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From Ambiguity to A Pro-Japanese Commitment”

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Abstract

Nazi Germany's foreign policy in the Far East from 1933 to 1937 was characterized by a 'balance' between two separate policies pursued by two decision-making authorities. These were a pro-Chinese policy of the German Army centered on military-industrial cooperation and a pro-Japanese one of the Nazi Party for ideological and political alignment. With the conclusion of the Hapro Agreement and the Anti-Comintern Pact, these two policies were to a large extent incompatible and the official German position of 'neutrality' insisted on by the Foreign Office had become increasingly tenuous. This ambiguous neutral position had been maintained until April 1938 and was replaced by a policy of commitment to Japan. Therefore, this thesis seeks to determine the underlying factor that made the earlier 'balance' possible and the ultimate reason that led to its breaking. In contrast to most studies in this field that have emphasized external factors at the international level, this thesis attempts to highlight the significance of decision-making structure at the domestic level of foreign policy analysis. To this end, motivations, stakeholders and detailed processes in the formation of German policies towards China and Japan, respectively, are explored, in order to assess not only the considerations involved from the inter-state perspective, but also the role played by different decision-making bodies within the country. Particularly through investigating the two-level negotiation processes of the Hapro and the Anti-Comintern agreement, interactions between domestic political and international relations in the Reich's foreign policy-making can be demonstrated. This study finds that the 'balance' sustained until 1938 was due to a dual approach decision-making structure, in which both traditional conservative bureaucrats and Nazi radical revolutionaries had certain decision-making power. By examining the causality of a series of changes with respect to both the international power-political situation and the domestic reform of government, it is shown that the shift to a pro-Japanese commitment was the consequence of the transformed Nazi decision-making structure and indicated the triumph of Nazi ideology over German diplomacy. These findings reflect the internal conflicts in Nazi Germany's foreign policy-making processes and how they had contributed to its Far Eastern policies in a period of rapid and far-reaching change.

Zusammenfassung

Nazi-Deutschlands Fernostpolitik war von 1933 bis 1937 von einem „Gleichgewicht“ zwischen zwei separaten und zunehmend unvereinbaren Strategien geprägt. Zwei unterschiedliche Entscheidungsorgane, die deutsche Armee und die NSDAP, unterstützten jeweils China bzw. Japan, was 1938 schlussendlich zu einem Bekenntnis zu Japan führte. Ziel dieser Masterarbeit ist es herauszufinden, welcher zu Grunde liegende Faktor dieses Gleichgewicht sowie dessen schlussendlichen Bruch erklären kann. Dafür werden die Außenpolitikprozesse des Deutschen Reichs auf internationaler Ebene mit China und Japan sowie auf nationaler Ebene analysiert. Die zwei-stufigen Verhandlungsverfahren des Hapro-Abkommens und des Antikominternpakts sind dabei von besonderem Interesse. Diese Arbeit kommt zum Schluss, dass der doppelgleisige Ansatz der Entscheidungsstruktur ausschlaggebend für das „Gleichgewicht“ bis 1938 war. Das bedeutet, dass sowohl traditionell konservative Bürokraten sowie radikal revolutionäre Nazis einen gewissen Einfluss auf Entscheidungen hatten. Der Grund für das spätere Bekenntnis zu Japan war die verwandelte Entscheidungsstruktur, die den Triumph der Nazi-Ideologie über die deutsche Diplomatie aufzeigt.

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Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt
ADAP	Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik
AO	Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP
APA	Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DGFP	Documents on German Foreign Policy
HAPRO	Handelsgesellschaft für industrielle Produkte
KMT	Kuomintang, Nationalist Party of China
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
SA	Schutzabteilungen
SS	Schutzstaffel

Introduction

The establishment of the National Socialist regime in Germany in 1933 marked in many respects a major change in German domestic politics and foreign policies, which transformed the whole European and global situation in the following few years. In the words of historian Gerhard L. Weinberg, Europe in the years from 1933 to the end of 1936 experienced a 'diplomatic revolution',¹ which indicated the development of Germany's position to the dominant power on the European stage from a barely accepted equal one. This revolutionary transformation occurred in the context of a 'peaceful settlement' of the continent in the Interwar Era.

The Treaty of Versailles disproportionately weakened Germany but failed to eliminate the potential of making the country powerful again; at the same time, it provoked the unrest and discontent among German society against the status-quo and prompted the rise of revisionism. Such background enabled the seizing of power by Adolf Hitler in January 1933, since which Germany was on its path towards the great war with the guidance of his national socialist ideology. On the one hand, Hitler ruthlessly gathered and consolidated power into his own hand and began military rearmament, preparing for his aggressive plans. On the other hand, he took a cautious and opportunistic approach with respect of the danger of foreign reactions, which led Britain and other great powers to adopt an appeasement policy. By the end of 1936, the initial achievement of rearmament was made, including the launching of the Four-Year Plan, remilitarization of the Rhineland, stalemate in the Spanish civil war, formation of the Axis and signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact. Until late 1937, the internal consolidation of power of Hitler and the National Socialist Party accompanied by a series power-political changes in the European and global context laid the foundation and encouraged Hitler to make the decision to carry out more offensive actions for his ultimate plan.

¹ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-36* (University of Chicago Press, 1970).

Over the past 70 years after the breakout of the Second World War, a considerable amount of research has been done attempted to interpret the origin of the war.² Despite the extensive studies on Nazi Germany's foreign policies leading to the war focusing on the European continent, less attention has been paid to the Far Eastern region. Compared to Nazi foreign policies in Europe, which shows relative consistency with a clear ultimate goal, Germany's interactions with the Far Eastern countries, mainly with China and Japan, provide a microcosm of internal conflicts in the Third Reich over foreign policy making. Concerning the global scale of the Second World War and the role of Japan in the Axis alliance, Nazi Germany's Far Eastern policy was the focus of this thesis.

In respect of the previous studies on German policies towards the Far East, research has tended to concentrate almost entirely on German-Japanese relations in the context of Axis alliance and particular emphasis has been put on Anti-Comintern Pact and its consequence, rather than a comprehensive investigation of the Far East.³ It is insufficient to understand Germany's Far Eastern foreign policy excluding the role of China given the political situation in the region after the Manchuria crisis in 1931 and the Sino-German cooperation since the 1920s.⁴ In addition, to date, German-Japanese alliance was oversimplified attributed to the National Socialist political ideas and policies. However, by drawing China into the big picture, the involvement of other

² See, for example: Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany* (University of Chicago Press, 1970); A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London, 1961); Donald Cameron Watt, *How War Came, The Immediate Origins of the Second World War 1938-1939* (Pimlico, 2000); Andreas Hillgruber, *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität in der deutschen Aussenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler* (Dusseldorf, 1969); William Carr, *Arms, Autarky and Aggression: A Study in German Foreign Policy* (London, 1972); David Irving, *Hitler's War* (London, 1977), etc.

³ See existing studies on Germany's policy towards the Far East in this period: Frank William Ikle, *German-Japanese Relations 1936-1940* (New York, 1956); Ernst L. Presseisen, *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy 1933-1941* (The Hague, 1958); Theo Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten 1935-1940* (Tubingen, 1962); V. Issraeljan and L. Kutakov, *Diplomacy of Aggression: Berlin-Rome-Tokio Axis, Its Rise and Fall* (Moscow, 1970); John P. Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern crisis, 1931-1938: a study in diplomacy and ideology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Karl Drechsler, *Deutschland-China-Japan 1933-1939: Das Dilemma der deutschen Fernöstpolitik* (Berlin, 1964)

⁴ See existing studies on Germany-China relations: William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, Calif, 1984); Joachim Peck, *Kolonialismus ohne Kolonien: der deutsche Imperialismus und China 1937* (Berlin, 1961); Ma Zhen-Du, *Chinese-German Confidential Diplomatic Documents 1927-1947* (San-Lian Bookstore, 1994)

stakeholders in the Reich's foreign policy will be seen. Therefore, this thesis is going to provide a more comprehensive examination of Nazi Germany's Far Eastern study, taking the role played by different decision-making bodies into consideration.

From a geographic perspective, the Far Eastern region was not directly related to Germany's key national interests. Given the great geopolitical distance from one another at either end of the Eurasian continent, they did not necessarily either pose security threat directly to each other or have significant political influence. From the economic perspective, Germany and Japan had very little interdependency because they had very similar domestic economic structures. By contrast, Germany and China had complementarity in economic structure, so that from German perspective, China was a great potential market for export and a source of import. During the 19th century, German Empire's policy in China until 1914 was dominated by an economic- and trade-oriented colonialization as a part of global imperialist layout. In contrast, its attempt of expanding sphere of inference in East Asia, especially in the Shandong Peninsula, led to a clash of interests with other imperialist powers, including Japan. In the First World War, Japan took over Germany's imperialist interest in China, and they also had conflicts over Pacific Island. Since then, Germany had a low sense of presence in the region.

In the post-Versailles era, one fundamental question confronted all German policy makers was the definition of Germany's role in Europe and world affairs. A revisionist tendency had become increasingly visible in comparison with a more moderate policy of the Weimar Republic. In the Far East, on the one hand, Japan, who also unsatisfied with the settlement of Washington Conference, transformed rapidly into a militarist authoritarian state pursuing expansion in East Asia. On the other hand, China was also undergoing a great revolution and social transformation, aiming to get out from the Century of Humiliation. After the 1911 Revolution, China came into a Warlord period of power vacuum until the Northern Expedition of 1927, when the Nationalist government of the Republic of China gained the dominant control. Moreover, even though China was officially declared as the victorious in the WWI, it did not sign the

Versailles Treaty as well due to the unequal Article concerning Shandong's problem. Given such background, the severe army and industrial restrictions imposed on Germany along with strong desire of German revisionists to re-strengthen Germany met with China's urgent needs for industrialization and military modernization. This mutual demand stimulated bilateral trade of industrial productions and arms between Chinese Nationalist government and Germany, although most was through private means. On the other hand, German relations with Japan remained at a very low ebb.

After 1933, when Hitler came to the position of Chancellor, Sino-German cooperation was accelerated with respect of Nazi Germany's increasing demand for raw materials from China for the purpose of rearmament on behalf of the Reichswehr and the deepening engagement of German military advisors in the Chinese army. Meanwhile, a rapprochement in German-Japanese relations was attempted by the Nazi Party activists based on their sharing anti-Communist and anti-League political ideologies. Nevertheless, the problems of these two separate policies pursued by different policy-making bodies in the Third Reich raised from the escalating conflicts in the Far East between China and Japan. After Japanese seizing of Manchuria in 1931, which was always viewed as the start of Second Sino-Japanese War, German Foreign Ministry took a position of 'neutrality'⁵, maintaining a fairly equal and mutual relation with both countries. However, from 1933 to 1938, the efforts made by Reichswehr and Nazis respectively, in China and Japan, challenged such neutral position insisted on by the Foreign Office, thus Germany's Far Eastern policy became increasingly ambiguous.

The year of 1936 was important for Nazi Germany's foreign policy in the Far East, as it marked the difficultly maintained policy of a balance between two separate policies pursued in two countries at war with each other. In this year, these two policies were crystallized into two agreements with China and Japan, respectively. On 8 April, Germany concluded an agreement with Nanking government granting a 100 million

⁵ See Prelude of this thesis: The Far East in the Interwar Era and Germany's Position in Manchuria Crisis, page 25-26.

Reichsmark (RM) of credit to China, followed by the ratification of the Hapro Agreement on 25 July by von Reichenau, in effect affirming support for Chinese army's military modernization to counter Japan. On 25 November 1936, the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed with Japan, symbolizing closer political ties in the name of countering the Communist International between the two countries in order to more effectively block the Soviet Russia. While the Hapro agreement with China implied certain extent of military commitment of German Army to China, the Anti-Comintern Pact was signed as an ideological alignment but with a secret supplementary agreement with military implications. It appeared that these two agreements were incompatible concerning the political situation in the Far East; thus, the question has to be asked is what made this "balance" policy of Germany become possible, as well as how far and how long these two separate policies could be pursued and coexist.

This ambiguous policy lasted until May 1938 when Germany officially recognized the Manchukuo and ordered the end of arm shipments to China and the recall of all German advisers serving in the Chinese Army. As most historians interpreted, this shift of German foreign policy was caused by the Second Sino-Japanese War, which compelled Germany to make a choice between China and Japan.⁶ However, after Sino-Japanese war officially broke out in July 1937, Germany reclaimed its 'neutrality' with no political interest in the region and made effort to mediate the war concerning its military-industrial interests in China. The implementation of the Hapro agreement continued and German military advisers serving in the Chinese army fought against the Japanese. Until mid-1938, given the changing power-political situation in Europe, Italy's accession to Anti-Comintern Pact and major domestic reshuffle of the Reich's government, Germany's Far Eastern policy of 'neutrality' was finally replaced by one of the gradual commitment to Japan.

There is no doubt that this change of the Reich's Far Eastern policy was

⁶ These historians include Karl Drechsler, *Deutschland-China-Japan, 1933-1939: Das Dilemma der deutschen Fernostpolitik* (Berlin, 1964); Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Starting World War II, 1937-1939* (Chicago, 1980); Theo Sommer, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten, 1935-1940: Vom Antikominternpakt zum Dreimachtepakt* (Tübingen, 1962).

contributed by various factors on both domestic and international level of analysis. Nonetheless, the key question this thesis is going to research is what the determinant factor was that made the earlier ‘balance’ in the Far East possible and later become no long applicable. Since foreign policies are inevitably entangled with domestic politics and decision-making structure, the significance of decision-making structure at the domestic level of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) in maintaining the earlier ‘balance’ can be seen, and it can also be assumed that it was a major change of domestic foreign policy decision-making ultimately leading to the shift of its Far Eastern policy in 1938. Therefore, aiming to find the underlying factor determined Nazi Germany’s foreign policies in the Far East, it is necessary to explore the foreign policy-making structure and processes in the Third Reich enabled a ‘balanced’ policy been achieved from 1933 to 1937, as well as what specific political processes and mechanism were brought into play to push the Nazi pro-Japanese policy into place in 1938.

