Shigemitsu was returning for an exchange of views, a member of the Far Eastern Department minuted-'We know more of the story than Matsuoka thinks.' see F0371/27909 F4973/4564/23 L. Foulds minute 11 June on Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 7 June 1941.
110. Captain Malcolm Kennedy diary entry for 14 May 1941, in Kennedy Papers, Sheffield University Library, Diary 4/36.
111. PRO F0371/27892 F5019/17/23 M. Shigemitsu/A. Eden, Lord Moyne, R.A. Butler conversation 9 June 1941. For the talks Shigemitsu held before his departure see K. Sato, op.cit. pp.114-115. After his departure Churchill paid tribute to Shigemitsu in a speech to the House of Commons referring to him in passing as 'a man most friendly to peace between our countries', see W. Churchill, *War Speeches 1939-1945 Vol.II*. (Cassell, London, 1952) p.15.
112. Lord Hankey diary entry for 9 June 1941, in Hankey Papers, Churchill College Library, HNKY 1/7.
113. PRO CAB96/3 FE(41)111 M. Shigemitsu/Sir F. Leith-Ross Conversation 11 June 1941.
114. PRO F0371/27761 F1193/9/61 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 22 February 1941.
115. PRO F0371/27894 F2591/18/23 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 2 April 1941.
116. PRO F0371/27926 F2073/137/23 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 18 March 1941. For more on this episode see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.228-229.
117. PRO F0371/27956 F3031/421/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 15 April 1941.
118. See in particular PRO F0371/27789 F3688/158/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 3 May 1941, and also F0371/27777 F3626/54/61 M.E. Denning Minute 3 May 1941..
119. PRO F0371/27843 F3820/2967/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 7 May 1941.
120. PRO CAB65/22 WM 48(41) Secretary's standard file of War Cabinet conclusions 8 May 1941. The decision not to distribute Craigie's

telegram to the Dominions was a reflection of a desire by Churchill to deny ammunition to the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, who had already clashed with him over this issue, see CAB69/2 DO(41) 21st Meeting 30 April 1941 and 22nd Meeting 1 May 1941. For more on this episode see D. Day, *The Great Betrayal. Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War 1939-42*. (Angus & Robertson, London, 1988) pp.133-134, W. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War. Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1988) pp.69-70, and D. Reynolds, *op.cit.* p.228.

121. PRO FO371/27918 F1836/122/23 Sir R. Craigie to Foreign Office 11 March.
122. Ibid.
123. PRO FO837/526 T33/36 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 11 April 1941.
124. PRO FO371/27894 F3593/18/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 April 1941. See also W.N. Medlicott, *op.cit.* pp.101-102.
125. PRO FO371/27895 F3647/18/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 April 1941.
126. Ibid.
127. PRO FO837/533 T33/65/Z Vol.3 J. Troutbeck Minute 10 June 1941.
128. PRO FO371/27895 F3647/18/23 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 21 May 1941.
129. PRO FO371/27895 F4694/18/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 May 1941.
130. PRO FO837/533 T33/65/Z Vol.3 Ministry of Economic Warfare to Sir R. Craigie 7 June 1941. The Ministry's reluctance to provide Japan with copra was also influenced by secret information that had been received indicating that Japan was expecting a large delivery of the commodity from New York.
131. PRO FO371/27833 F4345/1732/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 22 May 1941. For details on the breakdown of the talks in Batavia see S. Nagaoka, 'Economic Demands on Dutch East Indies', in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice*. pp.146-153, and W.N. Medlicott, *op.cit.* pp.81-86.
132. PRO FO371/27833 F4376/1732/61 H. Ashley Clarke Minute 31 May 1941.
133. PRO FO371/27834 F4919/1732/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 6 June 1941.
134. PRO FO371/27895 F4810/18/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 3 June 1941.
135. PRO CAB96/3 FE(41)113 Ministry of Economic Warfare Memorandum 18 June 1941. Also quoted in part in P. Lowe, *op.cit.* p.294. For the discussion of Craigie's memorandum see CAB96/2 FE(41) 21st Meeting 12 June 1941.

136. For the renewed pressure to turn South see S. Nagaoka, 'The Drive into Southern Indochina and Thailand.' p.234-235, M. Barnhart, op.cit. p.208, and S. Hatano & S. Asada, op.cit. p.396-398.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'NISHI NO KAZE HARE'

'ULTRA On 19 Nov. Tokyo told Charge d'Affaires in London that the international situation is tense. When diplomatic relations are on the point of being severed, following phrases will occur in the middle and end of Japanese Broadcasting Service in the form of a weather report.

- (1) With U.S.A. The words - HIGASHI NO KAZE AME (easterly winds rain).
- (2) With SOVIET. Words KITA NO KAZE KUMORI (north winds cloudy)
- (3) With BRITAIN, including invasion of THAILAND. Words NISHI NO KAZE HARE (westerly winds fine)

On receipts books are to be burnt.'

Admiralty to Captain on Staff Singapore 25 November 1941

In June 1941 it was not just the Japanese who were contemplating the necessity of a further advance, Germany too was on the verge of a new offensive, this time directed east against the Soviet colossus. Operation Barbarossa began on 22 June, and once more 'a unilateral action by Germany threw Japanese policy-making into confusion. Matsuoka, through reports received from Ōshima, was aware for at least two months beforehand of the general intentions of Germany, and British code-breakers had intercepted on 28 May an appeal from the Japanese Foreign Minister to Ribbentrop calling for the German Government-

'... to avoid conflict with Russia in view of the international situation & the internal conditions of Germany and Japan.'²

This warning had, however, failed to deter Hitler and his minions, and once the German assault had begun Matsuoka changed his tack from opposing the attack on the Soviet Union to lobbying actively for Japan to stand by its Tripartite Pact ally and launch its own offensive against Siberia. The Foreign Minister's policy change was not, however, just the result of loyalty to Germany, it was also influenced by his opposition to the renewed pressure from the armed forces for southward expansion, which he believed carried with it the danger of war with the United States.³ His conversion

led to a week and a half of intense debate in the highest circles in Japan as to the future policy of the Empire, which was finally settled by an Imperial Conference on 2 July at which it was decided as a compromise that the plan for occupation of south Indo-China should be put into operation as an interim measure and that preparations should be made for an offensive in the north in case of Soviet collapse.⁴

The confusion engendered in Japan by the German action attracted a great deal of interest from the Western powers. To Craigie the obvious shock that had been delivered to the Japanese provided Britain with an opportunity to wean the Konoe Government away from the dire influence of Germany, and on 25 June he proposed to the Foreign Office that this be achieved through a slight relaxation of the economic restrictions.⁵ Certainly the start of the Russo-German War offered a legitimate excuse for such action, as the conflict had made negligible the chances of Japanese re-export of goods to Germany due to the closure of the Trans-Siberian route. This pressure for a conciliatory gesture was also mirrored by the actions of the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires in London, Kamimura Shinichi, who on 27 June reported to Leith-Ross that a lessening of the restrictions on copra would be welcomed, particularly in the light of indications that the Government might fall and that then-

'... Baron Hiranuma might become Prime Minister and it was rumoured that Mr. Shigemitsu might become Minister for Foreign Affairs and that there might be a favourable alignment vis-à-vis the democracies.'⁶

However, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economic Warfare remained opposed to any relaxation of sanctions as this would interfere with their policy of forcing Japan to draw on its stockpiles of raw materials, and also because there was no guarantee that, in the case of a quick Soviet defeat, the Trans-Siberian Railway would not once again come into operation as a route linking east with west.⁷

The opposition to any measure of conciliation was also influenced by British knowledge of Japanese intentions towards south Indo-China. Through the reading of the B.J. intercepts, it was obvious that a move was being planned, and on 25 June the Director of Military Intelligence, Major-General Francis Davidson reported to the Chief of the Imperial General

Staff, General Sir John Dill, about the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee's thoughts on this new threat. He began by stating-

'We know from unimpeachable sources that the Japanese Government:-

- (a) Have asked for German help in "squaring" Vichy to agree to recognise Japan's "rights" to have eight air bases and two harbours in Indo-China.
- (b) Have further instructed their Ambassador in Berlin that if the suggested German approach to Vichy is likely to fail, that the matter should be dropped as Japan is determined to achieve her object by armed force.'⁸

In the face of these plans for expansion it had been decided that there was no justification for any concessions to Japan and that instead policy should concentrate on the necessity of deterring Japan from a move into south Indo-China. This had then led to a debate over the best means for achieving this aim; Major-General Davidson's initial response was to suggest that the best plan was for Britain to deliver a warning to Japan in concert with the United States, outlining the consequences of a Japanese occupation of Saigon. This plan had, however, he reported to Dill, been rejected as impracticable by the chairman of the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, who noted the difficulty in getting co-operation with Washington over such a declaration and the danger that a clear warning would compromise Britain's reading of the Japanese diplomatic code. It was therefore agreed that instead-

'... we should open up a vigorous Press Campaign against Japan; such action has already succeeded once in January/February of this year - and may succeed again.'⁹

Dill passed this proposal on to his fellow Chiefs of Staff and it was adopted at their meeting on 25 June.¹⁰

As well as launching a press campaign it was also necessary to consider what action Britain would take if Japan still decided to proceed with the occupation of south Indo-China. At a War Cabinet meeting on 7 July the issue of retaliation was discussed against recommendations from the Far Eastern Committee for the response to come mainly in the economic sphere, and specifically to abrogate the 1911 Commercial Treaty with Japan and to undertake a slight tightening of sanctions.¹¹ The War Cabinet recognized

clearly the need to take some action in response to further Japanese expansion but, in line with the Far Eastern Committee, rejected the need for a very harsh policy and instead approved the comparatively muted actions recommended to them. In this decision they were influenced by the general consensus that had developed in the meeting that-

'... the general situation did not justify us in taking strong deterrent measures to prevent further Japanese encroachments. Our policy must be, for the present, to take appropriate counter-action after each encroachment, calculated to play on Japanese reluctance to come into the war against an unbeaten and still formidable power.'¹²

On 10 July the intended measures were communicated to Craigie; he too recognized the need for retaliation and already on the same day he had advised the Foreign Office-

'It is ... of the utmost importance that we should make up our minds beforehand and take immediate counter-action in the event of the Japanese occupying bases in Indo-China.'¹³

Three days later he reported his concurrence with the War Cabinet's proposals, while stressing that it was extremely important to ensure that the United States collaborated fully in the implementation of these measures.¹⁴

However, by the time Craigie's telegram arrived at the Foreign Office the United States had already substantially changed the nature of the debate about how to respond to the Japanese move. This was owing to a report from Lord Halifax on 10 July that the State Department were considering a total embargo on goods to Japan which was to be introduced without giving any prior indication to Tokyo that such action was contemplated. This was followed by a further telegram on 17 July indicating that this policy was to be achieved through a complete freezing of Japanese assets in the United States.¹⁵ This was a marked contrast to the carefully balanced policy agreed to by the War Cabinet and the serious implications of this proposed move were not lost on the British officials concerned with Far Eastern policy. S. Waley of the Treasury noted succinctly to Sterndale Bennett-

'In short, the effect of freezing Japanese assets would be to suspend economic relations and thus to declare economic war.'¹⁶

On 13 July the Foreign Office, in a state of some concern about the

American plan, observed to Halifax-

'... while we are reluctant to discourage the United States from strong measures provided they are prepared to face the consequences, we felt that such an embargo imposed at one blow ... would face the Japanese with only two alternatives, either to reverse their policy completely or to exert maximum pressure southwards.'¹⁷