Although the overall lines and general principle of Nazi Germany’s foreign policy and major decisions have been attributed to the initiatives by Hitler, a priori assumption that the Reich’s foreign policy was under ‘Hitler’s absolute command’ was misleading to the research of German foreign policy-making, especially regarding the Far Eastern policies. In a system of ‘anarchic-impulsive dictatorship’ in terms of Edward N. Peterson,⁷ Hitler permitted to a certain extent inter-personal and interdepartmental rivalry. Due to the lack of a clear policy towards the Far East region by Hitler himself, here we go beyond his role to focus on the thoughts and activities of other actors of the governmental level of foreign policy analysis. German foreign policy-making structure and processes concerning the Far East region reflected the power struggle going on within the Reich’s government. This domestic political confrontation was between the radical revolutionary Nazi faction, which took a pro-Japanese stand, and Germany’s established ruling institutions representing the traditional conservative revisionist faction, especially the Reichswehr/Wehrmacht Ministry and Economic Ministry, which backed China. Another traditional instrument of foreign policies,

⁷ Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler’s Power* (Princeton University Press, 1969), 48.

namely the Foreign Ministry, in such context, confronted problems of behaving and balancing between different factions in accordance to its constitutional function and political position.

How far and how long different policies were allowed to be pursued independently and the Foreign Office's ability to deal with these difficulties under the Nazi leadership depended on the relationships between these decision-making bodies and Hitler himself. The process of transition from a 'balance' to a pro-Japanese Far Eastern policy not only represented the triumph of Nazi ideology over Foreign Office's diplomacy, but also symbolized the contradiction between the traditional conservatives and the Führer, which could be no longer tolerated by Hitler. Accordingly, it is an oversimplification to judge the pro-Japanese policy purely as a Nazi's preference or decision, and to exaggerate the influence of Nazi Party in the foreign policy-making of the Third Reich. The role played by other decision-making bodies and their contribution in the Reich's foreign policies will be assessed in this thesis.

This thesis is composed of three themed chapters. Chapter One and Chapter Two will study Nazi Germany's respective policies towards China and Japan. First of all, Germany's major interests in China and Japan, separately, from a national level of analysis will be examined, aiming to understand Germany's motivations behind its cooperation with two Far Eastern countries and the stakeholders been involved. In order to compare the 'Nazi interest' with 'German interest', this section will include both German relations with two countries before 1933 and after Hitler seizing power to illustrate the continuity and discontinuity. Because these interests were crystallized into two agreements in 1936, namely the Hapro Agreement and the Anti-Comintern Pact, the following section in each Chapter will investigate detailed negotiation and decision-making processes of two agreements. By doing so, this thesis seeks to how each agreement was able to be eventually concluded as well as the role played by various interest groups on both domestic and international level in this process. After that, with regard to the shift of Germany's Far Eastern policy in 1938, I am going to look at the changes happening in German relations with China and Japan, respectively,

from the final signing of the agreements in 1936 until April 1938.

Chapter Three aims to analyze how and to what extent had the domestic policy-making structure contributed to the Reich's foreign policy in the Far East. Firstly, Nazi Germany's foreign policy-making structure and processes from 1933 to 1937 as well as the reasons led to such decision-making structure will be explored in order to find the domestic factor enabled the existence of two separate and largely incompatible policies pursued in the Far East simultaneously. Analysis is based on the theoretical framework of Two-Level Game proposed by Robert Putnam⁸ to provide a systematic understanding to the interaction between domestic and international levels of German foreign policy-making in the negotiation process for international agreement. Accordingly, the main reason why both the Hapro and the Anti-Comintern agreements were reached at the same time can be answered. Then, on the question of why this 'balance' policy was broken in 1938, I will again look at what transformed in the decision-making structure of the Third Reich and why this change on the governmental level happened. Its implications and impact on the Reich's Far Eastern policy shifting to a pro-Japanese one will be finally discussed.

This thesis will be benefited from the interdisciplinary approach it adopts. The diplomatic history between Germany, China and Japan from 1933 to 1938 is studied based on primary sources including letters, memorandums, reports and etc. from 'Documents on Germany Foreign Policy 1918-1945' from captured archives of the German Foreign Ministry and the Reich Chancellery. In order to understand this diplomatic history more systematically and to analyze the foreign policy making of Nazi Germany, I use the approaches of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), a branch of political science dealing with decision-making processes of foreign policies on both domestic and international level. For instance, the Two-Level Game theory of the Societal Level Decision-Making models is applied to analyze the negotiation processes of two agreements.

⁸ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427-60.

Prelude: Background Information

Domestic Structure of Foreign Policy-Making of the Third Reich

The key question of interpreting the foreign policy of the Third Reich was always to what extent the policy could represent or correspond with Hitler's intention and central goal and whether Germany's foreign policy from 1933 could be referred as National Socialist foreign policy or mix on the basis of the continuity of German history, and how far various voices were able to be paid attention to and accepted by Nazi leadership. On the one hand, Nazi Germany's foreign policies were formulated in accordance with Hitler's political plan as the guiding principle. On the other hand, the central goals were pursued under a chaotic structure and the foreign policy making process reflected the interaction and power struggle between party and state institutions.⁹

During the Weimer Republic, in terms of constitutional theory, traditional practices and general obligations, key decision-making authorities, such as Reich president, chancellor and foreign minister, were supposed to take consideration of the views of Reichstag, Foreign Policy Committee, parties, experts and the public.¹⁰ Through the totalitarian Gleichschaltung, Hitler cut a great portion of these contributions to the process of forming democratic opinion, showing an essential characteristic of the National Socialist totalitarian state, which replaced the separation of powers with the Führer instruction. However, it would also be a mistake to assure that the Third Reich saw less competition and more control of entire governmental bodies than before 1933.

The instruments of Nazi foreign policy consisted of two parts.¹¹ On the one side,

⁹ Hans-Adolf Jacobsen provided a detailed analysis of this chaos structure of Nazi foreign policy-making in: *Nationalsozialistische Aussenpolitik 1933-1938* (Frankfurt/Main, 1968)

¹⁰ For more information about Weimar foreign policies, see Marshall Lee and Wolfgang Michalka, *German Foreign Policy, 1917-1933: Continuity or Break* (Berg, 1987); Peter Kruger, *Die Aussenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt, 1985)

¹¹ Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, "The Structure of Nazi Foreign Policy 1933-1945." in *The Third Reich: The Essential Readings*, edited by Christian Leitz (Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 51-93.

established state departments, including the Foreign Ministry, the Reich Interior Ministry, the Economics and Finance Ministries and the Defense/War Ministry, which were gradually but much later subjected to Gleichschaltung, continued to operate relatively undisturbed. Those leading state personalities, like Goebbels, Blomberg, Neurath, Göring and Schacht, were instructed to pronounce and demonstrate the 'peaceful' approach, meaning policies aimed towards 'equal status' and 'the restoration of honor', and calm those reactions by who had been incensed by the Nazi revolution¹². On the other side, new and non-governmental agencies of the Nazi party were established which competed with the traditional institutions as well as among themselves. They were designed to take over secret missions with a political nature, such as the Aussenpolitische Amt (APA) under Rosenberg, the Auslands organization (AO) under Bohle, the Dienststelle Ribbentrop, and the SS under Himmler. They acted largely in an individual manner and regarded themselves as to realize the Führer's will, yet the bounds of their activities were quite limited.

In such newly established structure of 'anarchic-impulsive dictatorship', traditional state organs' ability to maintain its position of authority depended to a large extent upon the personality and influence of the Ministers and senior officials themselves. This could be also attributed to the insufficient expertise of Nazi leaders, who had not managed to move beyond a stage of experimentation. In addition, Hitler consciously failed to take clear-cut decisions to strengthen his absolute position of power by playing individuals off against each other. Thus, each office and subordinate were not given a clearly delimited area of responsibility.

Accordingly, before 1938, the foreign policy making was simultaneously proceed by various governmental and non-governmental organizations. Owing the domestic situations and Hitler's deliberate manipulation, different foreign policy making instruments were enabled to compete with each other based on their own interests and understanding to the intention of Führer and German national interest. However, after

¹² Jacobsen, 69.

the reorganization of government in February 1938, the Ministry of Wehrmacht and Foreign Affairs were both taken over by party personnel, under the direct control by the Führer. As a result, the senior state officials left in the new government played a very limited role. It could be assumed that, starting with 1938, the German Foreign Policy was made by the Führer himself and the leading party members for the purpose of Hitler's war plan.¹³

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The traditional instrument of foreign policy was the Auswärtiges Amt (AA),¹⁴ represented the official position and activities abroad of Germany, its people and state. To master the manifold tasks and problems around the world, diplomats and civil servants had been professionally trained with a high degree of expertise. Their most important task was putting together a reliable picture of the outside world in accordance to German interests, thereby providing a secure basis on which foreign policy decisions could be arrived at or any possible alternatives considered.

The primary part of their task consisted in the exchange of information and impressions between delegations abroad and the headquarters in Berlin, and then offering the leader proposals in the field of foreign policy. This process took place through the official channels by the AA conducting in a diplomatic nature with the instructions of the minister. Furthermore, the AA represented Germany to the outside world, promoting trade and cultural exchange and eliminating foreign opposition as well as defending against damaging exertion of influence if possible. Meanwhile, the department also acted as liaison office to the organizations of the NSDAP in order to coordinate the work of the AA with various domestic agencies.

In terms of its function as announced, AA certainly played an important role in the

¹³ See Appendices for "The Foreign Policy Making Structure of the Third Reich 1933-1938 (As affecting Far Eastern Policy)" illustrated in a graph.

¹⁴ For more information about the AA, see P. Seabury, *Die Wilhelmstrasse, Die Geschichte der deutschen Diplomatie 1930-1945* (Frankfurt/Main, 1956); Hans-Jürgen Döscher, *Das Auswärtige Amt im Dritten Reich. Diplomatie im Schatten der 'Endlösung'* (Berlin, 1987); Rainer F. Schmidt, *Die Außenpolitik des Dritten Reiches 1933-1939* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002).

revisionist policy pursued between 1933 and 1938 and as an active representative of German interests abroad. Nevertheless, how successful was the Foreign Ministry in fulfilling its responsibility had to be assessed in terms of the trust of the leadership in the organization. The Foreign Minister, Constantin von Neurath, a traditional state official who did not belong to the Party elite but served in the position until 1938, was not in favor of Hitler, because his irresolute and relatively weak character was unsuitable for the radical ‘gutter-like politics’ of the Nazis.¹⁵ Hitler’s distrust of those old civil servants and diplomats grew, as he criticized them as a ‘society of conspirators’ and ‘a proper dumping ground for the intelligentsia’,¹⁶ because they were regarded as neither truly believed in National Socialist principles nor truly acted accordingly. However, at the time of Hitler’s accession to power there was no ready-made apparatus to replace the established diplomatic service to implement new policies, and it had to be acknowledged that, none of party agencies in the field was capable to replace the AA. Until 1938, Hitler intervened only occasionally in personnel decisions of the AA. Only in the context of the events occurred from late 1937 to early 1938 Hitler felt the need to carry out a fundamental reshuffle. He replaced Neurath with his favorite, Joachim von Ribbentrop.

Concerning the social structure of the civil servants in the AA, a majority of members came from aristocratic and senior civil servant families, who held conservative views and a belief that they should stand above the parties and loyalty to the state. Therefore, it can certainly be argued that the members of the senior diplomatic service formed a largely homogeneous and exclusive group which Neurath skillfully managed to shelter from intervention by the party.¹⁷ The generation gap between senior diplomats and new Nazi elites was visible. While the senior civil servants in AA had gained their crucial experiences during imperial Germany and the First World War, young Nazi members’ view had been shaped by the lost war, the

¹⁵ An in-depth study about von Neurath was done by John L. Heineman, *Hitler’s First Foreign Minister* (Berkeley, 1979).

¹⁶ Jacobsen, 60.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Weimer years and the period of radical transition. The Nazis never succeeded in undermining the homogeneity of the service to a significant degree. Until Neurath's departure, the AA contained very few total outsiders. Ribbentrop was one of the examples, who was appointed as the Reich's Representative for Disarmament Questions in 1934 and ambassador to London in 1935. Although it is difficult to judge true political stance among senior diplomats and civil servants, 7 of 92 senior civil servants in the headquarters in Berlin had joined the NSDAP before 1933, a further 26 until 1937, and 71 of 120 in 1940.¹⁸ However, it could be assumed that many of these members were either fellow travelers, opportunists or pressured to join. Some diplomats fought against the Nazi system in their own way.

Ministry of Reichswehr/Wehrmacht

Another traditional state department played certain role in Nazi Germany's foreign policy-making was the Ministry of Reichswehr, as the main emphasis of German rearmament in the mid-1930s was concentrated on the air force and the army given the territorial expansion as the essence of Hitler's foreign policy. The relationship between Germany's armed forces and the Führer and the command structure had undergone a process of transformation to Hitler's full control, during which it could be seen a competition of decision-making on the organizational level.¹⁹

After the First World War, the Versailles Treaty limited the Reichswehr to a standing army of 100,000 men, and a navy of 15,000. Most military leaders refused to accept the democratic Weimar Republic as legitimate and the Reichswehr under the leadership of Hans von Seeckt became a state within the state that operated largely outside of the control of the politicians.²⁰ In the view of Seeckt, the army was not only the "manifestation of the state and symbol of national unity", but also the "instrument

¹⁸ Jacobsen, 61.

¹⁹ More information about the German Army in the Third Reich, see Robert J. O'Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party 1933–39* (London, 1968); Robert B. Kane, *Disobedience and Conspiracy in the German Army 1918–1945* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2002); John W. Wheeler-Bennett, ed. *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918–1945* (London, 1964).

²⁰ Kane, 102.

of politics and basis of the ruling power”, so that “the army serves only the state and could not be involved in divisive factional politics.” With regards to the role of politics within the army, Seeckt’s Reichswehr was ‘non-political’ to the extent that participation in Weimar party politics was forbidden; rather, its “politics were internal as the army was a political force in its own right”.²¹

During 1933 and 1934, after Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, the Reichswehr began a secret program of expansion, which finally became public in 1935. Legally, the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht was Hitler himself in his capacity as head of state, the position he gained after the death of President Paul von Hindenburg in August 1934.²² The Defence Minister Field Marshal Werner von Blomberg, a conservative military leader, initiated the arm forces to take the Hitler oath of personal loyalty. At the time, Hitler did not yet interfere in the details of military administration, thus von Blomberg with other Generals had contributed to the rearmament project by building a strong and well-trained Army, meanwhile maintained certain independence from the party and outside control. However, with the initial success of rearmament, an increasingly aggressive foreign policy to radically unravel the Versailles Treaty alarmed the concern of conservative army leader, who rejected a general war despite advocating rearmament. Von Blomberg, like von Neurath, was not chosen by Hitler himself, but had been selected by von Hindenburg. Although the appointment had been acceptable to Hitler and von Blomberg had proved himself as willing instrument of Hitler’s will, he retained some independence and reservation in implementation, which had been shown in particular on 5 November 1937, when Hitler secretly unveiled his plans of aggression to his senior state officials.²³ The crisis resulted from Blomberg’s unfortunate marriage gave Hitler the opportunity to get rid of these ‘cowards’ and replace them with more obedient and aggressive subordinates to carry out his plans.²⁴ With the reshuffle of government,

²¹ Meier-Welcker, *Hans. Seeckt* (Frankfurt a.M., 1967) 643-662.

²² O'Neill, 91-92.

²³ Kane, 226.

²⁴ O'Neill, 108.

Hitler became the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

Along with traditional armed forces, there were many paramilitary organizations under the direct command of Hitler and the Nazi Party. For instance, the Schutzstaffel (SS), which was an agency of security, surveillance, and terror within Germany. The period from 1933 to 1938 saw the growing tension between the SA and the regular army. While Hitler the army was necessary as the nucleus of his military might, he also needed the SA to bluff the outside world. In September 1934, Blomberg announced the SS-VT was for purely internal police duties, which would be under Himmler during peace time and under the Wehrmacht during wartime.²⁵

N.S.D.A.P. – The Nazi Party

The NSDAP had its own institutions dealing with foreign affairs. First, the Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP was launched in 1934. The AO was not legitimate to control Germany's foreign policy. Apart from its intervention in the Spanish Civil War, the AO did not influence foreign policy decision-making. Nevertheless, it was supposed to supervise the ideological manner in which Germany's representative implemented Hitler's guidelines. The Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP, which although did not have a visible impact on diplomatic decisions prior to 1938, played an important role for realization of the ideological foreign policy objectives of the NSDAP. APA developed ideological concepts on the basis of Rosenberg's view. Only a minor part of its activities was known to the public. Its activities of a foreign political nature and agitation were concentrated on secret preparations for the partition of the USSR and the determined ideological struggle against Jewry and Bolshevism.²⁶

Dienststelle Ribbentrop, another party agency, moved every closer towards the center of the policy decision-making process as the increasingly developed personal trust between Hitler and Ribbentrop, who shared certain views, including an antipathy to the traditional diplomacy. The Büro was created in 1934 to take charge of the ad hoc

²⁵ Kane, 102-116.

²⁶ Jacobsen, 63-74

tasks which Hitler had instructed to his close associate and loyal liegeman in circumvention of the AA. The Dienststelle Ribbentrop boasted an extremely heterogeneous staff of 160 in 1936. In 1935, he was appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on Special Mission, which was ostensibly a position placed under the authority of the Foreign Minister, von Neurath, and by becoming ambassador to London, he took over one of the key diplomatic positions. Although Dienststelle Ribbentrop was not an institution to substitute or take over the AA, the heterogeneous nature of its personnel and works were inevitably a challenge to the AA.²⁷

Its sphere of activity was almost unlimited, and Ribbentrop, initially an amateur and ‘travelling minister’ with special mission, was to rise to the position of Hitler’s first adviser on foreign policy questions by 1937. His servility and belief in the Nazi ideology, and a degree of success of alliance-building allowed him to secure the Führer’s favor. With Ribbentrop and his staff, Hitler could be sure of their unconditional execution of his orders in line with radical and dynamic course of his foreign policy. This was demonstrated by the naval agreement with Britain in 1935, the Spanish Civil War, and the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan and Italy. Supported by both Hitler’s trust, he replaced von Neurath as the Foreign Minister in February 1938. From then on, however, he was to become little more than one of the executive organs of ‘his master’s voice’.²⁸

Nazi institutions saw foreign policy not simply as the assertion of national interests against other states, but also as the application of Hitler’s decisions and instructions in accordance with Nazi ideology. The Nazi revolutionists, in foreign policy-making, were in their own individual way, partly independent of each other in circumvention of the AA, took on cell-like functions of the ‘greater task’ either upon a specific order or because their own initiative based on Nazi ideology. Among those

²⁷ Jacobsen, 80-81

²⁸ For more information about von Ribbentrop, see Wolfgang Michalka, *Ribbentrop und die deutsche Weltpolitik, 1933-1940* (Munich, 1980).

functions, society was educated to be heroic-aggressive and militarized, and German foreign policies were transited to be a possible tool for aggression.²⁹

To sum up, in general, two factions in German foreign policy-making were mainly differentiated between the conservative revisionist, and radical revolutionaries, so-called National Socialist. Those traditional revisionist, involving the diplomats, soldiers, and industrialist, guided by the tradition of *Grossdeutschlandspolitik*, wanted to overthrow the final vestiges of the Treaty of Versailles and at least for a position of ‘*primus inter pares*’ in European power politics. Such policies might involve Germany in armed conflict with one or more of her immediate neighbors. Yet it was certainly different from the one pursued by Hitler and his follows National Socialists, who by contrast, saw revision simply as the stepping-stone towards the holy and racial war against Jewish-Bolshevism with its power base for world domination, and to gain ‘*Lebensraum im Osten*’ for the superior German Aryans at Russia’s expense.³⁰ It was clear that after 1938, the National Socialist took the control of the entire foreign policy-making, but between 1933 and 1938, the question was how far and when Nazi lines of foreign policy were accepted or resisted by other German foreign policy makers, or to what extent, if any, could Nazi foreign policy be described as being different from German foreign policy. The interaction between these state and party organizations themselves and with the Führer in the foreign policy-making of the Far East will be illustrated and analyzed in the following chapters.

The Far East in the Interwar Era and Germany’s Position in Manchuria Crisis

At the end of the First World War, the conflicts among great powers in the Far East was contemporarily settled during the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922. The Nine-Power Treaty, signed by all of the attendees³¹ reaffirmed the sovereignty

²⁹ Jacobsen, 83-84.

³⁰ Ibid., 87-89

³¹ Including the United States, Belgium, the British Empire, Republic of China, France, Italy, Japan,

and territorial integrity of China and adopted again the Open-Door Policy, raised by the United States, allowing all nations equal rights to trade with China, aimed to keep mainly Japan and Britain from total control of the country. In addition, Japan was required to revert the territorial control of Shandong province, which it took over from Germany with the Treaty of Versailles, back to Republic of China.³² Accordingly, Japanese expansionist plan had been restricted by such post-war settlement. Although Japan accepted the treaty regulations, but its discontent to the status-quo and growing expansionist ambitious led the eventual violation of the Treaty when it invaded the Manchuria and created the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1931.

This invasion marked the begin of the Second Sino-Japanese war and was the result of a decades-long Japanese imperialist policy to expand its influence and territories in order to secure access to raw material reserves, food, and labor. The period after World War I and the Great Depression led to the rise of an ultra-nationalist militarist faction, the Imperial Way Faction, in the Imperial Japanese Army. It became increasingly influential in 1930s aiming at restoring the Shōwa Statism and establishing a military government that promoted totalitarian, militarist, and expansionist ideals. After the February 26 Incident in 1936, ultranationalist Kōdōha faction gained dominance over the civilian government and thereby the state was transformed to serve the Army and the Emperor.³³ In such context, the Kwantung Army, a stronghold of the Imperial Way Faction, advocated a more aggressive foreign policy towards the Asian mainland. It acted in an independent manner to large extent in violation of the orders from political and military leadership based in Tokyo. In 1931, the Kwantung Army engineered the invasion of Manchuria on 18 August.

On the other side, for China, the Century of Humiliation had not only led China into internal division and constant civil wars, but also process of modernization. Since

the Netherlands, and Portugal

³² Fox, 24-28.

³³ More information about Japanese policy during the time see: Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria. The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy 1931-1932* (University of California Press 1964); Ian Nish, *Japanese foreign policy in the interwar period* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2002); Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London: Longman, 1987).

Xinhai Revolution in 1911 and intensified after Yuan Shikai died in 1916, China came to Warlords period of domestic chaos, characterized by the power struggle between different cliques in the former Beiyang Army. At the same time, many advanced Chinese nationals and revolutionaries have sought salvation from the West the truth in an attempt to find a salvaging the country road. Sun Yat-sen was one of them and he turned his attention towards Germany. In his book “Mighty Plan for National Construction”, he claimed that China was a large market for western excessive industrial products and investment for resource exploitation after the WWI, so that to achieve Chinese modernization and industrialization.³⁴

Due to the backward military and industrial situation in China, Sun’s plan required him to seek for foreign aid. Soviet Union became the major supporter, but the problem raised since the Soviet meanwhile was also back for the Communist Party of China (CCP), which was found in 1921. The death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925 resulted to a split between left and right wing in the Kuomintang and given the worries about the threat from rapid growing CCP under the Soviet support among KMT members, including Chiang Kai-shek, Sun’s successor, the ideological confrontation between KMT and CCP evolved into civil wars from 1927 to 1937.³⁵

In addition, during the Paris Conference, as a member of the Allies, China felt betrayed and humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles as the German territory in China was handed to Japan, which has invoked massive protests domestically, regime changes and instability, and poisoned relations with the West. This placed China also in a position against the status-quo, but its weak national strength restrained it from taking further revisionist actions more than self-strengthening. Even though, after Japanese seize of Manchuria in 1932, given Chinese military weakness, the Republic of China turned to the League of Nations for help. The Lytton Report was worked out

³⁴ Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary* (Taipei, 1953). More information about Sun Yat-sen, see Julie Lee Wei, Ramon H. Myers and Donald G. Gillin, ed. *Prescriptions for saving China: selected writings of Sun Yat-sen*, translated by Julie Lee Wei, E-su Zen, Linda Chao (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1994); Chi-ming Hou, “Sun Yat-sen’s Economic Philosophy and Policy” in *Sun Yat-sen and China*, edited by Paul K T. Shih (New York, 1974).

³⁵ For Chinese modern history during this period, see Ch’ien Tuan-sheng, *The Government and Politics of China, 1912-1949* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

followed the League's investigation, in which condemned Japan for its invasion to Manchuria. It named Japan as the aggressor, argued that the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo should not be recognized. The League's General Assembly adopted the report, and Japan thereby withdrew the League. Nevertheless, there was not any further action against Japan beyond tepid censure.³⁶

Germany's response to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese conflicts in September 1931 based on its consideration of the League's report was a policy of "official neutrality but full cooperation with the due process of the League".³⁷ These announced 'neutrality' was adopted with ambiguities. On the one hand, Bernhard von Bülow, the State Secretary in the Foreign Office, emphasized that current events in the Far East emphasized the maintenance of the integrity and authority of the League of Nations on current events and sought to avoid taking an action that could be irritant to its relations with both China and Japan. Germany supported the League Assembly's Resolution of 11 March 1932 which formalized the League's non-recognition of Manchukuo. On 24 February 1933 Germany joined the other powers in adopting the Draft Lytton Report at the League of Nations Assembly.³⁸ On the other hand, German Foreign Minister Julius Curtius avoided taking any stand towards the conflict at Geneva when approached by the Chinese for his support. It refrained from supporting the anti-Japanese front to accuse Japan of aggression to leave the responsibility for these matters on the shoulders of Britain and France. This position could be viewed as a continuity of its in the Washington Conference, in which Germany didn't signed the Nine Power Treaty. And the motivations behind such decision showed the Foreign Office's interpretation of Germany's interests in the region and its general principle in international affair, but also reflected Germany's growing negative attitude towards the League and her membership of it.

³⁶ More information about the Manchurian Crisis see: Christopher Thorne, *The limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far East Crisis of 1931-1933* (London 1972)

³⁷ Fox, 9, cited from AA (Documents of the German Foreign Office) K2088/K555400-01, von Schoen/Geneva, 22 September 1931; Ibid., K555438, von Bülow/Count Bernstorff, 24 September 1931; Ibid., K2088/K555391-391/1, Curtius/AA, Geneva, 21 September 1931

³⁸ Ibid., 21-24

Chapter One: Germany and Republican China 1933-1938

German Interests in China

Weimar Period from 1919 to 1933

Military-Industrial Trade and Military Advisers

Germany's interests in China traced back to its colonial history on the Shandong Peninsula and was mainly concentrated in the economic and industrial fields during the Interwar years that coordinated with its global search to establish military and economic contact on the part of the postwar Reichswehr for export markets for arms and industrial equipment, and for sources of raw materials to serve the needs of clandestine German rearmament. Despite the domestic upheavals and poor risk for investment in China during 1920s, Germany's reestablishment of its commercial foothold in China proceed rapidly, largely due to German loss of extraterritoriality, which brought German enterprises into an unexpectedly favored position compared to those of other Western nations in Chinese market.³⁹ Moreover, the continuous warfare between Chinese civil governments led the nation to become the world's largest consumer of arms.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen and later Chiang Kai-shek, with their personal preference, endeavored to attract the interest of German military and industrial circles on China and gain German support to the remaking of China under Kuomintang.

After November 1918, the Weimar Republic proclaimed, but the old empire's elites preserved strong influence, especially in the army and heavy industry, where they secured independent positions within the republic's political ideals. The Reichswehr sought to maintain the traditions of the Prussian army and looked forward Germany to again be a great power, and so that pursued its own domestic and foreign

³⁹ William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republic China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1984), 21.

⁴⁰ For the Northern warlords between 1912 and 1927, see Ch'I His-sheng, *Warlord Politics in China, 1916-1928* (Stanford, 1976).

policies shown by its disregard of military provisions of the Versailles Treaty together with its allies in industry. The Treaty of Versailles curtailed the scope of military establishment, including the abolishment of compulsory military service, reduction of the size of army, navy and air force as well as the outlaw of General Staff. It also required a significant amount of plant expanded during the war to be destroyed and threatened the profitability of big industrial enterprises. However, since the treaty came into force on January 1920, many provisions had been circumvented by different means. The Truppenamt under Colonel General Hans von Seeckt minimized the size of armed forces, known as 'Black Reichswehr', while reorganized a professional elite army of Traditionsträger.⁴¹ Von Seeckt pointed that the future of German military expansion could not be done by stockpiling, instead, by acquiring foreign subsidiaries with production facilities and finding oversea markets for materials that were not legitimate to use within Germany. By which German expertise could be employed as military advisors and technical experts to facilitate these interests and maintain research and development of new weapons system by investment of German firms in foreign companies or direct Reichswehr cooperation with local government of potential countries.⁴² This new form of cooperation with aboard on behalf of the Reichswehr had been practiced in the Soviet Union, Turkey and Latin America throughout 1920s, such as the "Gesellschaft zur Förderung gewerblicher Unternehmungen" with the Soviet as a model of the subsequent Sino-German cooperation.