The greatest concern caused by the American plan was that it implied the introduction of a complete embargo on sales of oil to Japan. Petroleum had been one commodity which the Ministry of Economic Warfare, a hawk in so many areas of policy, had always treated with due sensitivity. Richard Heppel of the Far Eastern Department had noted as late as May 1941, when the Ministry had expressed disapproval of an American proposal for the restriction of oil sales to Japan to 'normal' levels, that-

'MEW are still addicted to the indirect method, (tankers and containers) except where aviation spirit is concerned, + are apprehensive of the consequences of a rationing policy. They appear to contemplate without any misgiving the prospect of Japan continuing indefinitely to take from America as much oil, except aviation spirit, as she can lift in her tankers.'¹⁸

The new United States policy did not brook such timidity, for although it was clear that the American proposals had the potential to tip the confrontation in the Pacific towards war, it was equally apparent that Britain, to ensure itself of Washington's support in the case of attack by Japan and in the war against Germany, had to follow the State Department's lead. On 20 July Eden, in supporting the adoption of a parallel line to that of Washington, warned the War Cabinet that-

'... I cannot conceal from my colleagues the dangers inherent in our lagging behind the United States Government in dealing with Japan, *a fortiori* in our actually attempting to dissuade them from firm action. The risk of creating another Simon-Stimson incident and of seriously weakening the ties between us and America is real.'¹⁹

The danger with the American policy did not, however, lie merely with its effects once introduced, but also with the fact that Japan was to be given no warning that its next step would lead to such severe chastisement. This

decision was made in the belief that Japan would be so surprised by the ferocity of the American action that it would repent of its sins. This thinking was at fault in two respects; first it presumed that economic sanctions could deter even though they were not supported by an adequate military presence in the region, and second, to paraphrase an observation made by Leith-Ross on 14 July, it ignored the fact that it would be much easier to deter occupation of south Indo-China through the use of a warning than it would be to use sanctions to prise Japan out after an occupation.²⁰ The lack of a warning was also important because, while the drama over south Indo-China was being played out, the crisis in Japanese politics had led to the resignation of the Konoe Cabinet and its speedy reconstruction with Admiral Toyoda Teijirō replacing Matsuoka as Foreign Minister.²¹ This change of personnel was a sign that the new Government was willing to approach the West with a more positive attitude, but unfortunately it inherited the decision to occupy South Indo-China and, without knowing the consequences of this action, proceeded with its implementation, and by so doing damned, from virtually the first day of its creation, its chances of ever achieving any lowering of tensions with the West. In this context Sir Robert Craigie noted to the Foreign Office on 26 July, after a talk with Toyoda, with whom he was favourably impressed, that-

'It may be asked why a Minister desiring to improve relations should agree to embark on a course which was bound to lead to their serious deterioration. My surmise is that Japanese Government, despite periodical warnings of my colleague [Grew] and myself, were totally unprepared for anything more than the usual protests and that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, new to the job and new to diplomacy, had inherited a policy of whose dangers he was only dimly aware.'²²

The apparent revival of the moderate faction was not lost on Craigie and in late July 1941, despite the events in Indo-China, his reports began to show a muted optimism for the future for almost the first time in a year. To some extent this can be seen simply as relief at the passing from the Japanese political scene of Matsuoka, who had developed in his time as Foreign Minister into the *bête noire* of Craigie and Grew. His removal from the Gaimushō seemed to indicate that Japan was in a position to reverse the trend of the previous twelve months, and augured a possible retreat from

the commitment to the Tripartite Pact and a return to a more genuinely neutral stance towards the European War. This, however, only indicated a potential for easing tensions without any definite guarantee that it would take place. A more positive sign of a change in mood in Tokyo, that added weight to the enthusiasm generated by Matsuoka's ousting, came from Shigemitsu in conversations he held with Craigie on his return to Japan.

Shigemitsu had travelled back from Britain to Japan via the United States, and while in Washington consulted with Admiral Nomura Kichisaburō, the Japanese Ambassador, about the conversations the latter had been holding with Cordell Hull.²³ He eventually arrived back in Tokyo towards the end of July only to find that the original reason for his recall had been negated by the enforced resignation of Matsuoka. Despite this, the Ambassador still met the ex-Foreign Minister, and was taken aback when the latter, instead of defending the radical policy he had pursued in office, claimed that he had in fact done all he could to adjust relations with the United States and warned that Japan was at the edge of a precipice.²⁴ In addition to this meeting with Matsuoka, Shigemitsu also conveyed his impressions and advice to the Emperor, Prince Konoe, Admiral Toyoda, the Army General Staff and the participants of a Liaison Conference.²⁵

As he wrote later in *Japan and Her Destiny* the main gist of all his reports was to correct what he saw as the mistaken interpretation of the European War that had become orthodox in Japan due to the string of German victories.²⁶ He spoke first of the remarkable endurance of the British in the face of German aggression and how Britain was steadily building up its forces. He then went on to study the German position and noted that Germany was running the risk in the Soviet Union of fighting a conflict in vast unconquerable territories which would degenerate into a war of attrition, just as Japan had been entrapped in China. He also noted that as the war progressed the likelihood of American intervention increased and that-

'The attitude of America is the decisive factor and under Roosevelt's guidance they are already for all intents and purposes in the war. Actual participation is merely a question of time and opportunity. German difficulties in the occupied territories are bound to grow. That Russian,

American and British encirclement of Germany will lead to ultimate victory is a foregone conclusion.'²⁷

To counter any accusation that in assessing the European situation he was touching on military issues in which he had little expertise, Shigemitsu had brought with him a supporting statement from Major-General Tatsumi Eiichi, the Military Attaché in London. His conclusion from the above observations was that-

'Japan must not enter the war. It must be her absolute determination not to enter the war. She must bring her negotiations with the U.S. to a successful termination and go on from there to solve the problem of China and clear up her relations once and for all. Non-entry into the war, and a policy of straightening out her difficulties by diplomatic machinery, would bring Japan's standing in Europe after the war to new heights.'²⁸

The reception to Shigemitsu's observations varied; he noted later in *Japan and Her Destiny* that the Army was little moved from their allegiance to the Axis and responded to what was considered his pro-Western leanings by having him tailed by the gendarmarie.²⁹ However, his audience with the Emperor on 23 July made a more positive impression, and Kido Kōichi, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, who was present at this meeting, observed later at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial that the Ambassador's words reminded him of the tenaciousness of the British, and that-

'I also became aware of America's fighting will, and in view of our national strength I felt that we should try to make peace as quickly as possible.'³⁰

Perhaps more important than this was that Shigemitsu also received a sympathetic hearing from Konoe and Toyoda who, like Kido, realized that his observations were important for relations with the West in general and not with Britain alone, and that they showed the urgent necessity of achieving success in the talks with the United States.³¹

Shigemitsu reported the hopeful signs in Japan and the interested response to his observations on the course of the European War to Craigie in a conversation on 29 July, and noted-

'Even in the ranks of re-actionaries and younger officers, he was given a more friendly reception than at any time since he had occupied the post of

Vice-Minister.'³²

He also told Craigie that he was relieved to find on his return to Japan that the situation was not as bleak as he had imagined and that he had not found anywhere a desire for war with Britain and the United States. Shigemitsu's apparent enthusiasm, which dovetailed with the positive utterances emanating from Toyoda, encouraged Craigie to report back to the Foreign Office-

'It is ... valuable that Mr. Shigemitsu should be here at this juncture and I endorse his view that, despite the bleak outlook, it may still be possible, by keeping our measures of retaliation strictly within the economic field, to bring about a change for the better in Japanese foreign policy.'³³

It is worth noting in the above statement that the reappearance of a moderate faction in Japan did not lead Craigie to turn his back on the need to deter Japan or to espouse a policy based solely on conciliation. He still believed strongly that war with Japan could only be avoided if the West adopted a 'carrot and stick' approach to Japan, in which both elements would be equally important. Despite his record of clashes with London over sanctions in the spring of 1941, there is little evidence that Craigie disagreed with the hardline policy forced on Britain by Washington in July, and certainly there were not the stream of protests sent to the Foreign Office that, from his past performance, one would have expected had he had any serious reservations. Even with the advantages of hindsight he wrote approvingly in his Final Report in 1943 that-

'Such action, of course, involved a risk of immediate war, but it averted what was at that time an even greater risk, namely, that the Japanese Government should be left to assume that they could proceed with complete impunity along their path of territorial aggrandisement in South Eastern Asia. It also had the merit of removing from the minds of the more responsible Japanese leaders the lingering hope that any further southward advance could be made without the virtual certainty of war with the United States.'³⁴

He also recognized clearly at the time the need for a sustained build-up of military forces in the region, and on 25 August he made a familiar appeal to the Foreign Office-

'... the stationing of even a powerful force of minimum size at Singapore might be enough to lead the Navy, who are especially strong in the present Government to advise decisively against risking any further adventure in the South. It is important to bear constantly in mind, not only the advantage of having such a force on the spot, should war break out, but the possibility that its mere presence will tip the scales in favour of peace.'³⁵

However, he was convinced that to balance these measures of coercion it was necessary to take advantage of the revival of the moderates' fortunes in Japan and to show that the West was willing to negotiate seriously. It was here that he came up against the opposition of the Foreign Office. The refusal of the latter to countenance any positive response to the overtures reaching Craigie was the result of a number of factors. First, there was the legacy of the Burma Road crisis and the other previous exercises in compromise, which had led the Foreign Office to the conclusion that there was no point in negotiating with Japan. Second, this firm stance was given an apparent justification by the rapidly expanding ability of the British authorities, through the reading of Japanese diplomatic codes, to 'understand' and anticipate Japanese intentions. This information, which seemingly related the thoughts of the Gaimushō directly to the Foreign Office, meant that there was less need to rely on the observations of an Ambassador who was seen as having a sentimental and naïve faith in the nebulous Japanese 'moderates', and also confirmed the prejudice that had built up in the Far Eastern Department that no Japanese 'moderates' worth cultivating actually existed.³⁶ The third and final reason was that it was feared that any attempt by Britain to try to influence events towards a peaceful conclusion would be resented by the United States.

The belief in London that the Americans would look askance at any British intervention was not just the result of the desperate need to get the Americans into the European War or even a legacy of the Simon-Stimson controversy, but rather had its roots in the excessive sensitivity of the State Department about the talks that had been taking place between Ambassador Nomura and Secretary of State Hull since March. The Foreign Office appear to have learnt of the existence of the Hull-Nomura talks at

some time during April or May of 1941, and arrived quickly at the conclusion that these conversations were most likely an elaborate trap drawn up by Matsuoka to buy off the United States, and therefore represented a grave threat to Anglo-American solidarity in the region. These doubts led Lord Halifax to pass to Sumner Welles on 24 May a memorandum from Eden for the Secretary of State which warned of the dangers of the Japanese using the talks to attempt to push a wedge between London and Washington. The next day Halifax was called to see a furious Cordell Hull, who expressed his outrage at Britain's apparent lack of faith in his diplomacy.³⁷ When this was reported to the Foreign Office there was consternation that the Americans had been offended, and in a note that summed up the attitude that Britain took thereafter to the Hull-Nomura talks, Ashley Clarke of the Far Eastern Department noted-

'... it is obviously deplorable that we should have any disagreement with the Americans over our Far Eastern Policy: the Japanese initiative was in fact designed to produce such a result and it must not be allowed to succeed.'³⁸

After this episode the Foreign Office was far more circumspect and, even though still deeply suspicious of the Hull-Nomura talks and resentful that they were not privy to their contents, did not attempt to press Washington over the issue.