In this context, the new Sino-German trade, which ran heavily to armaments and munitions, developed quickly after 1921. German trade and investment in China fell dramatically from pre-WWI to 1921, that suck from 20.9% to 2.7% of shared foreign investment in China and from 4.7% to 1.3% of shared Chinese total trade.⁴³ This decline of German influence in China was reversed contributed by the agreement

⁴¹ John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918-1945* (London, 1964), 140. More information about Hans von Seeckt, see Meier-Welcker, Hans. Seeckt (Frankfurt a.M., 1967).

⁴² Ibid, 145

⁴³ Kirby, 25

signed in 1921 between China and Germany, in which Germany renounced “all special rights, interest and privileges” and which for China marked the first postwar treaty signed with the Western countries following principles of “equality and reciprocity”.⁴⁴ The sentiment among the Chinses of preference to deal with the Germans than British Imperialists offered German businesses superior position and favored treatment by both Chinese authorities and trading houses. Furthermore, the depreciation of the mark in 1923 led German firms dumped manufactured goods on Chinese market at the lowest price successfully. This bilateral trade recovery was also caused by Chinese thirst for arms during the warlord period. Chinese domestic production of rifles of 200,000 per year could hardly meet the demand of two million in 1928 by lobal militaries.⁴⁵ Arms Embargo to China agreed by Britain, France, Japan and the United States in 1919 increased German share of arms traffic with China, although the activities of Germany industry in China at this stage remains uncoordinated and through private means.⁴⁶

This development of Sino-German relations in economic sector was enhanced and accompanied by military cooperation, meaning military advisers and engineers with arms supplies from Germany to Nanking. The disarmament of Germany armed forces following the Versailles Treaty also resulted the early retirement of senior German officials, which met the demand of Chinese nationalist government for the purpose of military modernization and industrialization. The initiative of Sino-German cooperation in the military field was at first from the Chinese side. Sun Yat-sen sought to obtain military support and aid from Germany during 1921 and 1925. In April 1927, Chiang Kai-shek broke decisively with the leftists within the Kuomintang and against the Communists. The split between the Kuomintang and the CCP strained Chinese ‘alliance’ relationship with the Soviet Union, which had been founded by Sun Yat-sen and played an important role in the Northern Expedition. The common nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment among Chinese government and society, especially during

⁴⁴ Kirby, 26.

⁴⁵ Claude A. Buss, *War and Diplomacy in Eastern Asia* (Macmillan, 1941), 384.

⁴⁶ Kirby, 27.

1925 to 1926 kept Britain and France out of choice as well. Therefore, Germany became a logical choice apart from Chiang and other officials' preference and admire to German military tradition and capability, Bismarckian policy of 'blood and iron' in particular, and they saw Germany as a potentially valuable partner in the 'international development of China' and urgent need for a strong military force.⁴⁷ To Chiang himself, the employment of German assistance was compatible with so-called 'conservative modernization' in a centralized political state.⁴⁸

On the German side, although German Foreign Ministry was only open to possibilities of economic cooperation but excluded any military question, there were some adventurers in the army, who accepted the invitation from the Chinese side, in which Max Bauer made the most significant effort as the foundation of further Sino-German cooperation.⁴⁹ Max Bauer was referred to Chiang in November 1921 aimed to reorganize Nationalist army through Dr. Chu Chia-hua, a German-educated professor and official in Kuomintang government and General Erich Ludendorff. He worked under the Colonel Ludendorff in the Strategic Mobilization Section from 1905 and had planned and administrated successfully the "Hindenburg Program" of armaments supply. His political belief was characterized as "national bolshevism", which implied a kind ideology combining nationalism in some manner with socialism and communism and reflected the resentment towards the capitalist and imperialist West.⁵⁰ Accordingly, his political memoranda to Chiang denounced the "exploitation by capital" and stressed on the importance of "national idea", which had received Chiang's appreciation.

Although Max Bauer's official title was "economic adviser" owing to official German consumption to avoid the side-effect of military activities, his mission in China demonstrated a dual capacity, firstly for enhancing the power of Chiang Kai-

⁴⁷ Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary* (Taipei, 1953), 35-37.

⁴⁸ Kirby, 51.

⁴⁹ More information about Max Bauer, see John P. Fox, "Max Bauer: Chiang Kai-shek's first German Military Adviser." *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 4 (1970): 21-44.

⁵⁰ Klemens von Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism: Its History and Dilemma in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J. 1957), 139

shek, and secondly for German interest in China of transforming China into new market for industry. It thereby covered a much broader sense, shown by his highly detailed memoranda on military reorganization, industrialization, financial reform and many other relevant areas based on plans of industrial firms as the forefront.⁵¹ He had recruited 26 German advisors and suggested the establishment of a Trade Department attached to the Chinese legation in Berlin, whose task was to centralize all Chinese government purchases of arms and industrial material in Europe and reorient commerce away from the trading houses of Hamburg and Bremen. Although, the Foreign Ministry and Reichswehr raised objection against Bauer's activities, it appeared only targeted on Bauer himself due to his personal problems, rather than interests in China. Another visit from the Nanking government headed by Sun Fo during the same summer of 1928 was accorded every courtesy by the Wilhelmstrasse and Hindenburg and aided in establishing contacts with the Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie.⁵²

Despite Bauer's effort of laying the foundation of Sino-German cooperation, his demise in 1929 had played a key role in expanding contact between official German government and the Nanking government. Bauer's position as military advisory was passed to General Georg Wetzell, the former head of the Truppenamt in the Reichswehr, as Adviser-General from 1930 to 1934. Wetzell established formal ties between the Reichswehr Ministry and Nanking through a "Dienststelle für die Beraterschaft" in Berlin, which enhanced the direct involvement of Reichswehr in China. While he laid major attention on military side, economic missions were left to Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie. During mid-1920s, the Westerns shared certain expectation on developing new Chinese market. German industry believed that the unique relationship with Nanking fostered by Bauer would place it in a better position. The Reichsverband der deutschen Industries had also paid high and favorable expectation on China market than other foreign market. Given the problem of German foreign

⁵¹ Kirby, 52-55

⁵² Ibid., 67.

trade declined 75% since 1913, Reichsverband meetings in 1927-28 pointed out that “opening of new markets was deemed the most burning problem facing the German economy” and suggested with expert investigation of market, government credit guarantees, direct trade with foreign governments in order to overcome the difficulties.⁵³ Chairman Carl Duisberg said in 1929 that “China is the only country in which we still have the possibility of a great market for our exports.”⁵⁴

From the Chinese side, Sun Fo was active in promoting further cooperation with the Germans for his plan of national reconstruction. He proposed a special “preparatory committee” for planning further cooperation, which coincided with the ratification of a new Sino-German trade treaty allowing for mutual most-favored-nation status in 1929. But one important problem remained that Reich guarantee for industrial investment in some form was necessary for any foreign project demanded enormous initial capital outlays on the German part. The form of a direct Reich guarantee for all potential loss, which had been applied in Russian projects, was opposed by the Foreign Ministry since Germany had no political interests in China and it would lead to antagonism of competing nations. Another option of a partial guarantee in which the Reich would support private insurance only of goods delivered also had risk of unforeseen events and changed political circumstance. While this guarantee question was left open, the report of the study commission illustrated the political and financial instability in China, yet with optimistic attitude towards the coming peace by Nanking government that could offer “extraordinary possibilities for foreign industry and trade”.⁵⁵

This growth of trade was stagnated after the Great Depression in 1929. On the one hand, economists pointed out that “German industry’s willful optimism concerning prospects in China emanated from a desire to escape at any price from a severe

⁵³ Kirby, 66.

⁵⁴ Ma Zhen-Du, *Chinese-German Confidential Diplomatic Documents (1927–1947)* (San-Lian Bookstore, 1994), 28.

⁵⁵ Kirby, 72.

economic crisis.”⁵⁶ Reichsbank director expressed more directly of his view that stimulating exports to China could eliminate greatly German unemployment. On the other hand, problems regarding credit and Reich guarantees for German investment in China remained unsolved. Because of the shortage of credit in Germany, Reich guarantees asked by German firms were refused. Short-term American credits on German industry dropped to 20% of the 1928 total and industrial investments of large German corporations sunk from 1.5 billion in 1928 to 522 million in 1931.⁵⁷ In May 1929, the Reichsbank lost RM 2 billion in foreign exchange, thus export guarantees to China were no longer discussed.

To sum up, German imports from China rose from RM 265,05 million in 1927 to RM 370.67 million in 1929, and exports to China from RM 121.02 million to RM 185.60 million in the same period, in which exports of heavy industrial products more than doubled. Although German increased its share of China’s foreign trade from 3.8% in 1927 to 7% in 1929 only, compared to the big drop from 17 percent in 1913 to 9.5 percent in 1929 of the share of the Great Britain, Germany’s “economic-military” strategy in China raised serious concern of other western powers over a new battle for ephemeral Chinese market, which would reach its height in 1936.⁵⁸ During the Weimar era, China had proved a major outlet for German arms and munitions. Given certain political situation this transaction was limited at the unofficial level of German military mission. Since 1930, the Reichswehr began to play an active role, but German industrial interests in China were largely restrained by German government’s instability to guarantee investment abroad. After the National Socialist seizure of power on January 30, 1933, it shown an unexpected continuity and even enhancement of German interests in China from the Weimar period, as domestic political change had promoted the coordination between the interests of army and industry.

⁵⁶ Kirby, 73.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 75

Continuity and Change after 1933

Growing Military-Industrial Trade and Raw Materials Import

Under the Nazi regime, the main impulse of this domestic political shift to Sino-German relations was its accelerated rearmament progress corresponded with the so-called 'defense economy' based on mutual economic interests with high concerns of military-industry. Followed the situation during Weimar period, increased military and industrial production could not be fully consumed in the early years of the Third Reich. Therefore, the need of the military and of industry for export markets remained considerable. At the same time, new interests also arouse with the rising demand of strategic raw materials.

Hitler's statement on February 1933 suggested that "the main principle must be everything for the armed forces" in the next five years, therefore, "the position of German economy in the world was also dependent on that".⁵⁹ The chief of the army's War Economy Office, Colonel Georg Thomas, clarified the implication of Hitler's determination to rearm disregarded the Treaty of Versailles to the army that "the time had come to put much theory into practice". Thomas had been tasking of "centralizing and coordinating all the Reichswehr's activities in armaments development and procurement and facilitating army's foreign engagement".⁶⁰ After 1933, the Reichswehr advocated the concept of 'Wehrwirtschaft', defense economy, indicating that "the planned, long-term mobilization of the nation's productive capacity and the stockpiling of war materials for the event of a prolonged and total war, in order to give Germany the economic stamina it had lacked in the WWI."⁶¹ This strategy interpreted by Thomas required the "steady increase of domestic armament and military-related industrial production on a level out-stripping the rate of increase in the peacetime army, which in turn required increased exports of this production by "all possible means",

⁵⁹ DGFP, C, I, 35-37; More information about economic factors in Germany's rearmament can be found in Burton Klein, *Germany's Economic Preparations for War* (Harvard University Press 1959); Berenice A. Carroll, *Design for Total War: Arms and Economics in the Third Reich* (The Hague 1968)

⁶⁰ Kirby, 121.

⁶¹ Ibid.

including the employment of officers and former officers in countries deemed likely importers of arms and munitions.”⁶² Accordingly, the Soviet Union, which had already developed military-industrial relations with Germany during Weimer period, was recommended by Thomas to Hitler as an important partner of economic cooperation. However, Hitler refused such proposal by the Reichswehr absolutely because of his ultimate aim of subjugating the Soviet Union and his belief that no material benefit could be gained from working with such “Jewish-Bolshevik” state.⁶³ As a result, China, who stood second position in the Reichswehr’s plan came to the front.

Germany was a country that highly dependent on foreign import on natural resources, 85% of its petroleum, 80% of iron ore, 70% of its copper, 90% of its tin, 95% of its nickel, 99% of its tungsten and antimony and 20% of its foodstuffs needed to be imported from foreign countries in terms of its post-WWI boundaries.⁶⁴ This dependency was seen as its “Achilles’ heel in the WWI. Accordingly, from the point of view of the Reichswehr, Germany was not able to be self-sufficient in raw materials and must work with foreign markets to acquire ad stockpile reserves. Apart from raw material, General Walter von Reichenau of the Reichswehr Ministry also suggested the necessity to “strengthen, by means of orders from abroad, the productive capability of the armaments industry of central Germany so that it will be available when needed.”⁶⁵

China could offer a considerable quantity of ferroalloys, tungsten and antimony in particular, which were important materials required in the production of high-grade steel. Antimony has a crucial metallurgical use in imparting stiffness and hardness to specific lead alloys used in the manufacture of ammunition. Compounds of the rare metal were used in making shrapnel shells and cartridge cap. China’s production of antimony accounted for over 60% of world output, as Germany’s only source in 1934.

⁶² DGFP, C, 4, 791, editor’s note.

⁶³ DGFP, C, I, no. 252, 468-70.

⁶⁴ Kirby, 122

⁶⁵ DGFP, C, 2, no. 262, 496, *Minutes of interdepartmental conference*, 16 Feb. 1934

Moreover, the exceptional quantity of Chinese ore was more desirable, as it carried from 50% to 60% pure antimony and contained very few impurities which had difficulty to remove comparatively.⁶⁶ 90% of antimony production in China came from northern and central Hunan province, which were the regions of Kuomintang's control.

Tungsten was another critical important source for military industry since it was firstly applied in the cutting sharpening of refined steel by the Germans to increase the manufacture of munitions during the WWI because of its highest melting temperature than any other know metal. Ferrotungsten had thus became the 'martial diamond' as patented by Krupp in 1920s. It was further used in the production of tough, heat-resistant steel for armored plate, armor-piercing shells, rifle barrels, airplanes, as well as other application like telephone sets. The statistics demonstrated that the production of world tungsten production rose fourfold from 1914 to 1918 and reached again a highest level in 1936, which indicates the military value of tungsten and led to a global scramble for it.⁶⁷ China was the chief source of such ore since 1915, and its produced over half of global production of tungsten in 1933. Southeastern Hunan and Nan-ling regions were the major producing areas of wolframite, from which 79% tungsten could be extracted. Furthermore, Chinese tungsten mining also had favorable climate and economic conditions, that a warm, moist climate in the tungsten-bearing region produced heavy rock decay and enable the ore to be freed year-round from the containing rock, largely by inexpensive manual labor.⁶⁸

Owing to the intervene of major powers, Germany could not wholly control its own tungsten mines and the only workable substitute for tungsten, namely molybdenum, was monopolized by the United States. In 1929, German industry received through private trade 88% of its antimony and 53% of its tungsten from China. After 1933, according to a report by the War Economy office, "these ores were

⁶⁶ Kirby, 122-123.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 123.

designated to be secured in increasing quantities, as were the non-ferrous metals antimony, tin, copper, manganese, zinc and lead,” and pointed out the importance of securing dependable supplies in China to meet its increased demand. As a consequence, China’s importance in German rearmament efforts were enhanced by such supply-demand relationship. In the word of General von Seeckt, “the question of raw materials was the focal point of our policy” in China.⁶⁹ In-between the period between the draft sign of Hapro agreement in 1934 and the final sign of credit agreement, the Wehrmacht including von Blomberg sent telegram to urge the delivery of the first 4000 tons of tungsten, repeatedly expressing “urgency”.⁷⁰ However, this perspective of the Germany Army was not shared with Hitler, as his fear of over-reliance on foreign import of raw material. Even though, he did not hinder the Wehrmacht’s projects at this stage because he also realized the problem of raw material shortage faced by German rearmament.

Meanwhile, Germany’s great demand and purchase of raw materials from China also required vast amounts of foreign exchange, but the financial difficulties in the Third Reich and the traditional trading pattern dominated by the import-export houses of Hamburg and Bremen was incapable deal with rapid increasing economic exchange with foreign countries, including China, to meet its domestic demand. Due to the high public expenditures, which designed to bring about domestic economic recovery after 1929 crisis and continuous recall of foreign credit in 1933-34, German foreign exchange reserves were vanishing rapidly. Reichsbank President Hjalmar Schacht responded to such a financial situation in the autumn of 1933 with a moratorium on German foreign debts and enhanced regulation on trade of Industrial raw materials by his general control over German foreign trade policy. Given the shortage of foreign currency, Schacht brought forward in his “New Plan” that to finance foreign trade and rearmament through a system of bilateral clearing agreements, barter agreements, import licensing, and export subsidies with those countries who would directly

⁶⁹ DGFP, C, 3, no, 180, 365, *Memorandum of conversation with Seeckt*, enclosure in Trautmann to AA, 23 Aug.1934

⁷⁰ Ma, 232-246.

exchange their products with German exports, especially with primary-producing nations. This trading method of bilateralism accentuated shifting German trade from West European and American centers to south-eastern Europe, South America, and the Near and Far East. By 1938, two-fifths of German foreign trade, which is more than double of the 1934 percentage, took place with these areas. Sino-German trade was also one of the practice of this new policy owing to their Chinese increasing demand for German arms and industrial products in return.⁷¹

With General Hans von Seeckt been invited as Chiang's Adviser-General, he had successfully typed the German interests directly to the needs of Chiang Kai-shek. He promoted German arms and industrial exports to China by linking it with his plan of military modernization and industrial development for China proposed to and been appreciated by Chiang. Following the effort of Max Bauer of building a symbiotic relationship between German interests and Chiang's ambition, Seeckt recommended Chiang to build a capable modern army, two pre-conditions had to be fulfilled first, which were "centralizing the military system under the absolute leadership of Chiang and granting unrestricted German influence in the reorganization and industrial plans".⁷² In terms of Seeckt, the arms produced by Chinese arsenals were from 70% to 90% unusable, so that all arms had to be purchased abroad until the establishment of China's native armaments industry. By doing so, German military industries obtained a huge new market in China for arms export. In addition, Seeckt also foresaw a coming struggle over the trade and resources in the Far East and suggested that "Germany cannot and should not fight in Asia, instead should secure its position in China on the assumption that China will grow stronger in all aspects and in all circles."⁷³ German had been pursuing its interest in China through creating a symbiotic relationship with military needs of Chiang Kai-shek and sought to monopolizing certain segments of the Chinese market with some risky and inventive

⁷¹ Stolper et al., *The German Economy, 1870 to the Present* (New York, 1967), 145-146

⁷² Kirby 108-109,

⁷³ Ibid.

method of credit and subsidy.

With the sign of the “Treaty for the Exchange of Chinese Raw Materials and Agricultural Products for German Industrial and Other Products” in August 1934 and the finalized Hapro Agreement, German-Chinese trade volume grew rapidly. According to the statistics from the resource committee in 1935, from 1929 to 1934, Chinese export of tungsten to Germany increased from 229 thousand Yuan to 1976 thousand yuan, accounted for 0.7% to 10.31% of total German import from China. After 1933, German import of tungsten from China had grown largely, from 2510 tons in 1934 to 5091 tons in 1936. These statistics were based on non-governmental transactions. With the establishment of regulatory of tungsten trade by the Nationalist government, the proportion of official transactions rose consistently. After 1936, tungsten export to Germany were purchased by Central Trust of China and received by Melchers & C. foreign firm of Germany.⁷⁴ With the expulsion of the Communists from Kiangsi in the autumn of 1934, the beginning of wolframite exports north in July 1935, and the proclamation of the national tungsten monopoly in February 1936, the Nanking government had come to control access to this vital ore even before the demise of the Southwest Political Council. After 1937, the war also threatened the toll on the tungsten ore monopoly by Nanking government in the second half of 1938. Although exports to Germany actually rose by over 900 tons in 1938, exports to Germany actually fell by 2908 tons from 1937.⁷⁵

At the same time, China was the biggest customer of German Arms and Ammunition Shipments, accounted for 28.8% of total German export in 1936, reflected the impact of the Hapro treaty on German military exports to China. These official figures, however, while accurately depicting the trend of trade, underestimated the actual amounts of exports by a factor of ten. For example, according to official statistics for 1936, RM 6,405,000 of arms and ammunition was shipped to China; in

⁷⁴ Ma, 209-210

⁷⁵ See Appendices: Figures of Germany Trade Volume with China during the Interwar period, page 133

fact, Chinese orders amounted to 64,581,000 million Reichsmarks, and actual deliveries to 23,748,000 million Reichsmarks; for 1937 the figures were 60,983,000 and 82,788,600 million Reichsmarks respectively.⁷⁶ Before 17 August 1937 contracts worth 233 million Reichsmarks had been concluded under the Hapro agreement and with several German armaments firms, contracts after that date amounting to 59 million Reichsmarks. The 1937 annual report of the *Ausfuhrgemeinschaft für Kriegsgerat* showed that China received approximately 37 percent of Germany's total exports of arms for that year.⁷⁷ By comparison, the arms trade with Japan was lightweight, during 1937 orders amounted to 16.8 million Reichsmarks and deliveries to 10.9 million Reichsmarks.⁷⁸

Around the same period from 1934 to 1937, German interests in China had also been reflected in other forms of Sino-German cooperation and interest groups. With the ongoing Hapro negotiations, the *Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie*, an industrial organization of the NS state, had been active between 1934 and 1937 enabling German industry to deal directly with Nanking in advance by promoting, subsidizing and guaranteeing industrial investment in China by German Economics Ministry. Therefore, two new methods of trade emerged given the difficulties of getting Reich guarantee of investment required in Hapro, which were 'compensation trade' and 'ASKI mark',⁷⁹ both allowed the export of German products to Chinese market at a lower price and thus promoted German exports to China supported with additional means from the Chinese side. With such favorable measures, many large German firms sent special representative to the Far East, in which a Ruhr industrial firm of Otto Wolff engaged the most by investing in Chinese railroads and participating in the construction of China's first automotive and airplane manufacturing enterprise. Took

⁷⁶ Kirby, 248-249

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Appendices: Figures of Germany Trade Volume with China during the Interwar period, page 133.

⁷⁹ In "compensation trade", German importer was granted the right to sell his account at a discount to an exporter and the latter paid the importer in foreign exchange; "ASKI mark", *Ausländersonderkonto für Inlandszahlung*, enabled the exporter to reduce its price, while the importer was reimbursed from the proceeds of the export transaction. Kirby, 224.

railways as an example, the construction of the Chekiang-Kweichow railroads was begun with credits terms made possible by barter agreements, and it would serve the military needs of the regime, enhance industrial and mining development and allow for the transportation of raw material for export. From 1934 to 1936, German guaranteed China with credits valued of RM 57,316,000. Regarding the risk behind such credit, in the view Otto Wolff, the railroads were the best guarantee of China's ability to meet its obligations to Germany in the exploitation and transport of raw materials since "wherever in China the railroads goes in, the goods will come gushing out."⁸⁰

After 1936, the Three-Year Plan of Chinese industrial development, as the greatest Sino-German cooperated project in terms of its scope, coordinated with the finalized Hapro agreement in the same year and administered by Weng Wen-hao's National Resources Commission. The Plan was partially successful to the extent of increased of mutual trade values and Germany's contributions in military modernization, training the new division, and to certain extent helping China in the war against Japan.⁸¹ I. G. Farben's Max Ilgner gave his perspective of German interest and industry in China after his visit to China during 1934 to 1935. He wrote in the report that the key issue was maintaining its position in China, which had been built by Germany's singular relationship with Nanking and the existence of a certain "linked destiny" by Germany and China, and meanwhile securing an appropriate share of future development. Furthermore, he saw Japan as the greatest threat to German interest in China and so that Germany had to probably first cooperate with Western powers.⁸²

To conclude, German interests in China in the economic-industrial sectors was mainly driven by its demand for raw materials to support the plan of rearmament by the Germany Army, officially by the Ministry of Reichswehr, and also agreed by the Führer after 1933. At the same time, Germany's demand met with China's demand for

⁸⁰ Kirby, 224-229.

⁸¹ Ibid., 240.

⁸² Ibid., 232-233.

industrial products and arm equipment given Chinese market capacity of consuming German products, so that this mutual need of trade helped to solve the problem of shortage of foreign currency faced by Germany by a new form of trading relationship, namely barter agreement. This economic-industrial interest of the German Army became the major reason for the signing of Hapro Agreement in 1936. The head of the Hapro office in Nanking recalled in his memoirs that ‘the construction of China’s basic industries and the training of the Chinese army were trustfully placed in German hands in an arrangement that allowed the Chinese to reconstruct their economy under the guidance of what were then the world’s best technicians and scientists and granted German industry the keys to a secure and grandiose market.’⁸³ These two areas, the industrial and military, comprised the essence of what might be called a ‘German sphere of influence’.⁸⁴

Continuity of Military Advisers

Sino-German cooperation built upon personal friendship between Chiang and military advisers continued after 1933. Chiang’s loss of confidence with the advisership under General Georg Wetzell led Hans von Seeckt to be selected by Reichswehr Minister Wilhelm Groener to replace Wetzell’s position in China. In Germany, von Seeckt’s interests since his retirement in 1926 were concentrated on the Reichswehr which created by him, national politics and his own financial situation. Seeckt’s first visit to Nanking in May 1933, accompanied by Chu Chia-hua, was successful in gaining the admire and confidence of Chiang Kai-shek, who then invited Seeckt to be as “Senior Adviser” on political, military, and economic matters and to oversee the work of the German advisership in China.⁸⁵

Seeckt’s success in contrast to Wetzell was to large extent contributed by his understanding to Chinese domestic situation faced by Chiang and his political ideas,

⁸³ Kirby, 257.

⁸⁴ Joachim Peck, *Kolonialismus ohne Kolonien: der deutsche Imperialismus und China 1937* (Berlin 1961), 66.

⁸⁵ Kirby, 127.

which had not only played a founding role in the Germany army, but also had significant influence on the development of a modern Chinese army and the Nationalist government. Given the fact that this modernized troop served also for the fight against the Communists, in the view of some military official in the Reich's government and even in Nazi party, China could be useful as a political and military ally against the Soviet Union, ideally together with Japan. In his *Denkschrift für Marschall Chiang Kai-shek*, a memorandum of his advices, Seeckt explained his military thought of an elite army as the foundation of ruling power and proposed with a plan of military modernization and industrial development for China. By August 1933, Chiang wrote to Seeckt that he had begun action on his proposals and offered him the position of Chiang's Adviser-General on November 11. Concerning the Foreign Ministry's worries about Japanese reaction to Seeckt's appointment, Seeckt decided to leave the military mission to General Alexander von Falkenhausen and continued his economic mission in Berlin.⁸⁶

After the breakout of the Second Sino-Japanese war, German military advisory group in China had taken part in tactical command at the rear of the Chinese forces, and according to Chinese records, seventy-one German military advisers participated in the battle that erupted in Shanghai on 13 August. Furthermore, certain Chinese military units deployed in that battle, such as the 87th and 88th Divisions, were among the Kuomintang government's elite troops that had been trained by the German military advisers and were equipped with German weapons. In 1938, journalist Matsumoto Shigeharu affirmed that "the war between Japan and China in the Shanghai area was in one respect a war between Japan and Germany".⁸⁷ The training of elite divisions was the work of General Alexander von Falkenhausen's adviser, which also attempted to bring a larger number of existing divisions up to a moderate level of competency. The extent of military reorganization achieved before July 1937, even if it was not all that its proponents wished, led to a growing confidence in Nanking in

⁸⁶ Kirby, 131-134.

⁸⁷ Ma Zhente and Qi Rugao, *Jiang Ji-eshi yu Xi-Te-Le (Jiang Jie-shi and Hitler)* (Taipei: Dongda Tushu Gongsi, 1998) 390-2.

China's ability to resist Japan. It was also to be seen in the positive messages that von Falkenhausen sent to Germany in the first month of the war.⁸⁸

Agreement with China: The Hapro Agreement

Negotiation Process

Reich Guarantee

Given the deeper engagement of German business and army and the needs of rearmament for both raw materials and industrial market, the Reichswehr, worked together with the Ministry of Economics urged a “unified representation of German industry in China to handle future trade on an official level”, and sought to conclude a barter agreement in the form of Schacht's trade manipulations.⁸⁹ To this end, the Handelsgesellschaft für industrielle Produkte (Hapro) was founded on January 24, 1934, which was in the mold of ‘Gefu’ with the Soviet Union and ‘Stamag’ with Turkey for handling Reichswehr-industrial business in 1920s.⁹⁰ The earliest contact for a barter agreement between Nanking and Germany began in 1933, and the difficulties of negotiation concentrated on the issue of Reich Guarantee and Klein-Canton agreements.

First of all, the Reich guarantees against loss were necessary in this barter trade. As early as June 1933, T. V. Soong, brother-in-law of Chiang Kai-shek's visit to Germany for the purpose of being advised for China's industrial reconstruction by Reichswehr, and more importantly, seeking for long-term credit. Trautmann, German Ambassador to China, in 12 June 1933, reported to Berlin the uncertainties of the domestic situation in China and his reservation about the advisability over the credit question. He warned the Wilhelmstrasse about “the danger of allowing ourselves to be

⁸⁸ Hsi-Huey Liang, *The Sino-German connection: Alexander von Falkenhausen between China and Germany 1900-1941* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1978), 246.