With this background it was only natural that the Foreign Office viewed Craigie's reports on the re-emergence of the moderates with a good deal of suspicion and did not order the Ambassador to begin any negotiations of his own. Craigie was, however, uncomfortable with the lack of direction emanating from London and, in particular, the failure to make clear to Japan the consequences of any further expansion. On 12 August, after an interview with Toyoda the day before, he wrote-

'I am more than ever confirmed in my view that any policy of "keeping Japanese Government guessing" as to our real intentions in the Far East is an erroneous one in the present circumstances, and that we stand to gain more by discussing our mutual difficulties and intentions as frankly and openly as circumstances permit.'³⁹

He then proceeded on 25 August to observe that, though he recognized that the United States was taking the diplomatic lead in the Pacific, it was

still essential for him to hold regular meetings with the Foreign Minister, and that this was especially necessary as the impression had grown in Toyoda's mind that it was the British who were forcing the Americans to take a tough line in negotiations.⁴⁰ There was some sympathy with these views in the Far Eastern Department, but also a realization that, however well reasoned the opinions expressed by Craigie, he failed to acknowledge that Britain was no longer in control of its destiny in East Asia.

While Craigie pondered on the chances of a relaxation of tensions, the tide of events seemed to promise an ever greater chasm between East and West. In the economic field, after the introduction of the freezing order on 26 July, there were a few days of uncertainty about how severe the American restrictions were going to be, but it soon became apparent that a complete embargo had been introduced which included a freeze on the sale of oil to Japan, and that the American lead was going to be followed strictly by both the British and the Dutch.⁴¹ In the political field, at the end of July and into early August there was a new scare that Japan was on the verge of moving into Thailand; this coincided with the meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt at Placentia Bay and led the Prime Minister to propose to the President that Japan be given a parallel warning from Britain and the United States outlining the consequences that would arise from any further Japanese expansion.⁴² When Roosevelt returned to Washington he took with him a declaration to read to the Japanese Ambassador, and on 17 August met with Nomura at the White House. However at this meeting the gravity of Roosevelt's warning was blunted almost immediately by Nomura's communication of a new proposal from Tokyo that called for a summit meeting to be held between the President and Prime Minister Konoe.⁴³

The Japanese plan had originally been cabled to Nomura on 7 August. It was far more than merely the result of a resurgence in moderate opinion in Japan, for its origins lay in the realization that the West's freezing of Japan's assets faced the Japanese Government with a choice between negotiating a settlement with the United States or going to war. The proposal was therefore viewed by Konoe as the last chance to avoid war, as an opportunity to break free from the limitations of the Hull-Nomura talk, to tackle the issues head-on and, if successful, a chance to present the

Army with a *fait accompli*.⁴⁴ Shigemitsu wrote in *Japan and Her Destiny* '... he [Konoe] appeared to be thinking that there was nothing for it but to make this the turning point, to make such concessions at the meeting as would bring the talks to a satisfactory ending, in accordance with the Emperor's instructions, and force the Army to agree...'⁴⁵

Shigemitsu was in a good position to know Konoe's feelings about the meeting because he had been chosen to act as the personal diplomatic adviser to the Prime Minister, another indication of the weight given to his views after his return from Britain.⁴⁶

At first Roosevelt displayed some enthusiasm for Konoe's bold plan but this initial interest was soon dispersed by the State Department, which took the position that before any meeting could take place Japan must first commit itself to accept the 'Four Principles' which Hull had outlined at the start of his talks with Nomura as the basis of the American negotiating position, and show a willingness to compromise over its policy towards China and its links with the Axis.⁴⁷ This was at cross-purposes with Konoe's original plan which, due to the necessity to present the Army with a sudden *fait accompli*, had been drawn up on the basis that there be no preconditions to the meeting, lest they might justify the Army stepping in to prevent a meeting between the two leaders from ever taking place. Konoe's desperation for a meeting was exacerbated further when, at an Imperial Conference on 6 September, it was decided that if talks had not been concluded by early October then Japan should be ready to go to war before the end of that month.⁴⁸ This was a tight deadline, and that day Konoe invited Grew to dine secretly at his house and there expressed orally to the American Ambassador his acceptance of the 'Four Principles' and emphasized his belief that a meeting with Roosevelt could turn the corner in Japanese-American relations.⁴⁹

The deliberate policy of pressing the diplomats in Tokyo to communicate Japan's enthusiasm for a meeting was not limited to Grew and his Embassy but also involved Craigie, in the hope that British pressure on Washington would lead the Americans to take a less rigid stance. On 8 September Shigemitsu arranged a secret meeting with the British Ambassador, at which he assured Craigie that the moderates were beginning to regain control over

Japanese policy and that the link with the Axis was steadily growing weaker. Shigemitsu also raised the point that the Atlantic Charter, which Churchill and Roosevelt had drafted at their Placentia Bay meeting, with its promise of free access for all nations to raw materials contrasted greatly with the policy now being pursued by the Anglo-Saxon powers towards Japan.⁵⁰ This latter point was emphasized again a week later in a talk that Craigie held with Shigemitsu's protégé, Amau Eiji, the new Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, who told him-

'You ... have now lived in Japan some years, and I believe you have observed the condition of the people in their daily lives; I wonder if you think these people are really adequately compensated for their capacity and effort. Though they work from morning to night, still they are only barely at the level of subsistence, whilst virtually every Englishmen, working less than the Japanese, enjoys a life of relative ease. In a word, whilst the Japanese are in a life and death struggle, the English give their thought to how they may live more luxuriously.'⁵¹

Influenced by this growing pressure on him to assist in a reconciliation between the West and Japan, Craigie began in the early autumn of 1941 to press London ever harder for the need to come to some kind of understanding with Japan. The first sign of this came on 9 September when he forwarded to the Foreign Office the contents of a telegram which Grew was sending to the State Department. Grew had written in this note that he believed that Konoé and Toyoda were sincere in their wish for peace, but that they were hindered in this by the rest of the Japanese Cabinet and that therefore the United States should try to do its best to encourage the peace process by explaining to the Japanese people the advantages which would accrue from a policy of friendship with the Democracies.⁵² Craigie noted in his telegram his complete agreement with this approach and also wrote-

'Neither my United States colleague nor I are suggesting any relaxation at this stage of measures our two countries have taken against Japan: but it stands to reason that in a confused situation such as exists today in Japan the more clearly we can bring home to the Japanese public the advantage's of a break with Matsuoka's policy the better.'⁵³

This communication led to a debate in the Foreign Office about the correct way to react to the apparent change of mood in Tokyo. On 12 September Eden wrote to Churchill-

'It is clear that the Japanese are hesitating but this better mood has only been brought about by the contemplation of the forces that may possibly confront them. Russia, the United States, China and the British Empire, to say nothing of the Dutch, is more than this probably over-valued military power is prepared to challenge. Our right policy is, therefore, clearly to keep up the pressure.... We are now engaged in examining Craigie's telegrams. It is important that we should not be too forthcoming to Japanese approaches, even through Shigemitsu. We want the Japanese to feel that we are in a position to play our hand from strength.'⁵⁴

From these remarks it is clear that the view in London was still fundamentally different from that taken by Craigie. The Foreign Office, partly due to the need to do nothing to offend Washington, but also because of a belief that Japan would not make the mistake of risking war against the powerful combination grouped against her, continued to reject the need for a 'carrot' to go with the 'stick'. The policy towards Japan continued, as it had since October 1940, to be based on the need to deter Japan, but without any apparent awareness that the nature of the dispute with Craigie, which in the spring had been concerned merely with the appropriate ceiling of sanctions, had now changed and that the choice being offered Japan, after the introduction of a full embargo, was to fight or accept the end of its Great Power status. The result of this was that on 18 September Eden informed Craigie-

'Mr Shigemitsu evidently wishes to persuade us that the cooling off towards the Axis is prompted by a desire to re-establish friendship with the democracies. There is every reason to think, however, that it springs from a growing conviction that the Tripartite Pact has lost its value as a means for the promotion of Japanese ambitions and that a temporary compromise with the United States and ourselves would provide a better chance of ultimately achieving Japan's aims.... [W]e cannot think the moment is opportune to hold out inducements to the Japanese ... It is I think important at the present stage not to give the impression to any Japanese, however friendly, that we are thinking even of relaxation.'⁵⁵

Over the next week and a half Craigie contemplated his reply to this negative response to his proposal from London, and during this period he held further talks with the Japanese diplomats. By this time the pro-negotiation faction in Tokyo was becoming increasingly desperate due to the failure of the Americans to agree to the summit proposal, and this led to the pressure on Grew becoming ever stronger. Shigemitsu made an important contribution to this campaign, and on 18 September he held his own talk with the American Ambassador, in which he reiterated the arguments used previously by Toyoda and urged Grew to realize that time was running short. He also stressed the sincerity of Japan's desire for an understanding and noted-

'... the Japanese Government could be compared with someone who had scaled a high fence and had his feet planted on the other side on new ground. He said in addition that although it was a physical impossibility to set down ahead of time all details relative to the carrying out by Japan of the undertakings which the Japanese Government might assume, the sincerity and will of the Konoye Government is such that the faithful execution in the course of time of any agreement which may be reached can be counted on with complete confidence.'⁵⁶

Shigemitsu's concern about the future of the Hull-Nomura talks was also shown in a conversation he had with Kido on 26 September, in which, according to the latter's testimony at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, he talked again of the likely outcome of the European War, and-

'... earnestly pleaded that Japan should settle outstanding problems with America and that Japanese-American diplomatic relations should be adjusted.'⁵⁷

The urgency for a settlement meant the attention paid to Craigie was also increased, and on 26 September he was called to the Gaimushō for meetings with Toyoda and Amau. In his talk with the Foreign Minister, Toyoda attempted to impress the British Ambassador with Japan's sincerity by noting that he was considering whether the moment was opportune for Shigemitsu to return to London, and told Craigie-

'He realised how well Mr. Shigemitsu had done in London and spoke of him as "one of our best Ambassadors", but it was a question whether his health was good enough to justify his being asked to return to so strenuous a post at

so difficult a time.'⁵⁸

Amau tried a different tack and, after describing Japan's aims in seeking a meeting with Roosevelt, stressed that great pressure was being exerted by the German Government on Konoe to give up his diplomacy with the United States.⁵⁹ On 27 September the pressure continued with another meeting between Shigemitsu and Craigie, at which the former revealed for the first time that, should the proposed summit take place between his Premier and the American President, Shigemitsu would accompany Konoe as his personal adviser.⁶⁰ Two days later the campaign to win over Craigie took another turn with a tea party, arranged by Shigemitsu, where once again he met with Toyoda and Amau.⁶¹

This series of discussions encouraged Craigie, in his reply to Eden, to press even harder for the Foreign Office to support a policy of negotiation in Japan, and he noted-

'With his [Matsuoka's] departure a very considerable - though not yet a radical change - has occurred in the political situation here, and there exists a more real prospect ... of setting in motion a steady swing away from the Axis and towards more reasonable policies.... Main difficulty appears to be that while Japanese want speed and cannot yet afford to go beyond generalizations, the Americans seem to be playing for time and to demand the utmost precision in definition before agreeing to any outward step of rapprochement.... If persisted in, it bids fair to wreck the best chance of bringing about a just settlement of Far Eastern issues which has occurred since my arrival in Japan.... [M]y United States colleague and I are firmly of the opinion that on balance this is a chance which it would be the high *[sic]* of folly to let slip. Caution must be exercised, but an excess of cynicism brings stagnation.'⁶²

The effect that these conversations had on Craigie's outlook was also shown in another field. On 21 September he had written to Cadogan requesting that, after four strenuous years in Tokyo, he be allowed two months leave in the United States beginning in early October, and in support of his application he noted-

'Present negotiations in Washington seem to afford good opportunity for me to be absent not only because they tend to exercise a delaying effect on

developments here but because for the present at least we must leave diplomatic leading to Americans.'⁶³

This suggestion initially received some sympathy from London, but when it became clear in the following week that Japanese desperation was growing, and that the new Counsellor at the British Embassy in Tokyo, William Houston-Boswall, would, due to an attack of septicaemia, be too ill to take charge in Craigie's absence, approval was withdrawn.⁶⁴ His reaction to this decision on 29 September was to report to London that even before he had received their telegram he had already decided that, due to the seriousness of the present situation, his presence was needed in Tokyo.⁶⁵

Despite the agreement between Craigie and London that the prospects for the future were looking very grave, his observations on the Hull-Nomura talks still fell on deaf ears in the Foreign Office, and in the minutes made on his 30 September telegram the usual motives for British inaction were repeated; the only real point of note being that Sterndale Bennett raised the important question of what the West could in fact offer Japan which would justify that country's withdrawal from China and the end of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.⁶⁶ There was, however, by this stage another reason why the Foreign Office felt that it could refuse to countenance any mark of conciliation, and this was that a marked improvement in the military position of the Western powers was beginning to take place. Already at the Placentia summit the American Joint Chiefs of Staff had indicated to their British counterparts that they were going to reverse their policy of only a minimal defence for the Philippines, and in early October this policy came to fruition with the stationing of B-17 *Flying Fortress* bombers at Clark Field on Luzon.⁶⁷ On 11 October Lord Halifax wrote a personal letter to Churchill in which he reported on a conversation he had with Roosevelt about the effects of this deployment, and also noted that Henry Stimson, the Army Secretary, had-

'... showed me various maps and circles that they had prepared, illustrating the extent to which bombers based on the Philippines could get at the Japs and told me that they had information that the Japs were greatly affected in their judgement by this move.'⁶⁸

The arrival of American reinforcements in South East Asia had an important effect in London, as it justified and indeed made it politic for Britain to deploy its own deterrent force in the region, and in mid-October Churchill and Eden forced a reluctant Admiralty to agree to the sending of a squadron based on the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* to Singapore.⁶⁹ This was, of course, a move that Craigie had been urging on London ever since his arrival in Tokyo and had recommended as recently as August. The problem was, however, that he had always viewed the stationing of such a force at Singapore as only one element in his 'carrot and stick' approach to Japan, and had hoped for it to be balanced by indications of what Japan could gain through a policy of compromise, but in the autumn of 1941 the decision for deployment was made by Churchill, with Eden's support, with only coercion in mind. The attitude of the Foreign Office was such that even when a report was received from Lord Halifax on 17 October endorsing a very limited plan from Hull for the barter of American cotton for Japanese silk, it was greeted with the greatest suspicion; an opinion that was supported strongly by Churchill, who noted on his copy of Halifax's telegram that 'This is the thin edge of the appeasement wedge.'⁷⁰ The result was that Halifax was duly told on 21 October that-

'Our experience has been that any obvious concession to a Japanese Government has the effect of stiffening the extremists rather than encouraging more moderate elements. We also doubt whether an exchange on the limited basis proposed would be sufficient to deflect Japanese policy.'⁷¹

The day before Halifax's telegram was received in the Foreign Office news was received from Tokyo of the resignation of the Konoe Cabinet. This had taken place due to the Army's refusal to allow more time for negotiations, and their insistence that the Government abide by the decision that had been taken at the Imperial Conference on 6 September. On 18 October the formation of a new Cabinet was announced with the former Army Minister Tōjō Hideki as Prime Minister and with Tōgō Shigenori as Foreign Minister. The Emperor had agreed to the formation of this Cabinet on the proviso that the policy decided upon at ^{the} Imperial Conference would not now be regarded as binding and that the attempt to seek an acceptable compromise with the United States would continue.⁷² Despite this attempt to keep Japan's

options open, the appointment of a hardline figure such as Tōjō did not augur well for the future, and suggested that the brief resurgence of the moderates was now over.

The trend in Japan towards a more fatalistic attitude was displayed not only in the political transition, but also in the military field, where the preparations for war were steadily making progress. As early as 19 September Craigie had forwarded a report from his Naval Attaché, Rear Admiral Hector Boyes, which mentioned that a number of developments indicated that the Japanese merchant marine was being prepared for hostilities.⁷³ This was followed a month later by a brief telegram in which Craigie noted simply-

'From various indications Naval Attaché considers all units of Japanese Navy are mobilised and on a complete war footing.'⁷⁴

These signs of Japanese mobilization, added to the information on the call-up of reservists and other sundry intelligence, led Craigie to feel that he had to challenge the assumptions made by Sir Robert Brooke-Popham in a telegram the latter had sent to the Chiefs of Staff on 1 October, in which he had urged that the pressure on Japan to retreat should be increased still further.⁷⁵ In his observations on this telegram Craigie wrote that he felt that the Commander-in-Chief Far East had underestimated the 'strength and desperation' of Japan and noted that-

'... it would take very little further pressure to drive Japan to rash enterprises ... in fact Service Attachés consider, and I agree, that she is capable if she felt it necessary of undertaking simultaneous operations both in the North and in the South while continuing to hold China.'⁷⁶

This growing pessimism about the future of Japan's relations with the West was further underlined by two conversations that Craigie held with Shigemitsu in October. In a meeting on 8 October Craigie found his Japanese counterpart devoid of the enthusiasm that he had so recently shown, and when Craigie had asked to be kept informed of the progress of the Japanese talks in Washington, he received an example of one of Shigemitsu's blunt retorts-

'Your point is completely missing the mark. It is you [Britain] who, just before I left London, advised us to approach the United States rather than

you in order to bring about a settlement in East Asia. If you want to get any information at all, why not get it from your ally the Americans.'⁷⁷

He also reacted angrily to a comment from Craigie about the continuing preponderant influence of the Army in Japanese politics by telling him that Japan's domestic affairs were none of Britain's business.⁷⁸ This unhappy interview was followed by another on 23 October, after the formation of the Tōjō Cabinet, in which Shigemitsu noted bitterly to the British Ambassador- 'If the United States without modifying their main principles and conventions had acted with a little more understanding of the Japanese Government's difficulties, the Prince's position would not have been rendered impossible and a great opportunity would not have been missed.'⁷⁹

In reporting this conversation to the Foreign Office Craigie wrote-

'I gained the impression from his manner rather than his words that he was disappointed at the turn of events, and looked at the future with more misgiving than at any previous time.'⁸⁰

This was the last meeting that the two diplomats were to hold. After this Shigemitsu, with little hope of averting war, faded into the background and tendered his resignation to the Gaimushō.⁸¹

On 29 and 30 October the impression that a decisive turn had taken place in Japanese politics was confirmed by two interviews that Craigie held with Tōgō. In the first of these meetings Craigie protested about the build-up of Japanese troops in Indo-China, which the Foreign Minister unconvincingly explained away as being necessary to defend the security of Japan.⁸² In the second talk Tōgō complained about the dilatoriness of the Americans and repeated the request that had been made before by Shigemitsu and others that Britain should seek to use its influence with Washington to push for a more conciliatory line.⁸³ The dour nature of these two conversations brought home to Craigie that the time left in which to secure a settlement was growing dangerously short and, in a spirit of some desperation himself, he drafted a long telegram to the Foreign Office warning of the consequences of the failure of the talks in Washington, which followed in the tradition of those he had sent previously during the Tientsin and Burma Road crises.

The telegram was sent from Tokyo on 1 November and, owing to its importance as an indicator of Craigie's views only a month before war began, it is worth dwelling on at length. He began by stating-

'I have for some time felt it was unfortunate that matters of vital concern to us should be under discussion between the United States and the Japanese Government, not only without consultation with His Majesty's Government but without our being given anything but the barest outline of what was happening.'⁸⁴

He then proceeded to note that this lack of dialogue was an important problem because Britain and the United States simply did not have the same interests in East Asia and that, in addition to the fact that Washington could not be expected to negotiate for Britain, it also threatened to diminish Britain in Japan's eyes and also lead to difficulties with the Dominions. From this point he turned his attention to the method that the Americans had used up to this time in the talks, observing critically-

'... little attention seems to have been paid in Washington to Japanese psychology and to the facts of the international situation here, which forbid so sudden and drastic a change in policy as the United States Government appear to demand. Feeling is being worked up in both the United States and Japan to such an extent that an explosion could occur at any time. This might take the unpleasant form of a direct attack on British territory, from which Japan might hope to achieve the first results before the ponderous machinery of the United States Government had had time to project the United States into active participation of the war.'⁸⁵

The potential for an attack on Malaya, he held, demonstrated the importance to Britain of receiving a much fuller account of the talks from Washington than had been the case up to now. In his conclusion he brought the threads of this argument together and set out his views on how the West should deal with Japan-

'Every act of the United States Government and ourselves in reinforcing our military position in the Far East, and the imposing of economic sanctions for specific misdeeds, has been excellent and salutary: but I have always recommended that simultaneous steps should be taken to convince the Japanese Government and people that there is a better way out for their country than a resort to arms, and that the door to it remains always open; in particular it is important to convince the Japanese that there is no

truth in the repeated German assertion that a democratic victory would reduce Japan to the status of a third-rate power. It is in this latter direction that American diplomacy has seemed to me to be a little lacking in vision. In particular I feel that about the worst mistake that we and the Americans can make at this juncture is to underestimate the strength and resolution of this country and its armed forces, in the event - perhaps now not far distant - that it may feel itself driven to desperation.'⁸⁶

This comprehensive analysis of the current situation was followed over the next few days by further telegrams from Craigie adding extra emphasis to the points he had already made. On 6 November he noted prophetically-

'One of the tragedies of the situation is that most Japanese, including many in high places, appear to under-estimate America's naval and air strength and endurance of Japan. The belief that I have frequently expressed in the past year that Japan would avoid war with America at almost any cost, no longer holds good to-day.'⁸⁷

Again, however, these pleas from Craigie for the Foreign Office to take a more positive stance failed to have the desired effect in London, and succeeded only in initiating a series of minutes in which the officials of the Far Eastern Department described Japanese pressure on Craigie as only part of a war of nerves and reiterated the reasons why Britain could not take the Ambassador's advice.⁸⁸ As a result of these deliberations, Eden sent Craigie a telegram on 15 November informing him that it was the Foreign Office's intention to maintain its current policy and to adhere strictly to a 'firm and united front' with the United States.⁸⁹ In justifying this approach the Foreign Secretary noted-

'The maintenance of our present policy admittedly involves a risk of war, though with a good prospect of active American participation. With the Japanese in their present mood there is no alternative for us except appeasement which is of course what the Japanese are hoping for. But there can be no assurance that concessions to Japan, which would have to be made certainly at the expense of China, and probably of others, would stave off the risk of war. On the contrary Japan would then be confirmed in the conviction that aggression pays, and would be ready to resume her southward thrust at the first opportunity, perhaps when we are being hard pressed at

home. We should find that we had merely bought a short respite at the cost of forfeiting both the respect and material assistance of our friends.'⁹⁰