⁸⁹ Kirby 135.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 136.

driven further by interested circles into a situation where we must finally accept what the interested parties of both nation desire.”⁹¹ A further question of the possible Japan irritation caused by such credit commitment made to China by German government was also taken into the Foreign Office’s consideration. Following this report, a departmental discussion took place in Berlin on 27 June about technical questions regarding Chinese security for credits and the length of the period of credit, in which Michelsen, Deputy Director of Department IV, argued for a positive approach. Soong’s visit was less successful regarding his purpose, but a mutual understanding and sympathy to each other’s international position and a proposal for further discussion over the credit question had been put on table.

Von Bülow was informed on 18 September of an exchange of letter between Soong and Krupp von Bohlen, President of the Reichsverhand der Deutschen Industrie. The attitude of the Foreign Office explained by von Bülow on 27 September to Krupp was a strong reserve towards the idea of state guarantee due to its fear of radical changes in Chinese internal situation to economic instability. But he admitted that “a participation of the Reich Government in the agreement was inevitable later on.”⁹² According to Kinzel from the Reichswehr Ministry, Foreign Office had also rejected against Reich guarantees for arms deliveries requested by German firms as well.⁹³ Rheinmetall, an armaments firms controlled by the Reichswehr Ministry, approached Michelsen on June 30 about the Reich guarantee for machine guns deliveries that had been agreed with Soong. After receiving Michelsen’s response explaining the Foreign Office’s objection to diplomatic support, Rheinmetal suggested a week later a compromise of letting the Solothurn Company joining as an intermediary between him and the Chinese and the Reich guarantee would be assured only to the transactions between Rheinmetal and Solothurn.⁹⁴ But this proposal was refused as well given the argument by the Foreign Ministry against any official participation in the transactions

⁹¹ John Fox, *Germany and the Far Eastern crisis, 1931-1938* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 56, cited from AA. 8578/E601651-64, Trautman/AA, Peking 19 May 1933.

⁹² DGFP, C, I, 867-868, *Memorandum by von Bülow*, 27 September 1933.

⁹³ Fox, 61, cited from AA. 9078/E637465/A, Reichswehr Ministry/AA, 26 September 1933.

⁹⁴ DGFP, C, I, 643-644, *Memorandum by Michelsen*, 10 July 1933.

as usual concerning Chinese domestic affairs and Japanese reactions.

In April 1934, von Seeckt made his second visit to Nanking, during which he introduced Hans Klein, the legal owner of Hapro company, to Chiang Kai-shek, in the name of his “personal friend” who had the confidence of government circles in Germany.⁹⁵ Thereby, the negotiation for a barter agreement restarted between Klein backed by the Reichswehr on the German side and Kong Xiangxi on the Nanking side. Through four weeks of negotiations, “Treaty for the Exchange of Chinese Raw Materials and Agricultural Products for German Industrial and Other Products” was drafted and signed on August 23, 1934. Under the agreement, the Chinese side was supposed to send ores and agricultural products to Germany in exchange for industrial products from the German side. Klein undertook to provide experts and machinery, including installations for the exploitation of ores, which were to be sent on credit pending the shipment of raw materials and also to grant a credit of RM 100 million in the form of an account in Germany upon which the Chinese government would draw in ordering industrial goods and would be repaid by shipment of raw materials. The terms of the treaty did not clarify the precise goods to be delivered to Germany, but according to German Ambassador, Oskar Trautmann, “high-quality ores were meant above all”.⁹⁶ Although the treaty did not stipulate the duration of the repayment period, it had been shown a dramatic growth of Sino-German trade volume. Nevertheless, the signing of the Klein-Nanking agreement did not mean the implementation of the barter. It could only come to effect until the RM 100 million credit been officially granted by the German government and an additional credit treaty with Nanking signed.

Therefore, the debate between Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry over Reich guarantee was raised again with the interference of Hjalmar Schacht. When the Reichswehr Ministry spoke to Schacht about the question of Reich guarantee, Schacht expressed a strong attitude that the “Wilhemstrasse would have to withdraw its

⁹⁵ Kirby, 140.

⁹⁶ DGFP, C, 3, no.180, 365, *Memorandum by Trautmann*, 19 Aug. 1934.

objections, otherwise he would place the matter before Hitler for a decision”.⁹⁷ Schacht appeared to influence the position of Foreign Office, shown by Voss’s talk with Reichsbank Director Blessing, in which Voss admitted that “if Schacht stood his ground the Foreign Office would make no further difficulties.”⁹⁸ On 16 October 1934 the matter was brought up to General von Reichenau, Head of the Armed Forces Office after the signing of the Hapro agreement and the readiness waiting for transactions to start. Reichenau stressed the support from of Reichswehr and Schacht and asked the Foreign Office to “allow Ministries to assume responsibility for the relevant financial arrangement.” Frohwein from the Wilhemstrasse responded that the matter of Reich guarantee for howitzers was “a serious question of foreign policy, as under the present procedures the Reich guarantee, which usually became known abroad, involved the Reich Government directly in individual transactions and in certain circumstances this might create awkward situations as regards out foreign policy”.⁹⁹

At the meeting on 22 November 1934, both sides appeared some willingness to compromise. The Foreign Office accepted Blessing’s suggestion of support from the Golddiskontbank to disguise the problem raised from government participation in order to keep government assistance granted with its own financial backing in such a way remaining entirely unremarked aboard. Frohwein repeated that Rheinmetal could fulfill its contract of transactions if they agreed to forgo the Reich guarantee, but he also stated that “the government had to ensure its control over this trade since for political reasons it might become necessary to prohibit the export of arms to certain countries and to encourage their export elsewhere.”¹⁰⁰ On the other side, Reichenau, after a discussion with Hitler before the meeting with von Neurath’s presence, Hitler’s attitude that carried Foreign Office’s position opposing the delivery of howitzer in 1935 given Nazi inclinations towards Japan led him to make some concession.¹⁰¹ He then admitted that the procedure for assistance by the Reich in the form of credits

⁹⁷ DGFP, C, III, 461, *Memorandum by Frohwein*, 5 October 1934.

⁹⁸ Fox, 66, cited from AA. 7072/E526583-86, *Memorandum by Voss*, 6 October 1934.

⁹⁹ DGFP, C, III, 504-505, *Memorandum by Frohwein*, 17 October 1934.

¹⁰⁰ DGFP, C, III, 504-505, *Memorandum by Frohwein*, 19 October 1934.

¹⁰¹ Fox, 67.

might be reviewed and promised to prevent armaments firms from applying for Reich guarantees or credits for armaments orders from abroad. Therefore, a consensus between Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry was eventually reached that “as much secrecy as possible should be maintained over such transactions and to disguise the part played by the Ministries of Economics and Finance.”¹⁰² On 4 April 1935, according to Soltau of the Ministry of Economics, when he confirmed the attitude in the Wilhemstrasse, the Foreign Office seemed satisfied that the suggested credit was to be granted by the Reichskreditgesellschaft, a State bank functioning like a private bank. On 13 April, Von Neurath also raised no objections, so that Meyer was able to reply on 18 April to Soltau’s request of Foreign Office’s formal answer on the question of a Reich guarantee to Rheinmetall in the required sense.¹⁰³

Klein-Canton Problem: From Klein to the Reichswehr Ministry

At the same time of the debate over Reich Guarantee in German government, another trouble was raised by the Nanking government concerning the contracts signed in the summer of 1933 between Hans Klein and with Marshals Chen Chi-tang for the establishment of an armaments industry in Canton, the chief rival of Nanking government. This contract was reached in secret but with the acknowledgment of Seeckt, who had also the confidential discussion with the Canton Marshals during his visit to China. On July 20, 1934, Klein signed further a secret barter agreement with Chen, which was almost identical to his treaty one month later with Nanking but with a doubled credit project of RM 200 million.¹⁰⁴ More importantly, according to the assumption made by Wagner, the Reichswehr was behind the Klein’s activities, which had been proved that Klein was head of a trading organization, STAMAG, and had received support from the Reichswehr, the Ordnance Office in particular.¹⁰⁵ This agreement was interested by Klein and likely the Reichswehr owing to the better

¹⁰² DGFP, C, III, 461, *Memorandum by Frohwein*, 3 October 1934.

¹⁰³ Fox, 69, cited from AA. 6691/H098422, Meyer/von Neurath, 5 April 1935; Meyer/Ministries of Economics and Finance, 18 April 1935.

¹⁰⁴ Kirby, 144.

¹⁰⁵ DGFP, C, I, 812-14, Trautmann/AA, Peking 18 September 1933

position of Canton of supplying ores. Klein was convinced that Canton could deliver 8000 tons of wolframite a year based on the statistic that 90% percent of China's tungsten was exported from the port of Canton in 1933, and he was impressed by Canton provincial government's claim to have the monopoly of the commerce.¹⁰⁶ Klein behaved as a purely business man emphasized instead that the "leading circles at home had considered this carefully", so that he seemed to be confident that the financial arrangements would be secured by his application for a Reich guarantee.¹⁰⁷

This unpublic agreement was noticed by Nanking government as early as February 1934, when Chinese Counsellor of Legation, Tann, visited both German Foreign Ministry and Reichswehr and expressed objection to any military agreement with Canton government without the prior approval of the central government.¹⁰⁸ However, Nanking's opposition had been neglected by General von Reichenau and Reichswehr Minister von Blomberg, who insisted on Germany's right to deal with Canton as it saw fit and responded that "We as a great power are not accountable to any country for our deliveries abroad".¹⁰⁹ Von Reichenau did not see financial guarantee would be an obstacle for the project as he suggested that "a successful execution of the project would result in increased sales of German industrial products in one of China's richest provinces." He further argued that "Nanking's objections would be weakened by current discussions for a similar project for Nanking, and therefore recommended that the Nanking request that the Klein project be abandoned should not be acceded to without a corresponding quid pro quo."¹¹⁰

The Wilhelmstrasse learned this 'secret agreement' even earlier in September 1933 when Trautmann forwarded to Berlin a report from Dr. Wagner, the Consul-General at Shanghai. In the world of Trautmann, "a feeling of uneasiness and mystery" were used to describe Klein's personal character that had contributed much to the

¹⁰⁶ Kirby, 143.

¹⁰⁷ DGFP, C, I, 812-14, Trautmann/AA, Peking 18 September 1933

¹⁰⁸ DGFP, C, II, 445-446, *Memorandum by Altenburg*, 2 February 1934

¹⁰⁹ DGFP, C, 3, no.554, 1042, Blomberg to Neurath, 23 March 1935

¹¹⁰ Fox, 111-112; DGFP, C, II, 495-97, *Minutes by Kuhlborn*, 12 February 1934

political storms raged about him in both Germany and China, since he was pursuing a deal between certain sectional interests in both countries. Thus, he expressed serious worries in response to the 1933 Klein-Canton agreement.¹¹¹ The Foreign Office stated its position that “Germany had no interests in maintaining China’s national disunity by supporting provincial regimes against the central authorities, or in maintaining that disunion as a permanent state” as the Japanese might desire. On February 7, 1934, von Bülow wrote to General von Blomberg, Reichswehr Minister, stating that “with regard to the Central Government’s attitude it appears that Klein’s plans are hardly feasible”.¹¹² The Chief of the Asian Section, Meyer, summed up the arguments of Foreign Ministry’s opposite attitude to all of Klein’s schemes that “the arming of Canton was detrimental to the interests of Nanking; the arming of Nanking would provoke a Japanese reaction; and economically, all pacts stood on the shaky ground that was the Chinese economy.”¹¹³

Between August 1934 and April 1935, Klein maintained connection with both Nanking and Canton governments, who sent economic study commission to Berlin at almost the same time. However, it had been increasingly clear in terms of von Seeckt that Chiang Kai-shek could no longer tolerate the separate deals with Canton, and he confidentially told Ambassador Trautmann that the Canton adventure was injurious to the status of the Nanking advisership. On October 1934, Chiang’s Nanking troops succeeded to get the control of Kweichow, Yunnan, and Szechwan provinces and then directly threatened Kwangtung and Kwangsi, which implied that the major reason, the shipment of tungsten through the region, for Klein’s Canton ventures became meaningless.¹¹⁴ On March 1935, a report of the appointment of further military advisers to Canton, including that of General Hans Selmsdorff as General, prompted Trautmann and von Falkenhausen to express their worst fear about relations with Nanking to Berlin. Von Neurath immediately requested von Blomberg to give an

¹¹¹ DGFP, C, I, 812-14, Trautmann/AA, Peking 18 September 1933

¹¹² Fox, 111, cited from AA. 6680/H095966-67, von Bülow/von Blomberg, 7 February 1934

¹¹³ DGFP, C, 3, no. 504, p.959, *Meyer’s memorandum*, 20 Feb.1935

¹¹⁴ Kirby, 145-146

explanation and Voss restated the Foreign Office's attitude that maintaining Chiang's confidence in the loyalty of the German Government was much more important than the interests being pursued in Canton, as Canton government would be defeated at the hand of Nanking soon.¹¹⁵ Von Blomberg replied by emphasizing the private nature of any contract with Canton and denying the objection from Nanking to retired officers being employed in an advisory capacity with the approval of Minister of Economics.¹¹⁶ Given such position of Reichswehr and following Hitler's reception of Klein in February, Meyer forwarded the reply to Trautmann without raising any further issues with the military authority in Berlin and required Trautmann to "safeguard German interests in Canton and to forestall any possible complications with Nanking."¹¹⁷

The Canton projects were finally liquidated by the intervention of Hermann Kriebel, German Consul-General in Shanghai. Kriebel, as a National Socialist, an old Party comrade, was appointed in this post by Hitler in 1934. He cabled Hitler directly on May 1935, setting forth the value of ties with Nanking by referring to the large-scale transactions of raw materials vital for rearmament and the necessity of abandonment of Klein's transactions with Canton.¹¹⁸ A week later, General von Reichenau and Foreign Minister von Neurath "initialed a dispatch to the Nanking legation to the effect that Klein would transfer his work from Canton to Nanking and make any continued dealing with Canton subject to Chiang Kai-shek's approval."¹¹⁹ Coincidentally with von Neurath's decision to raise German Mission in Peking to the status of an Embassy expressed to Chinese Minister, according to Meyer on 24 May, Klein would be transferring his work from Canton to Nanking and Reichswehr's plan with Canton had been abandoned. The discussion between Klein and Nanking for arms agreement rebegan in June 1935.¹²⁰

On November 1935, when Nanking's policy towards Japan became clearly

¹¹⁵ Fox, 122-123, cited from AA. 6680/H096252, von Neurath/von Blomberg, 14 March 1935

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ DGFP, C, III, 922-924, *Memorandum by von Erdmannsdorff*, 11 February 1935.