By the time this communication arrived in Tokyo Craigie had received further evidence of the drift towards a breakdown in the Washington talks which filled him with foreboding. On 11 November he had seen Tōgō at a meeting in which the latter complained that the Americans were treating the talks as if they were still at a preliminary stage whereas the Japanese viewed them as actual formal negotiations.⁹¹ This was followed three days later by a talk with an unnamed but well placed source who passed on very accurate information about the current attitude of the Japanese cabinet. This conversation was also important because it involved an exchange between the two interlocuters that went to the very heart of the Japanese dilemma-

'On my observing that a country did not plunge into a great war and face desperate risks unless its existence was at stake, informant replied that it was precisely because powerful elements here considered Japan's very existence to be endangered by our economic measures that they believed there was no alternative to war.'⁹²

Faced with this evidence of Japan's growing impatience Craigie responded to the stonewalling of the Foreign Office by writing again on 18 November of his disagreement with America's negotiating tactics and defending his call for Britain to use its influence with Washington. In particular he noted-

'I agree that it would be better to face war than to contemplate appeasement in the sense in which I understand the word, namely buying off an aggressive state by offering unworthy concessions at the expense either of ourselves or others. But I do not consider we would be justified in taking it for granted that "with Japanese in their latest mood there is no alternative for us except appeasement". The situation which confronts us here is one which admittedly contains element of so direct a clash that war may be inevitable. But there are influential elements in this country still working for peace...'⁹³

It might be thought that in the face of this continued refusal by Craigie to accept that Britain could not intervene in the Washington talks, the Foreign Office would show some irritation at his intransigence. This was

not the case, however, for the Far Eastern Department realised that Craigie was restricted in his assessment of the situation due to the lack of information available to him. Indeed on receipt of the telegram of 18 November, Sir Horace Seymour, who oversaw the activities of the Department, noted-

'I sympathize with Sir R. Craigie - the trouble is the American stipulation that we must not tell him what they tell us.'⁹⁴

This withholding of information did not include only the details of the course of the Hull-Nomura talks but also the diplomatic intelligence data derived from the American use of MAGIC and the British B.J. source, and much of the military and naval intelligence, all of which indicated Japan's growing readiness and desire to take the offensive. That Japan was on the verge of entering the war was, of course, not lost to Craigie, but he did not know the full history of how Japan was publicly claiming a desire for peace while at the same time preparing its military machine for action, a device which appeared to be designed to gain Japan time and to lull its intended victims into a false sense of security.

The clearest evidence of Japan's aggressive intentions came from the military build-up in Indo-China in the autumn of 1941. At first the main influx of troops and *matériel* was located in the north of the French colony, which led to fears in late October that the next Japanese move would be an offensive into Yunnan province to cut the Burma Road.⁹⁵ By the middle of November, however, it became evident that the deployment of Japanese forces was beginning to change, and on 15 November the Deputy Director of Military Intelligence at Singapore, Colonel G.E. Grimsdale, informed the War Office that SIS operatives in Indo-China had just reported a marked increase in activity in Cambodia which suggested that the intended target was now Thailand.⁹⁶ The situation was such that by 19 November the Far East Combined Bureau noted in its weekly report-

'Japanese preparation in French Indo-China apparently designed for alternative plans of attack against China or Thailand but impossible yet to assess relative probability. Probable Japanese themselves still undecided pending outcome latest Washington negotiations. Anxiety apparent in Tokyo for early and favourable result of these.'⁹⁷

As the above report indicates it was clear by the third week in November that the talks in Washington were coming to a climax. To facilitate the negotiations the Gaimushō had decided to send a seasoned diplomat to assist the inept Nomura. This idea had first been mooted while Toyoda was still Foreign Minister and his first choice for this mission had been Shigemitsu, but Army opposition had quashed that proposal and instead in November Tōgō chose Kurusu Saburō, the diplomat who had signed the Tripartite Pact on behalf of Japan.⁹⁸ The events that subsequently took place in Washington have been analysed extensively by historians and there has been much debate on the question of what would have happened if Cordell Hull had on 26 November presented Nomura and Kurusu with the State Department's plan for a *modus vivendi*, in answer to their proposal of 20 November for a temporary settlement.⁹⁹ There has also been some controversy about the British role in this affair and particularly over the effect of Churchill's message to Roosevelt on 26 November in which he noted-

'Of course, it is for you to handle this business and we certainly do not want an additional war. There is only one thing that disquiets us. What about Chiang Kai-shek. Is he not having a very thin diet? Our anxiety is about China. If they collapse, our joint dangers would enormously increase. We are sure that the regard of the United States for the Chinese cause will govern your action.'¹⁰⁰

Certainly Craigie's view of these events at the time, and later in his final report, was that this was a real opportunity to halt the drift towards war. He himself played little part in the proceedings, although he received word of the Japanese and American proposals for a temporary settlement from the Foreign Office on 24 and 25 November, and sent his observations back to London on 27 November.¹⁰¹ In this cable he noted his agreement with the American plan and stated that with some amendments it would probably be acceptable to the Japanese Government.¹⁰² However, by the time his views arrived in the Foreign Office it was too late; Churchill had already made known his doubts to Roosevelt, and Hull had already decided, in his famous words, 'to kick the whole thing over' with the presentation of his uncompromising note on 26 November. The talking was to all intents and purposes over.

In his final report Craigie held firm to his view that Britain should have taken a more positive line over the Japanese proposal for a temporary settlement, claiming that it was-

'... the last throw of the Emperor and the moderates in their effort to avert the disastrous war into which the Japanese army were seeking to project their country.'¹⁰³

He asserted that he had heard from sources in Tokyo that the Japanese armed forces had given a firm guarantee to the Cabinet that they would halt their preparations for war, if an agreement were reached on the basis of the 20 November proposals, and noted that if Japan had undertaken to withdraw from Indo-China it would have 'meant a dislocation of the Japanese army's plans for an attack on Malaya'. He also wrote of his conviction that in the last months of 1941 there was a feeling in Tokyo that the tide of the war in Europe was changing and that, through its reverses in the Battle of the Atlantic and the Soviet Union, Germany was no longer in the ascendant.¹⁰⁴

There is, of course, a strong argument for saying that the last Japanese efforts for peace should have had a more positive reception, but in dealing specifically with Craigie's critique one has to concentrate attention not on those who were in the best position to act, the Americans, but instead on the reaction in Whitehall. It must first be acknowledged that there was in London a grave suspicion of the Hull-Nomura talks and a fear, as one writer has put it, of 'the ghost of appeasement.'¹⁰⁵ This, indeed, has been the main accusation from historians of the British Government's actions, that the latter was too hemmed in by the past and through an excess of caution assisted in the demise of the *modus vivendi*.¹⁰⁶ The Foreign Office's case has not been helped by the fact that in two post-Pearl Harbor accounts of the final days it justified its actions by criticizing the content of the American proposal as too generous; it was described in one memorandum as only likely to lead to an 'inglorious and unworkable compromise'.¹⁰⁷ This analysis, when put beside Craigie's 'evidence' that the Japanese Government were sincere in their desire for a settlement, can seem overly cynical and inflexible, but before making such a judgement one has to understand the wider context against which the decision to give only grudging support to the *modus vivendi* was made.

The first point to make is that Craigie's contention that it appeared in the autumn of 1941 that the tide in Europe was turning in Britain's favour may have been the feeling among his circle in Tokyo, but it was certainly not the way events appeared in London or, as Waldo Heinrichs has recently made clear, in Washington. Although the Battle of the Atlantic might have eased, the titanic struggle in the Soviet Union was reaching a climax and in the last week of November German troops were poised in front of Moscow. Churchill was in no doubt that a Soviet surrender would lead to Germany turning westwards once again to extinguish British resistance. It might be thought that such a danger actually argued in favour of a temporary settlement in East Asia, but this is to miss two vital factors. First there was a fear that if Japan was diverted from a southern advance it might instead strike north against the Soviet Union, thus aiding the German cause. Second there was no guarantee that an American-Japanese settlement would necessarily preclude an attack on British territory; in November 1941 Britain still had no firm promise of support in case of Japanese attack.

In addition to these general points it is also essential to look at the intelligence material passing into British hands during these seven days (20-26) in November, to see whether this could have influenced Churchill to take a hard line. In this context it must be remembered that on first hearing of the *modus vivendi* on 23 November the Prime Minister had told Eden-

'... I should feel pleased if I read that an American-Japanese agreement had been made by which we were to be no worse off three months hence in the Far East than we are now.'¹⁰⁹

Certainly the information received was disturbing; there were further reports from the FECB documenting the build-up of Japanese forces in south Indo-China, and evidence that the South China fleet was being expanded and prepared to move south. On 26 November the Far East Weekly Report noted-
'Estimated 10,000 withdrawn from Central China during week. Some in tropical kit. 3 withdrawals of M.L.C. [Military Landing Craft] from Central China since 1st October now total 330, but no indication of destination. Arrival of aircraft indicates near completion of preparations for operation based on Indo-China should Japanese policy so require. Only Japanese merchant ships outside Japan and China Seas are eleven in South

Seas and one in South America.'¹¹⁰

This report obviously indicated that Japanese preparations were almost complete, but to this piece of military intelligence must be added something from the diplomatic field. On 25 November Britain decrypted the 'Winds' message.¹¹¹

Unfortunately, due to the excessive secrecy of the British Government over security matters, the impact of this message on Churchill and his advisers cannot be properly assessed, but it is hard to believe that such a cable, with its reference to the severing of diplomatic relations, would not have raised fears of war. Also, of course, it needs to be understood that war with Britain and war with the United States were treated in it as two separate entities; could this have provoked a fear that Japan was still trying to drive a wedge between the two countries? That Japan was using the talks in Washington as a camouflage for its aggressive intentions and would strike no matter whether an agreement was reached or not? This is speculation but it is nevertheless a possibility that the message would have caused such a debate and it would have confirmed the belief in London that it was too late to talk of mutual compromise.

The situation in late November was thus more complex than Craigie believed, and the dangers very great. There was a chance that, if events went drastically wrong, Britain could find itself alone in a war against Japan, with the possibility in the near future of a renewed German interest in invasion. In these circumstances it was considered safest to continue with the policy of a hard line towards Japan and urge caution on the United States to forestall its being mollified by false assurances. It must be remembered that Britain was fighting a war to the death and could not afford to take risks; America was at peace, and it is on Washington that any blame lies for the premature death of the *modus vivendi*.

On 27 November, after this last diplomatic flurry of activity, Craigie reported that an informer who was close to Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal Kido had told him that the Emperor was very concerned about the course of events, but that it was very difficult for him to veto an occupation of Thailand because it was by no means clear that this would lead to conflict

with the West. The British Ambassador therefore suggested to London that to deter a Japanese move into Thailand it was necessary to make clear that such action would entail a great risk of war with Britain and the United States.¹¹² This proposal, though it met with some scepticism in the Foreign Office, concurred with Churchill's view of the situation, and on 30 November the latter forwarded the idea to Roosevelt.¹¹³ This was Craigie's last major contribution to the cause of peace between Britain and Japan, and it is somewhat ironic, and a clear sign of how things had come to pass, that this proposal led in the end to a letter from Roosevelt to Emperor Hirohito on 6 December, rather than a letter from King George VI.¹¹⁴

By this late date, however, it was obvious from the interception of Japanese telegrams that the time for diplomacy was over. In the first days of December, as the final preparations were completed by the Japanese forces for the impending onslaught, Craigie received instructions from the Foreign Office to ready the Embassy for the order to withdraw from Japan.¹¹⁵ It is not clear though whether in these final days Craigie ever received a clear warning from the Foreign Office that relations were about to be severed, which would have taken the form either of a telegram containing the single word 'Plumper' or a broadcast on the BBC including the coded message 'Aunt Jemima will not give her talk to the children this afternoon'.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless the necessary precautions for withdrawal, such as the burning of code-books and the destruction of the Embassy archives, were carried out. While this activity took place Craigie, in a last effort, saw Tōgō on 5 December and pleaded with him to make a radical change in Japanese foreign policy before it was too late, but this request was cast aside by the Foreign Minister, who showed a 'marked hardening of his attitude.'¹¹⁷ Early on the morning of 8 December, Craigie was called again to the Gaimushō to see Tōgō and on this occasion was told of the Japanese decision to break off the negotiations with the United States. He returned from Kasumigaseki to the Embassy to be met with the news that hostilities had broken out in Malaya and at Pearl Harbor, and soon an emissary arrived from the Gaimushō to communicate the Japanese declaration of war.¹¹⁸

NOTES

1. PRO ADM199/1477 Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) to Captain on Staff Singapore 25 November 1941.
2. PRO WO208/882 BJ 091607 Tokyo to Berlin 28 May 1941, decrypted 30 May 1941. For further information derived about Barbarossa from Japanese decrypts see C. Boyd, 'Significance of MAGIC and the Japanese Ambassador to Berlin: (1) The Formative Months Before Pearl Harbor.' in *Intelligence and National Security* 1987 Vol.1 No.2 pp.152-153.
3. See C. Hosoya, 'The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact.' and S. Nagaoka, 'The Drive into Southern Indochina and Thailand.' in J.W. Morley (ed.), *The Fateful Choice. Japan's Advance into Southeast Asia, 1939-1941.* (Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1980) p.96-100 and p.235 respectively.
4. For the details of the Imperial Conference of 2 July see N. Ike (ed.), *Japan's Decision For War. Records of the 1941 Conferences.* (Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, Cal. 1967) pp.77-90.
5. PRO FO371/27881 F5593/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 25 June 1941.
6. PRO FO837/534 T33/65/Z Vol.4 S. Kamimura/Sir F. Leith-Ross conversation 27 June 1941. See also W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade Vol.2.* (HMSO, London, 1959) p.104.
7. See PRO CAB96/4 FE(41)126 Ministry of Economic Warfare 25 June 1941, and FO371/27881 F5593/12/23 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 28 June 1941.
8. PRO WO193/866 Director of Military Intelligence to Chief of the Imperial General Staff 25 June 1941.
9. Ibid.
10. PRO CAB79/12 COS(41) Chiefs of Staff 244th meeting 25 June 1941.
11. PRO CAB65/19 WM 66(41) War Cabinet conclusions 7 July 1941. The memorandum drawn up by the Far Eastern Committee is CAB66/17 WP(41)154 'Japanese Intentions in Indo-China' A. Eden Memorandum 6 July 1941. See also P. Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941.* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977) pp.236-237, K. Sato, *Japan and Britain at the Crossroads, 1939-1941. A Study in the Dilemmas of Japanese Diplomacy.* (Senshu Univ. Press, Tokyo, 1986) pp.119-120, and W.N. Medlicott, op.cit. p.105.
12. PRO CAB65/19 WM 66(41) War Cabinet conclusions 7 July 1941. Also quoted in P. Lowe, op.cit. p.237.
13. PRO FO371/27957 F6238/421/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 10 July 1941.
14. PRO FO371/27763 F6170/9/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 13 July 1941.
15. See PRO FO371/27881 F6101/12/23 Lord Halifax to A. Eden 10 July 1941. and FO371/27972 F6408/1299/23 Lord Halifax to A. Eden 17 July 1941.

On the American motivation for such an extreme response to the Japanese plans see W. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War. Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1988) pp.133-145, and J. Utley, *Going to War With Japan, 1937-1941*. (Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, Tenn., 1985) pp.151-154.

16. PRO F0371/27972 F6489/1299/23 S.D. Waley to J. Sterndale Bennett 18 July 1941. On the British reaction to the proposed American action see W.N. Medicott, op.cit. pp.106-107.
17. PRO F0371/27881 F6106/12/23 A. Eden to Lord Halifax 13 July 1941.
18. PRO F0371/28846 W4956/54/61 R. Heppel Minute 12 May 1941. For more on oil policy before July 1941 see I.H. Anderson, *The Standard-Vacuum Oil Company and United States East Asian Policy, 1933-1941*. (Princeton, Univ. Press, Princeton, 1975) pp.160-172.
19. PRO CAB66/17 WP(41)172 'Japanese Plans in Indo-China' A. Eden Memorandum 20 July 1941. Also quoted in C. Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1941-45*. (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1978) p.72.
20. PRO F0837/534 T33/65/Z Vol.4 Sir F. Leith-Ross Minute 14 July 1941. For the Japanese failure to predict the Western response to the occupation of south Indo-China see K. Sato, op.cit. p.129.
21. On the crisis in Japanese politics see K. Oka, *Konoe Fumimaro. A Political Biography*. (Univ. of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1983) pp.133-134.
22. PRO F0371/27765 F6811/9/61 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 26 July 1941. For Craigie's positive assessment of Toyoda see K. Sato, op.cit. p.126.
23. In M. Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny. My Struggle For Peace*. (Hutchinson, London, 1958) p.238 the author claims that he only learnt of the existence of the talks with the United States at this juncture. This comment must, however, be treated with some caution as *The Magic Background to Pearl Harbor. Vol.3*. (Department of Defense, Washington, 1978) No.541 Tokyo to Moscow 27 May 1941, contains a short account of the talks which the Moscow Embassy was asked to forward to other missions including London.
24. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.238.
25. See Kido Kōichi diary, entry for 23 July 1941 (State Department, Washington 1977), N. Ike, op.cit. p.110, and M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.239-240.
26. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.239-240. The content of these talks is confirmed by Admiral T. Toyoda Affidavit, IMTFE Exhibit 3554 in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide (eds.), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.XIV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34541.

27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid, p.240.
30. R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide (eds.), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial. Vol.XIII.* (Garland, New York, 1981) p.31223.
31. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.240.
32. PRO FO371/27882 F7098/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 29 July 1941.
33. Ibid. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.131-132.
34. PRO FO371/35957 F821/821/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 4 February 1943. Craigie's final report has been printed complete in J. Rusbridger & E. Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor. How Churchill Lured Roosevelt into War.* (Michael O'Mara, London, 1991) Appendix 9 pp.7-8.
35. PRO WO193/826 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 25 August 1941.
36. An important issue in the origins of the Pacific War is whether the West's intelligence breakthrough with the Purple code made war more likely; for an interesting comment on this question see J. Tsunoda, 'On the So-Called Hull-Nomura Negotiations.' in H. Conroy & H. Wray (eds.), *Pearl Harbor Reexamined. Prologue to the Pacific War.* (Univ. of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1990) pp.92-93.
37. PRO FO371/27909 F4430/86/23 Lord Halifax to A. Eden 24 May 1941. See also D. Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance 1937-41. A Study in Competitive Co-operation.* (Europa, London, 1981) pp.230-231, D.C. Watt, 'Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented in November 1941? Sir Robert Craigie's Final Report on his Embassy in Japan and the Reactions of the British Policy-Making Elite.' (unpublished manuscript) p.14, and P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.252-255. On the course of the Hull-Nomura talks up to July 1941 see R.J.C. Butow, *The John Doe Associates. Backdoor Diplomacy For Peace.* (Stanford Univ. Press, Stanford, 1974) pp.147-242.
38. Ibid. H. Ashley Clarke Minute 26 May 1941.
39. PRO FO371/27892 F7724/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 12 August 1941.
40. PRO FO371/27892 F8410/17/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 25 August 1941. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.137-138.
41. On the American imposition of the freezing order and its consequences see J. Utley, op.cit. pp.154-156, W. Heinrichs, op.cit. pp.177-179, and I.H. Anderson, op.cit. pp.175-192.
42. The best and most complete account of the Placentia Bay meeting is T.A. Wilson, *The First Summit. Roosevelt and Churchill in Placentia*

Bay. (Univ. of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kan., 1991). For the effect of the meeting on Japan see K. Sato, op.cit. pp.133-134.

43. R. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1979) p.301, and W. Heinrichs, op.cit. pp.161-163.
44. See J. Tsunoda, op.cit. pp.93-94. This sympathetic view of Konoe's intentions is by no means accepted by all historians whether Western or Japanese, for a contrary view to that of Professor Tsunoda see A. Fujiwara, 'The Road to Pearl Harbor.' in H. Conroy & H. Wray (eds.), op.cit. pp.156-158.
45. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.243.
46. Ibid, p.250.
47. For Roosevelt's and the State Department's reactions to the Konoe proposal see J. Utley, op.cit. pp.159-161, W. Heinrichs, op.cit. pp.161-163, and K. Sato, op.cit. p.142.
48. For the record of the 6 September Imperial Conference see N. Ike (ed), op.cit. pp.133-151.
49. On the Grew/Konoe meeting see W. Heinrichs, op.cit. pp.185-187.
50. PRO FO371/27883 F9164/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 8 September 1941. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.145-146, and D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.241.
51. K. Usui, 'A Consideration of Anglo-Japanese Relations: Japanese Views of Britain, 1937-1941.' in I. Nish (ed.), *Anglo-Japanese Alienation 1919-1952*. (Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge, 1982) p.95.
52. For Grew's opinions at this point see W. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador. Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition*. (Oxford Univ. Press, New York, 1966) pp.345-350.
53. PRO FO371/27883 F9172/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 9 September 1941. For a critical opinion of the views expressed by Craigie in this telegram see K. Sato, op.cit. p.145.
54. PRO FO371/27981 F9615/1299/23 A. Eden to W. Churchill 12 September 1941.
55. PRO WO193/928 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 18 September 1941.
56. FR Japan, 2:624-625 Memorandum by J. Grew 17 September 1941.
57. R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide (eds), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Vol.XIII*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.31217.
59. PRO FO371/27910 F9987/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 27 September 1941.