¹¹⁸ Fox, 124-125.

¹¹⁹ DGFP, C, 4, no.101, 192-193, Meyer to Trautmann, 24 May 1935.

¹²⁰ DGFP, C, 4, 192-193, Meyer/Trautmann, 24 May 1935.

marked by the attempted assassination of Wang Ching-wei and the Sixth Plenary Session of Kuomintang, Trautmann and von Blomberg requested Klein to end his projects in Canton immediately because of Nanking's supposed 'appeasement' policy of the Japanese.¹²¹ However, a meeting on 24 January 1936 between Hitler, von Blomberg, von Neurath and Klein showed that Klein had still contacts with Canton and tried to persuade Hitler that his projects in Canton had been approved by Chiang, but such statement was soon denied by Chiang in Trautmann's report on February.¹²² Although, this Canton issue was eventually addressed in summer 1936 when Chen Chi-tang was in exile defeated in his confrontation with Chiang, and thus Nanking government gained the monopoly of ores commerce and took over all contracts signed between Klein and Canton, the distrust and irritation about Klein had become inveterate in both Nanking government and German Foreign Ministry.¹²³ At this time, the Reichswehr Ministry also shared this distrust since Klein's behaviors had affected Germany's general political and economic relations with China.

The Nature of the Agreement: Formal or Informal, Economic or Military

Due to the Klein-Canton problem, the Reichswehr Ministry took over the responsibility of Hapro agreement, so that it raised the concerns and discussion again over the nature of the Hapro agreement and its implication on Sino-German relations between the Reichswehr and the Foreign Office. The problem rooted firstly in the establishment of the Hapro company. At least in a legal sense, Hapro operated as a private company from 1934 to 1936 under the principle ownership of Hans Klein. In terms of the company's founding agreement, its diverse range of business included "domestic and foreign commerce in implements and finished equipment for the automobile and agricultural machine industry".¹²⁴ Such "private" venture provided more flexibility and initiatives to Hans Klein to gain more financial profits behaving as a pure entrepreneur. Nevertheless, technically, Reichswehr took no responsibility

¹²¹ Fox, 127.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Kirby, 147-148.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 136

for the enterprise. For instance, the deputy of Hapro, Colonel Curt Preu, was assigned by Reichswehr as adjutant to Seeckt. Hans Klein had also close relationship with Seeckt since 1920s and he was later introduced to Chinese Legation by Colonel Thomas himself.¹²⁵ Besides, Hapro were also financed by the Engelhardt Bank of Berlin, which had long been active in supporting Reichswehr businesses. Klein's partner in this bank, Prince Heinrich Reuss, told the Foreign Ministry in 1935 that "it was quite correct that Herr Klein had acted on the orders of the Reichswehr Minister."¹²⁶

According to Trautmann, Klein's negotiation with the Nanking government were going ahead without the Foreign office being consulted about either their economic viability or possible effect on more usual trading channels. Chiang Kai-shek on February 1934 stated to Trautmann that "this business was organized at a government level and not through the private active in the China trade" and Klein had claimed that "he was acting on the instructions of the highest German authorities".¹²⁷ On November 1934, Trautmann was instructed by von Bülow, to suggest to Generals von Seeckt and von Falkenhausen, that due to the great interest of the Reichswehr Ministry in the Klein projects that the Foreign Ministry should interfere to speak to Chiang directly.¹²⁸ However, the Foreign Office had very little influence to against Klein's projects both in Canton and in Nanking, because of the other interested parties were supporting behind Klein's negotiations, including Hjalmar Schacht, Colonel Georg Thomas, Wilhelm Keppler, and even partly Hitler himself. Therefore, by the end of 1934, the Foreign Ministry was faced dilemmas in its Far East policy between being forced to accept Klein's activities due to the economic and military benefit brought to Germany and difficulties to continue of its general lines of maintaining Germany's neutral position and freedom of choice in the Far East.

At the beginning of 1935, the Foreign Office examined detailly of Klein's

¹²⁵ DGFP, C, vol.2, no. 235, 445, *Memorandum by Altenburg*, 2 Feb.1934.

¹²⁶ DGFP, C, vol.3, no. 476, 900-901, *Memorandum by Voss*, 2 Feb. 1935.

¹²⁷ DGFP, C, III, 893-894, *Memorandum by Voss*, 31 January 1935.

¹²⁸ Fox, 116.

agreement and found out that the scale of Klein's negotiations and the status of Chinese officials he was dealing with signified that this was much more than a purely private compensation agreement as declared. Voss concluded that "Klein's contracts were in their present form, economically unacceptable and politically undesirable" and thus suggested the Foreign Ministry to repeat its opposition and "German contribution should be limited in as inconspicuous, innocuous and non-military as manner as possible."¹²⁹ On the other hand, Meyer responded to strong protest from von Dirksen, German ambassador to Japan, about the aircraft factory that "Germany's relations with China or even Russia were not to be subordinated simply to Japanese points of view" and warned against making the aircraft factory a "to be or not to be" issue.¹³⁰ It appeared that von Neurath were confident in the strength and stability of German-Japanese relations as he commented on von Dirksen's request "the apprehension exaggerated"¹³¹. The Foreign Office sought to find a form to satisfy both Chinese and German aviation interests and Japanese susceptibilities. Therefore, von Bülow on the one hand asked the Reichswehr Minister that the position of von Seeckt's military adviser should decline, on the other hand instructed von Dirksen to pursue his conversation in Tokyo along with an 'explanatory' notice about von Seeckt's imminent visit to China in order to minimize the possible repercussion.¹³²

Nevertheless, the further negotiation showed that the Foreign Office was faced by an established policy that it could only hope to alter or influence in a marginal way. On February 1935, the Director of Department IV, Meyer and von Erdmannsdorff, after being informed with the support to leading from leading circles and even Hitler himself, replied to Reichsbankdirektor that "the Foreign Office 'warmly supported' all plans designed to produce an additional exchange of goods with China and had no objection on such issues of national importance, in cases where things necessary for the army's requirements are concerned, with a precondition of financial and delivery

¹²⁹ DGFP, C, III, 893-894, *Memorandum by Voss*, 31 January 1935.

¹³⁰ DGFP, C, II, 748-479, Meyer/von Dirksen, 14 April 1934

¹³¹ DGFP, C, II, 387, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 19 January 1934

¹³² Fox, 75, cited from AA. 8580/E601959-62, von Bülow/von Blomberg, 29 January 1934

guarantee and minimizing political complications.”¹³³ By now, the Foreign Ministry decided to circulate its view on Klein’s project in an official *Stellungnahme* and come to the front to deal with the issue in an alleged position of ‘authority’ with Chiang Kai-shek. Regarding credit guarantee, “it was admitted that the Foreign Office recognized the necessity of accepting unusual financial risks in cases where the Reichswehr Ministry’s interests were involved, but with necessary investigation in advance.”¹³⁴

As a consequence, the Foreign Office went for von Seeckt and Colonel Thomas on February 1935 for up-to-date and authoritative information on Chiang’s view. Von Neurath was then informed that Chiang was not trust Klein to conclude an agreement given Klein’s project in Canton, suggested making economic and military relations between two countries as official as possible and requested the diplomatic representation of both countries be advanced to Embassy status.¹³⁵ Despite the consequent diplomatic complications of committing Germany to China’s side in her long-running feud with Japan, von Neurath expressed Foreign Ministry’s attitude of supporting “all efforts to obtain raw materials, particularly when such materials were necessary for the defense of the country.” A further statement was made that “every endeavor to extend Sino-German economic relations on the basis of barter transactions will be heartily welcome by the *Auswärtiges Amt*”¹³⁶. Von Seeckt reported to Hitler in the presence of von Neurath, von Blomberg and Schacht on June 26, that it was necessary to pursue a clear-cut policy in China as a means of reinforcing Germany’s military and economic rearmament. Not surprisingly, the only positive reaction from Hitler was to accede to Chiang’s request that to transfer the German Embassy from Peking to Nanking. The Führer and the Foreign Ministry shared the view of avoiding make clear inclination in its Far East policy or political commitment to China.¹³⁷

In June 1935, the negotiation of implementing Hapro agreement started. Klein

¹³³ DGFP, C, III, 922-924, *Memorandum by von Erdmannsdorff*, 11 February 1935.

¹³⁴ Fox, 121.

¹³⁵ DGFP, C, III, 929-230, *Memorandum by von Erdmannsdorff*, 14 February 1935.

¹³⁶ Fox, 121.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

proposed to Weng Wenhao, the secretary general of resource committee, expressed the expect of the delivery of 4000 tons of tungsten in the first year of implementation of Hapro agreement. Weng agreed with such proposal but stated Chiang's request to replace Klein with German authorities by threatening to stop delivery wolfram prepared for Germany and to sabotage the commission sent to Germany to conclude the credit agreement. Von Blomberg took the matter to von Neurath complaining that the Ambassador should not added obstacles to Klein's plan which had been approved by the Führer and Chancellor and should coordinated to persuade Chiang for acceptance.¹³⁸ Von Neurath refuted that "Klein had deliberately avoided calling on the Embassy and informing the officials about his plans."¹³⁹

While the Foreign Office continued its objections in a memorandum to State Secretary, von Erdmannsdorff, emphasized the Japan's position and economic difficulties and unsecured financial guarantee,¹⁴⁰ The Nazi's increasing inclination towards Japan, to certain extent had helped the Foreign Ministry to keep a "neutral" policy in the Far East issues by balancing the inclination of the Reichswehr towards China. While it was informed that Ribbentrop sought to conclude a pact with Japan, von Dirksen tried to persuade the Foreign Office that it was Hitler's intention to pursue the closest possible relationship with Japan. On the other hand, the War Ministry warned against political alignment with Japan and the recognition of Manchukuo that would risk its commitment to China. Therefore, German-Japanese rapprochement prompted the Foreign Ministry to accept the unclear defined nature of Hapro agreement in order to maintain a balance in the Far East.

On 24 March 1936, von Blomberg telegraphed Chiang Kai-shek directly, in which he made the promise again concerning Canton problem and requested confirmation of Chiang Kai-shek's support.¹⁴¹ Regarding Klein, he stated that Klein had withdrew from the Hapro, which has become a state-owned company which would work in the

¹³⁸ DGFP, C, V, 304, von Blomberg/von Neurath, 25 March 1936.

¹³⁹ DGFP, C, V, 341-342, *Memorandum by Voss*, 30 March 1936.

¹⁴⁰ DGFP, C, V, 347-348, *Memorandum by von Erdmannsdorff*, 31 March 1936.

¹⁴¹ DGFP, C, V, 282-283, von Blomberg/Chiang Kai-shek, 24 March 1936.

future “only in accordance with his instructions.”¹⁴² After receiving such confirmation, Chiang finally replied favorably to von Blomberg on 3 April.¹⁴³ On April 8, the control of Hapro passed from Klein to the Reichswehr Ministry and Colonel Thomas of the War Economy Office became chairman of the board of the firm. On 9 April 1936, a credit agreement for 100 million RM was concluded between von Blomberg and Chen Ku, the leader of the mission sent to Germany by Chiang. While the President of the Reichsbank and the Minister of Finance were asked for approval to the agreement in advance, the Foreign Office was informed afterwards by von Blomberg to coordinate for carrying out the exchange of goods between Germany and China.¹⁴⁴

The signing of the credit agreement was the crucial step for final ratification. To confirm the treaty and ascertain further implementation, the War Ministry arranged a visit for General von Reichenau to China to “cultivate relations with Chiang”¹⁴⁵. Reichenau during his trip, remarked that ‘if a war against Japan should occur, it is only natural that German military advisory group should go to war along-side the Chinese’, which implies an extending vision beyond mere economic and military cooperation, but military commitment to China.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, von Blomberg made efforts to secure the ‘fruit’ of the agreement had been achieved in Berlin with the Foreign Office and financial branches. When Rommer of the Reich Finance Ministry called to ask for Foreign Office’s views of the Klein agreement in preparation for a meeting to discuss the credit agreement with China and the grant of a guarantee to the Golddiskontband for the 100 million RM credit. Voss’s reply implied that “all the various Ministries could do was to accept the fait accompli, especially since Hitler had placed the weight of his authority behind the agreement.”¹⁴⁷ While von Bülow was still doubt about the economic validity of Klein’s agreement, von Reichenau claimed on 4 May that

¹⁴² DGFP, C, V, 270.

¹⁴³ DGFP, C, V, 384-385, von Blomberg/Chiang Kai-shek, 3 April 1936.

¹⁴⁴ Kirby, 148-149.

¹⁴⁵ Fox, 134.

¹⁴⁶ Tajima Nobuo, “Fighting Behind the Scenes: Developments in German Far East Policy, 1935–1936” in vol. II of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD: 2009) 210.

¹⁴⁷ Fox, 135, cited from AA.218/147860-61, Memorandum by Voss, 18 May 1936.