58. PRO FO371/28020 F10069/4564/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 27 September 1941.
60. PRO FO371/27910 F10116/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 September 1941.
61. Ibid. See also Sir R. Craigie affidavit for M. Shigemitsu, defence exhibit 3555 in R.J. Pritchard & S.M. Zaide (eds.), *The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Vol.XIV*. (Garland, New York, 1981) p.34547.
62. PRO FO371/27883 F10117/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 September 1941. See P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.257-258.
63. PRO FO371/28049 F10307/10307/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Cadogan 21 September 1941.
64. Ibid, Sir A. Cadogan to Sir R. Craigie 28 September 1941.
65. Ibid, Sir R. Craigie to Sir A. Cadogan 29 September 1941.
66. PRO FO371/27883 F10117/12/23 J. Sterndale Bennett 1 October Minute on Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 September 1941. For an account of the Foreign Office reaction to Craigie's telegram see P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.258-259, and D.C. Watt, p.15.
67. PRO CAB122/577 Admiral R. Turner/Rear-Admiral V. Danckwerts conversation 19 August 1941. See also D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.235.
68. Lord Halifax to W. Churchill 11 October 1941, in Microfilm of the Hinckelton Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge, HLFX 4.11. See also D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.242.
69. PRO CAB69/2 65th Meeting 17 October 1941 and CAB69/8 DO(41) 66th Meeting 20 October 1941. See A. Marder, *Old Friends, New Enemies: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Strategic Illusions, 1936-1941*. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981) pp.223-231, and D. Reynolds, op.cit, p.243.
70. PRO FO371/27911 F10960/86/23 Lord Halifax to A. Eden 17 October 1941, and W. Churchill minute 19 October 1941. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. pp.260-261, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. p.16.
71. Ibid, A. Eden to Lord Halifax 21 October 1941.
72. On the political upheaval in Japan see K. Sato, op.cit. pp.149-151 & 155-156, and A. Iriye, op.cit. pp.164-166.
73. PRO FO371/27963 F9766/523/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 19 September 1941.
74. PRO FO371/27964 F10939/523/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 17 October 1941. See also A. Marder, op.cit. p.215 footnote 3.

75. See PRO W0193/865 Commander-in-Chief Far East to Chiefs of Staff 1 October 1941, and F0371/27884 F11231/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 22 October 1941.
76. PRO F0371/27884 F11231/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 22 October 1941. See also P. Lowe, op.cit. p.261.
77. On the 8 October meeting see K. Sato, op.cit. p.150.
78. Ibid, pp.150-151.
79. PRO F0371/27884 F11282/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 23 October 1941.
80. Ibid.
81. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. p.259.
82. PRO F0371/27884 F11593/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 29 October 1941. See K. Sato, op.cit. p.160, and P. Lowe, op.cit. p.261.
83. PRO F0371/27884 F11651/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 30 October 1941. See K. Sato, op.cit. pp.160-161, and P. Lowe, op.cit. p.262.
84. PRO F0371/27911 F11672/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 1 November 1941. See D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.16-17.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid. Also quoted in D. Reynolds, op.cit. p.222.
87. PRO F0371/27884 F11947/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 6 November 1941. Also quoted in P. Lowe, op.cit. p.263.
88. PRO F0371/27911 F11672/86/23 L. Foulds minute 3 November 1941 and Sir A. Cadogan minute 6 November 1941 on Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 1 November 1941.
89. Ibid, A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 15 November 1941.
90. Ibid.
91. PRO F0371/27911 F12196/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 11 November 1941. See also K. Sato, op.cit. pp.167-168.
92. PRO F0371/27884 F11745/12/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 4 November 1941.
93. PRO F0371/27912 F12486/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 18 November 1941. Also quoted in D.C. Watt, op.cit. p.19
94. Ibid, Sir H. Seymour minute 22 November 1941.

95. PRO CAB122/73 Captain on Staff (Singapore) to Director to Naval Intelligence 30 October 1941 Far Eastern Weekly report 54.
96. PRO WO208/874 Deputy Director of Military Intelligence (Far East) to War Office 14 November 1941.
97. PRO CAB122/73 Captain on Staff (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence 19 November 1941 Far Eastern Weekly report 57.
98. M. Shigemitsu, op.cit. pp.250-251.
99. For the course of the Hull-Nomura talks in late November 1941 see W. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War* pp.205-214, J. Utley, op.cit. pp.170-175, and R.J.C. Butow, op.cit. pp.298-302.
100. PRO FO371/29713 F12818/86/23 W. Churchill to F.D. Roosevelt 26 November. For critical assessments of the British response to the *modus vivendi* see D. Klein & H. Conroy, 'Churchill, Roosevelt and the China Question in Pre-Pearl Harbor Diplomacy.' in H. Conroy & H. Wray (eds.), op.cit. pp.133-138, R.J. Grace, 'Whitehall and the Ghost of Appeasement: November 1941' in *Diplomatic History* Vol.3 No.2 pp.173-191, J. Rusbridger & E. Nave, op.cit. pp.140-143, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.19-23.
101. PRO FO371/29713 F12916/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 27 November 1941. See also D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.19-20.
102. Ibid.
103. PRO FO371/35957 F821/821/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 4 February 1943. For the disagreements between Craigie and the Foreign Office see S. Olu Agbi, 'The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie Versus the Foreign Office.' in *Modern Asian Studies* 1983 Vol.17 No.3 pp.514-517, and D.C. Watt, op.cit.
104. Ibid.
105. See R.J. Grace, op.cit. pp.173-191
106. See ibid, D. Klein & H. Wray, op.cit. pp.133-138, and D.C. Watt, op.cit. pp.1-30.
107. See PRO FO371/27914 F14304/86/23 H. Ashley Clarke memorandum 4 January 1942 and FO371/35957 F821/751/23 H. Ashley Clarke memorandum 7 February 1942.
108. See W. Heinrichs, *Threshold of War*. p.213.
109. PRO FO371/29712 F12813/86/23 W. Churchill to A. Eden 23 November 1941. Also quoted in K. Sato, op.cit. p.172.
110. PRO CAB122/70 Captain on Staff (Singapore) to Director of Naval Intelligence 26 November 1941 FEW 58.

111. PRO ADM199/1477 Director of Naval Intelligence (Admiralty) to Captain on Staff (Singapore) 25 November 1941.
112. PRO FO371/27913 F12976/86/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 27 November 1941.
113. PRO FO371/27913 F13053/86/23 Former Naval Person [W. Churchill] to F.D. Roosevelt 30 November 1941.
114. R. Dallek, *op.cit.* p.309.
115. PRO FO371/27913 F13091/86/23 A. Eden to Sir R. Craigie 2 December 1941.
116. For discussion of the 'Plumper' telegram see PRO CAB107/3 Ad Hoc Meeting 6 December 1941. For the 'Aunt Jemima' broadcast see FO371 28943 W5253/1376/49 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 1 May 1941.
117. Sir R. Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*. (Hutchinson, London, 1946) p.134.
118. Sir R. Craigie, *op.cit.* pp.135-136.

CONCLUSION

The war which began in December 1941 brought disaster to both Japan and Britain. For the former a series of quick victories could only delay the inevitable as the military and industrial might of the United States girded itself to crush the Japanese Empire: for the British, despite their finally emerging on the winning side, the conflict was a turning point in the history of its Empire; the humiliating surrender at Singapore in February 1942 shattered Britain's prestige in South East Asia and India and presaged the steady retreat of the post-war era. In the face of these calamities the fact that the warnings emanating from Craigie and Shigemitsu were ignored can be interpreted as the result of a blinkered and foolhardy attitude on the part of their respective governments, not simply in 1941 itself but during the entire period from 1937 onwards. However, this argument only holds water if it can be established that, as well as warning of the dangers of mutual antagonism, the two ambassadors also provided practical solutions to the problems in Anglo-Japanese relations and alternative paths to progress: to say that a war should be avoided is easy; to say how it should be averted is a different matter altogether.

There was, of course, a whole range of issues separating Britain and Japan, such as the differences over trade, the nascent naval rivalry, and the controversy over Japan's links with the Axis, but underlying all of these, at least initially, was the issue of China. Britain and Japan may have liked at times to suggest that this was a moral divide, but in essence it was about power and in particular power over the commercial destiny of China. To this problem both Craigie and Shigemitsu had their own answers.

For Craigie the solution to the split over China once the Sino-Japanese conflict had begun was for Britain to recognize that Japan would be the most likely victor of this contest and that, if Britain were to emerge after the war with its stake in China maintained, it would have to act as a strict neutral and not assist Chiang Kai-shek. This was a view greeted

with horror by the China hands of the Far Eastern Department and by those with a political interest or economic stake in China, who foresaw that in this future world Japan would dominate the China market with Britain left as a very junior partner. It was such judgements by Craigie that earned him the accusation that he was an outsider, inexperienced in East Asian affairs; to an extent this is true, but the reason for his somewhat cavalier attitude towards the fortunes of British merchants in China was not due to any lack of understanding of the problems of the East, it was rather a result of his consciousness of Britain's global insecurity.

To come to any conclusion about Craigie one has to realize that he saw an Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement* as his goal not for sentimental reasons but as a necessity, hoping that at least this part of Britain's 'strategic nightmare' could be vanquished. It is obvious from his reports to London that he was deeply concerned at the drift of Japan into the Axis camp and saw the countering of this tendency as one of his greatest responsibilities. From the first reports of the abortive German mediation of the Sino-Japanese war in autumn 1937 to his accounts of German pressure on Japan in autumn 1941 to end the Hull-Nomura talks he consistently urged the Foreign Office to take positive measures to counter the Reich's influence. In his final report in February 1943 he wrote-

'... the burden of my advice during the years 1937 and 1941 has been that we could not afford to follow a purely idealistic policy or to deal with Japan according to her merits so long as we remained under the threat of war with Germany - a proposition that became still more obvious after the actual outbreak of war in Europe, followed by the collapse of France.'¹

This approach meant that Craigie felt that the problems over China always had to be set against the wider perspective, and this is what led him to preach caution over the loan to China in summer 1938, over Tientsin in 1939 and over the Burma Road in 1940. In each of these cases his advice exerted a strong influence over Britain's eventual decision to take the line of least resistance and his arguments proved to be a useful and necessary antidote to the not infrequently myopic vision of the Far Eastern Department.

In his views on British policy towards East Asia Craigie's judgements were also shaped heavily by his assessment of the United States. In this field he was, of course, not without experience, having held the reins of the American Department in the Foreign Office for almost ten years. His conviction was that, although it would make sense for Britain to act jointly with the United States if the latter showed any inclination to do so, London should never bank on Washington's support since to do so would leave Britain dangerously exposed as the Americans were masters of moralistic rhetoric but loath to take action. This belief was again important in influencing his reaction to the crises that Britain met between 1937 and 1940, and underlined his certainty that if Japanese pressure were resisted and no compromise made then Britain would be on its own.

In contrast to Craigie's attempt to play down the importance of China, Shigemitsu saw it as the central issue of Anglo-Japanese relations. In meeting after meeting with R.A. Butler and others he emphasized that a British willingness to meet Japan over China would clear the main obstacle to the development of a new understanding. In the short term his aim in presenting this argument was to assist Japan in ending the war in China by persuading Britain to curb its support for Chiang Kai-shek and return to a truly neutral stance, a point he was very keen to link with Japan's relations with Germany once the war in Europe had begun. This may give the impression that he was in favour of the war with China and perhaps, as some have claimed, sympathetic towards the Army's ambitions, but in essence he still held to the beliefs that had guided his conduct as Minister to China and Vice-Minister at the Gaimushō. In other words he was heavily influenced by his consistently held belief that the West was exerting a baleful influence in China, encouraging the latter to resist Japan for the selfish motive of defending the West's stake in the East, and by his hope that Japan and China would, once the West had been forced to retreat politically from East Asia, eventually co-operate to their mutual benefit. This policy was not the same as that held by the dominant faction in the Army, and it is noticeable that in August 1940 Shigemitsu urged Matsuoka to conclude a liberal peace agreement with China and that in 1942, as Ambassador to Nanking, he tried to effect a radical change in Japan's China

policy and to establish the Wang Ching-wei régime as a truly independent sovereign government.

In espousing the view that Britain should take a neutral stance towards the Sino-Japanese war Shigemitsu's views were, of course, close to those of Craigie and to his backers in London such as Sir Warren Fisher, and it might seem that there was here a real possibility of compromise but, even ignoring the weighty moral objections to a British withdrawal of support from Chiang Kai-shek, there remained a deep divide between the British and Japanese positions. For Britain any settlement on these lines would be designed to maximize the British stake in China once the war there had ended; the Japanese aim, however, was to achieve the opposite and to expel British political influence from the region and to minimize its economic hold. The problem that had doomed the Leith-Ross mission in 1935/6 was still applicable in the war years in China. To have come to a settlement it would have been necessary for one side to change fundamentally its policy towards East Asia: for Britain to have accepted Japanese predominance rather than simply displaying a willingness to treat her as an equal partner, or for Japan to have given up the gains it had gathered from the decline of the Washington system.

This question of whether Japan could have sacrificed its dominant position in China for the sake of peace with the West leads on to the problem that behind the disagreements over China lay an even more fundamental divide. This was the question of how to deal with the fact that the Japanese felt their rapidly expanding economy was stultified by the obstacles inherent in the Anglo-American *status quo*, namely the lack of free access to raw materials and markets. Both Shigemitsu and Craigie recognized that it was this issue which was at the centre of Japan's revisionism and that only a settlement of this problem could ever lead to Japan once again taking its place as a pillar of the world order. This was the issue which Shigemitsu addressed in his memorandum of August 1935 and in his letter to Arthur Edwardes in June 1936, and in the former he had argued strongly that if the *status quo* powers insisted on keeping their empires, of whatever sort, intact, and denied other nations the right to trade on equal terms in their economic blocs, then it was a recipe for conflict. Craigie too realized

that this was the case, and in his response to Sir Robert Vansittart's memorandum on Germany in December 1936 he wrote of the dangers of Britain espousing a policy of 'what we have we hold'.

However, Craigie did not leave the issue there; in June and July 1940, when the Burma Road crisis had revealed the folly of Britain's flank being threatened by a revisionist Japan ~~threatening its flank~~, he built on this germ of thought to construct an image of how Japan's economic dilemmas could be answered. In his telegram of 22 June he sketched a plan in which Britain and the United States would give Japan financial assistance in return for a peace settlement with China, and on 14 July went further and proposed that Japan should be allowed free trade with Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, concessions over raw materials and immigration, the lowering of British and American tariffs, and increased access to credits to finance imports. This comprehensive list went to the heart of the issue and was intended to right many of the inequalities in the inter-war international economy. Apart from the question of whether Britain, or indeed the United States, would ever have had the vision to implement such a policy, there was one major problem; it was far too late. In wartime the concessions envisaged by Craigie were simply impossible to realize.

The start of the war in Europe was the crucial dividing line in Anglo-Japanese relations. Craigie was certainly right in arguing that the conflict made it even more necessary for Britain to assure itself of Japan's neutrality, but the whole nature of the war with Germany made an understanding more difficult rather than easier to achieve. Britain could not pursue its policy of economic warfare, which was considered one of the major weapons in its armoury, without placing restrictions on the ability of neutrals to trade with the Reich, and also could not fight the war without increasing markedly its control over and use of Imperial raw materials. Both these requirements had a severe effect on Anglo-Japanese relations and squeezed ever harder Japan's already limited access to raw materials. Against this background Craigie's proposals in July 1940 were simply impractical; the stocks needed for the British war effort, let alone the lack of desire in the government for such a policy, defeated the plan from the very start.

Apart from this problem there was also the difficulty that Britain's war effort was so ineffectual in the first two years of the conflict that it only helped to encourage Japan to look south and to seek the acquisition of vital raw materials through the threat of force or force itself. In the development of the pursuance^c of this quest it was the collapse of France that acted as the critical catalyst; in June 1940 it appeared to Japan as if the role of the dominant power over South East Asia was her's for the asking, and with it the economic riches which would fulfil Japan's requirements. Shigemitsu was aware that this was an excellent opportunity, and advised the Gaimushō to take advantage of it and seek the expansion of its influence through political pressure on the region. However, his support for this policy was conditional, and he emphasized that there was a strong need for caution in order to avoid arousing Anglo-American suspicions. His advice was rejected, and in the Matsuoka period Japan blustered its way into the region at the same time as it linked itself ever more closely to Britain's enemies in Europe and thus helped to solidify the Anglo-American combination in the Pacific.

The events in Europe thus provided a momentum to the estrangement between Britain and Japan, which Craigie and Shigemitsu were increasingly powerless to stop. As sanctions began to bite into the Japanese economy, Japan was forced to try to improve its position in South East Asia which in turn led to firmer sanctions, starting a downward spiral towards war. Both ambassadors advised their hosts and their own governments of the risks of war and preached the need for caution, for Japan to stop advancing and for Britain to show some flexibility in the economic field, but to no avail. The years of suspicion and unsatisfactory compromises had bred a contempt for concessions in London, and in Tokyo the Japanese Government was increasingly faced with a choice between giving up at a stroke all the gains of the previous ten years or going to war. In these circumstances conflict was inevitable unless (yet again) one of the two sides chose to fundamentally change its policy towards East Asia.

There were then potentially insurmountable obstacles to Britain and Japan ever coming to an understanding whether over China or, during the war, over the economic difficulties. That, however, still leaves the question of why

on the British side the will to make a fundamental change to British policy was wanting. To a degree the answer can be found within the Far Eastern Department where the influence of those who could only see as far as Britain's interests in East Asia was paramount. It is disturbing to see that on a number of occasions the views expressed by the two ambassadors did not receive the requisite attention in the Foreign Office for reasons that were at best questionable. In the case of Shigemitsu there was a tendency to dismiss his views which rested on the fact that he had not been in Japan since 1936 and therefore did not comprehend fully the making of Japanese policy. As for Craigie, during the crucial years from 1937 to 1939 his recommendations, if seen to be too weighted towards compromise, could be written off as no more than the result of exposure to 'Piggottry'. This questioning of the validity of the ambassadors' comments was most ill-considered and unfortunate, weakening their ability to influence policy, and allowing the Far Eastern Department to air their stock clichés without fear of challenge.

This, however, was only part of the story; there was another reason during the entirety of this period for Britain's refusal to attempt seriously to come to terms with Japan, and that was fear of an adverse reaction from the United States. Washington hung over Britain's East Asia policy like some Victorian morality painting warning of the dire consequences of veering from the road of righteousness. Britain's concern was not that its policy was immoral, it was that America might see it as immoral, which could have serious repercussions not only in the region itself but also in Europe. Britain knew that in a war with Germany it would at the very least need the benevolent neutrality of the United States, and this perception of the necessity to assure American support grew ever greater as the threat to Britain grew ever closer. Particularly by mid-1941, with Germany's conquest of the Balkans and the probable defeat of the Soviet Union, there was a belief that Hitler could only be defeated through the entry of the United States into the war. All aspects of British policy were subservient to that essential goal, and that included the question of Japan. Craigie may have been right in all the crises up to the Burma Road in urging the British government to avoid war, but in 1941 his ability to see the wider perspective, which had served him and Britain so well until then, failed.

Churchill declared in 1943, in disagreeing with the case argued in Craigie's final report-

'It was ... a blessing that Japan attacked the United States and thus brought the United States wholeheartedly and unitedly into the war. Greater good fortune has rarely happened to the British Empire than this event which has revealed our friends and foes in their true light...'²

This time Churchill was right.

However, admitting that Craigie was wrong in 1941 does not invalidate the work he, and for that matter Shigemitsu, had done in earlier years. Both men had striven hard to improve Anglo-Japanese relations, had eased tensions during difficult crises, and had sought out areas of possible convergence such as mutual antipathy towards the Soviet Union. They were certainly both ambitious men and their desire for a *rapprochement* was influenced by their wish to achieve a personal success for themselves. Nevertheless, sentiment did play some role and they were both to some extent the victim of the 'ambassador's disease', that after a few years the diplomat begins to represent the interests of his host as well as those of his own country. Despite this it is wrong to state that Craigie was a mere appeaser or that Shigemitsu was a moderate unrepresentative of his country's expansionist designs, both diplomats were more complex than a simple label would suggest.

Sir Robert Craigie was without doubt a most able negotiator; time and time again he saved Britain from the consequences of its own follies. He came to Japan in 1937 with the clear aim of trying to restore some degree of friendship with that country and prevent it drifting into the clutches of the Germans, and pursued this goal for the next four years. At times flights of fancy would lead him to propose policies that were clearly unacceptable, such as that in autumn 1938 for an Anglo-German mediation of the Sino-Japanese war, and he on occasion either over-emphasized the influence of or placed too much faith in the Japanese moderates, but in the main his sense of perspective was crucial in adding a sense of realism to Britain's policy in East Asia. In his first years in Japan he gained from having a Prime Minister in London who was sympathetic to his arguments and appreciated his efforts, although it must be understood that there is no

evidence suggesting that he was placed in Tokyo at Chamberlain's request. After May 1940 the situation began to change and increasingly his advice fell on deaf ears; the need to rely on his assessments of Japanese thinking was weakened by the reading of the Japanese diplomatic code and he was seen as weak and vacillating. It is a matter of shame that in the end, after his mission had tragically failed, the only reward he was given by the British Government was the lowly position of the British representative to the War Crimes Commission in Geneva.

Shigemitsu Mamoru is a difficult figure to assess. Any judgement of him is in danger of being influenced by the very great controversies over his reputation. To read the warm remarks made about him by the likes of Kase, Piggott and Hankey alongside the prosecution's claims at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial makes for a very odd experience, and it is difficult to believe that they are talking about the same man. To come to any understanding of Shigemitsu one has to break from these extremes; he was neither the Anglophile liberal portrayed by his admirers nor the militarist diplomat painted by his detractors. He was first and foremost a nationalist, and as Ambassador to the Court of Saint James from 1938 to 1941 he did his best to improve relations with Britain on terms beneficial to Japan. When from August 1940 he began to warn of the need for caution in relations with Britain it was not because of any deep longing to avoid war with that country, it was a matter of calculation, the calculation that the United States was beginning to side with Britain and that the combination of these two powers would eventually cause the downfall of Hitler and the defeat of Germany leaving Japan alone against two of the most powerful countries in the world. His espousal of a policy of peace was not due to his being affected by pro-Western sentiment but because he saw continued peace as in Japan's best interests. It is only right that at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial he was found innocent of the charge of conspiring to wage an aggressive war; that was far too crude a weapon for a diplomat as astute as Shigemitsu.

It is interesting to note in the end that the two ambassadors can be seen as representatives of the factions on both sides who desired *rapprochement* for reasons of necessity. The proposals put forward by them tried to

address the fundamental reasons for the divide between the two former allies, but it needs to be emphasized that, though they shared the same method of achieving their aims, the aims themselves were very different. For Craigie the matter of greatest importance was that Japan should be neutralized so that Britain could concentrate on the European situation, while Shigemitsu consistently saw friendship with Britain as a means of legitimizing and securing Japanese control over East Asia and blunting the threat of the formation of an Anglo-American combination against Japan. To have merged these two separate goals together and produced a mutually acceptable compromise would have been incredibly difficult but whether it would in the end have been impossible is a question that cannot be answered; what is certain is that in the tense climate of the 1930s there was no-one at the highest levels with the selflessness and vision necessary to address these problems and without that leap of faith war could not be avoided.

NOTES

1. PRO F0371/35957 F821/821/23 Sir R. Craigie to A. Eden 4 February 1943.
2. PRO F0371/35957 F2602/751/23 W. Churchill to A. Eden 19 September 1943.

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