Schacht had made available a revolving credit of 100 million Reichsmark. At a meeting on 27 May with Göring, Schacht, the Reich Finance Minister von Krösigk, General Staff of the Air Force and the Raw Materials and Foreign Exchange Staff, von Blomberg underlined the importance of China as source of raw materials and obtained Schacht's support.¹⁴⁸ Eventually, von Reichenau ratified the Klein agreement on 25 July 1936 in China.¹⁴⁹

Germany – China Relations from 1937 to 1938

Response to the Anti-Comintern Pact and H.H. Kung's Visit

Concerning the publicized Anti-Comintern Pact, on February 1937, Executive Yuan in Nanking warned that this might strengthen the hands of pro-Soviet faction within China, and about the protests in China against German military advisers. Trautmann strongly denied any pro-Japanese direction of German policy and suggested with a visit by H. H. Kung, Chinese Republic's Minister of Finance, to meet with German authorities in Berlin.¹⁵⁰

From 9 to 14 June 1937, Kung made an official visit to Berlin. In the meeting with von Mackensen and Schacht, they stressed on the political considerations and ideological nature to struggle against international bolshevism to be the only reason for Germany to conclude Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan without far-reaching commitments involved. Schacht reaffirmed that Germany had no political interest in the Far East and regarded China from a long-term perspective of mutual economic importance. In addition, he rejected the establishment of a German-Manchukuo Chamber of Commerce and claimed the economic nature of Knoll's appointment that had nothing to do with Japanese government.¹⁵¹ During the reception by Göring, as

¹⁴⁸ Fox., 135-136.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 139.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 212, cited from AA.59/39457; 919/295119-23.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 218, cited from AA.7814/E566854-55, Memorandum by Schacht, 10 June 1937

Commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, he emphasized German interest in the strategic raw materials from China under the Hapro agreement, and Germany's support for strong and efficient Chinese army fighting against communism in China. But he also mentioned that the normal channel of Sino-German trade partnership should not be disturbed by an "inter-state agreement under the competence of the Wehrmacht".¹⁵² Finally, Kung was received by Hitler on 13 June. Hitler remarked on the complementary Sino-German relationship in the economic aspect and rejected any political aim to be pursued in the Far East. He justified the political agreement concluded with Japan by portraying the communist threat to Western Europe. Hitler also expressed his wish to see détente of Sino-Japanese relations and willingness to offer mediation if required.¹⁵³

Sino-Japanese War and Trautmann Mediation:

The Second Sino-Japanese War that began on July 7, 1937, was justified avowedly by Japanese army as in adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact to save China from bolshevism and its allies, given the formation of a tenuous 'united front' between KMT and CCP. On the one hand, Hitler replied to Japanese Foreign Minister Hirota on 10 July, that "in clear recognition of our common aims, Germany will do all that it can to strengthen the cooperation initiated by the Anti-Comintern agreement".¹⁵⁴ On the other, in Nanking, German Ambassador Trautmann commented this to be "an old Japanese cliché". Von Neurath's emphasized Germany's 'strict impartiality' to Chinese Ambassador and would "support Britain and the United States if they were able to negotiate a peace in the Far East".¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, von Falkenhausen, Chiang's chief adviser, recommended Chiang to adopt a strong stand and denied the thought that a Japanese victory was certain to von Blomberg.¹⁵⁶ Von Weizsäcker of the Foreign Office made public that the Anti-Comintern Pact "had nothing to do with current

¹⁵² Fox, 224, cited from AA.3708/E36593-96, Ministry of Economics/AA, 16 June 1937

¹⁵³ Ibid., cited from AA. 3708/E036585-88, Memorandum by von Schmieden, 15 June 1937

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 231, cited from AA. 155/130844-45, Hitler/Hirota, 10 July 1937

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 236, cited from AA. 153/82097-108, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 31 July 1937

¹⁵⁶ DGFP, D, I, 736, Trautmann/AA, Nanking 21 July 1937.

conflicts and was not designed to fight bolshevism on the territory of a third State”.¹⁵⁷ He also denied the intention of recalling the German military advisers from China, because it would signify that Germany was supporting Japan and Japan’s action were probably driving China in the direction Soviet Union.

In August, von Blomberg assured to Nanking that the arms trade would continue and expressed his agreement with Foreign Office’s approach on the Far Eastern question.¹⁵⁸ However, Hitler, on 16 August declared to subordinates that he “adhered, in principle, to the idea of cooperating with Japan.”¹⁵⁹ Even though, he also confirmed Foreign Office’s policy of neutrality in the present circumstance. Hitler asserted to von Blomberg that the arms to China already contracted for should be delivered, as long as China covered these by foreign exchange or raw materials but rejected further orders for military equipment and credit to Nanking.¹⁶⁰ Following the battle of Shanghai, China and Soviet Union concluded on 21 August 1937 a non-aggression pact. However, on 27 August, Hitler still confirmed his statement on 16th, shown that he had not made up his mind to fully abandon China.¹⁶¹

By September 1937, it had been reported that von Falkenhausen and other German advisers had been actively involved in directing Chinese military operations against Japanese forces, and von Blomberg believed that the Chinese were capable of sustaining the war in long term.¹⁶² This was intensively protested by the Japanese and thus von Dirksen suggested for German mediation.¹⁶³ However, the position of Foreign Office concerning the German mediation was negative on 12 September based on Trautmann’s telegram that the “intervention of third parties would be impossible if peace proposals from Tokyo meant only the defeat of China”.¹⁶⁴ By 3 November, it appeared to the Foreign Office that the conditions given by Hirota would not be

¹⁵⁷ DGFP, D, I, 744-45, Memorandum by von Weizsäcker, 28 July 1937.

¹⁵⁸ Fox, 240, cited from AA.1702/398215-16, Memorandum on von Blomberg-Kung conversation of 12 August 1937.

¹⁵⁹ DGFP, D, I, 750, Memorandum by von Mackensen, 19 August 1937.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Fox, 242.

¹⁶² Ibid., 244-246.

¹⁶³ DGFP, D, I, 759, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 21 September 1937.

¹⁶⁴ Fox, 250, cited from AA. 4422/E084052, von Neurath/Nanking, 12 September 1937.

accepted by Chiang, and Chiang was looking to the Nine-Power Treaty for support.¹⁶⁵

A major change of German attitude to the war took place in October 1937. China appealed to the League of Nations on 12 September and called the Nine-Power Conference at Brussel on November.¹⁶⁶ Followed intense pressure by Mushakoji and Oshima on Ribbentrop, on 18 October, Göring informed Keitel that the Führer had decided that an “unequivocal attitude was to be adopted towards Japan”, because they had threatened to withdraw from the Anti-Comintern Pact if “the support of the Chinese by Germany was continued in its present form”.¹⁶⁷ Göring requested Keitel to issue instruction that no further military supplies were to be sent to China. However, this instruction only lasted two days and the Wehrmacht had the order reversed. Von Blomberg informed Göring that he had already commanded to continue the business in camouflaged form.¹⁶⁸ On 22 October, Japan refused to attend the Brussels Conference and then Hitler announced that Germany refused to participate as well given her non-membership.¹⁶⁹

Nevertheless, on 6 November, Hitler mentioned again concerning Trautmann’s mediation China’s adherence to the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact, and the Japanese should undertake to respect all foreign interests in China.¹⁷⁰ Hitler also explained to the Japanese Ambassador that a formal recognition of Manchukuo was not yet possible, despite his own inclinations, because this would result the rupture of trade relations with China, which would cause tremendous difficulties for Germany’s raw materials situation.¹⁷¹ Trautmann’s mediation was limited by its function as only a messenger, which actually led him to become the unwilling tool of the Japanese. Japanese victory at Shanghai and Nanking prompted Tokyo to formulate terms that no Chinese government could accept. All the effort for mediation ended on January 16 by an

¹⁶⁵ DGFP, D, I, 779, von Neurath/Nanking, 3 November 1937.

¹⁶⁶ DGFP, D,I, 767, Trautmann/AA. Nanking 16 October 1937.

¹⁶⁷ DGFP, D, VII, 609-610, Appendix III, Oshima/Göring, Berlin 21 October 1937.

¹⁶⁸ DGFP, D, I, 502, *Memorandum by Heyden-Rynch*, 22, October 1938.

¹⁶⁹ DGFP, D, I, 772, *Memorandum by von Neurath*, 27 October 1937.

¹⁷⁰ Fox, 267.

¹⁷¹ DGFP, D, I, 786-787, von Mackensen/Rome, 27 November 1937.

official Japanese declaration. On 18 January 1938, both China and Japan recalled their Ambassadors.¹⁷²

Reshuffle of the Reich's Government

In Berlin, with a major reorganization in the leadership of both the armed forces and the Foreign Office, German Far Eastern policy became distinctly partisan and pro-Japanese in the end. Von Blomberg was removed and Hitler himself assumed supreme command of the armed forces, and von Ribbentrop replaced von Neurath became Reich Foreign Minister. After two weeks of the reshuffle, Hitler reconsidered of giving diplomatic recognition to Manchukuo. He explained his decision to the Reichstag on February 20, that "I do not consider China strong enough, either spiritually or materially, to withstand from her own resources any attack by Bolshevism." On the other hand, Japan was valued as "an element of security for the culture of mankind."¹⁷³ On April 28, 1938, Göring announced to cease shipments of war materials, even those already contracted under Hapro agreements. With further Japanese insistence, in May Ribbentrop recalled the German military adviser in Nanjing.

¹⁷² Fox, 274-290.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

Chapter Two: Germany and Japan 1933 – 1938

German Interests in Japan

Economic Aspect

Trade with Japan

The commercial relationship was very low before the First World War and severed by Japan's declaration of war against Germany and the subsequent hostilities in Jiaozhou Peninsular. Before the war broke out, the value of Japanese exports to Germany in 1914 was 9,960,000 yen and that of imports from Germany was 44,920,000 yen. By 1919, Japanese exports to Germany fell to almost nothing and its imports from Germany was as little as 260,000 yen. Their bilateral trade was revived with the armistice. The imports of German machineries had a great significance for Japan's heavy and chemical industrialization. By contrast, Japanese exports were of limited importance to the German economy, which accounted no more than 0.3% of German imports during 1920s. In July 1927, a Japanese-German commercial and navigation treaty was signed, which marked the mutually granted most favored nation status to each other and the final normalization of commercial relations between them.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, followed by the Great Depression, Japan and Germany abandoned the gold standard, and both fell into difficulties with outflows of gold and foreign exchange. Exchanges in technological field through licensing and direct investment ceased as well. Thus, German-Japanese economic relationship contracted again until mid-1930s and remained insignificant compared with German-China trade volume.

¹⁷⁴ Kudo Akira, Tajima Nobuo and Erich Pauer, "Changing Japanese-German Economic Relations: Competition and Cooperation." in vol. I of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 44-87, (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009), 55-56.

Trade with Manchuria

Although the trade volumes directly between Germany and Japan was very limited, Germany did have great economic interests in Manchuria, which was occupied by Japan as its puppet state named Manchukuo after 1931. By 1934, Germany became the biggest buyer of Manchuria.¹⁷⁵ And this was boosted to large extent by a troublemaker German businessman, Ferdinand H. Heye. In 1933, for the purpose of improving economic relations to then encourage political mutual understanding, recommended von Dirksen and Göring by Heye was sent by Hitler to Manchuria and Japan. Before his mission, Heye related his plan to establish a bank in Manchukuo with Reich funds, in order to develop Manchuria and inner Mongolia with German capital and industrial products. Heye said that “the Japanese would then be persuaded to undertake an action against Vladivostok and proceed through Siberia in order to deal Bolshevism a death blow.”¹⁷⁶ The Foreign Ministry dismissed Heye and forbidden his plan from proposing to Hitler. However, owing to his close tie with Reich Minister Göring, he achieved to receive the assumed sympathetic from Hitler and financing support from Industrialist Fritz Thyssen.¹⁷⁷ During his voyage, Heye proclaimed that he was traveling “in a special capacity for Hitler” in the meetings with Japanese War Minister Araki, Chief of the Japanese General Staff Koiso and Manchukuo officials.¹⁷⁸ Given his plan in Manchuria and ‘claimed’ official stature, Koiso gave him a letter for Hitler, in which wrote that German recognition of the Manchukuo as the puppet state was the precondition for Germany to obtain a “special economic position” there.¹⁷⁹ When Heye returned to Berlin in November 1933, Hitler was appreciated with his mission and appointed him as “provisional German commissioner” leading the trade relationship between Germany and Manchukuo, despite strident opposition from both

¹⁷⁵ Chou Whei-Ming, “The Wang Jing-wei Regime and the German-Japanese Alliance.” in vol. I of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 323-341 (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009) 326.

¹⁷⁶ DGFP, C, I, no.50, 104-107, *Memorandum by Meyer*, 6 Mar. 1933.

¹⁷⁷ DGFP, C, II, no.97, 172, *Meyer to the missions in China and Japan*, 2 Dec. 1933.

¹⁷⁸ DGFP, C, II, no. 241, 454, *Dirksen to AA*, 7 Feb. 1934.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

the Foreign and Reichswehr Ministries.¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, Heye proceeded to act on his own. He proclaimed himself the “first German Minister to Manchukuo” and continued to negotiate with those Manchukuo authorities who would speak with him. He announced an agreement with Hsinking on June 5, 1934, however, neglecting to send Berlin a copy. Not until February 4, 1935, was Heye officially dismissed by Hitler.¹⁸¹ Heye failed to be aware of Berlin's delicate interaction with Manchukuo, as its official diplomatic recognition by Germany was welcomed by Japan but would greatly damage Sino-German relations. Hitler's interest to keep China as a partner for the time being became obvious, when he disavowed Heye, who had falsely promised German recognition of Manchukuo in order to monopolize German trading in the region under his name.

Despite the unsuccessful mission of Heye, the development of new economic ties between Germany and the Yen bloc had been agreed by Thyssen with Hitler's approval. Before 1930, German demand of soybean had been the foundation of its trade with Manchuria, thus Germany would continuously to be one of the largest market of Manchurian economy. Germany bought Manchurian beans primarily through Japanese firms, through paying with the proceeds of the German export surplus in trade with Japan. The relationship, endangered in 1931 when Japan went off the gold standard and depreciated the yen to one-third of its former parity, become stagnated in 1933 with the German enactment of legislation to reduce lard and vegetable fat imports. German accusations of Japanese ‘dumpling’ of cheaply made and lower priced goods in overseas market, thus competing ‘unfairly’ with better quality and higher priced German manufactured goods led many hostile opinions expressed in German economic circle against Japan.¹⁸² For the Japanese side, under German defense economy since 1933, the imposition of import quotas and the raising of tariffs on imported raw materials harmed their interests. This tension was partly reduced on July

¹⁸⁰ DGFP, C, II, no. 269, 510, *Memorandum by Ulrich*, 19 Feb. 1934

¹⁸¹ DGFP, C, III, no. 22, 53, Neurath to Dirksen, 21 June 1934; no. 478, 904, Neurath to Hess, 4 Feb. 1935

¹⁸² Akira, Nobuo and Pauer, 77.

1934 when Germany and Japan agreed to avoid the double taxation of shipping profits in both countries. However, the introduction of New Plan trading with countries who were linked by clearing agreement, which was opposed by the Foreign Ministry to apply to trade with Japan, had worsened Japan's poor balance of trade with Germany because Japanese were being denied foreign exchange certificates for the import of Japanese goods into Germany.¹⁸³

Until 1935, a second attempt to put German-Japanese relations on a material basis, partly aimed to balance Germany's rapid increasing trade with China.¹⁸⁴ The rearmament boom in Germany had begun to affect German facts consumption, alternative sources like Manchurian soybean had been developed as a "Reich Economic Mission to the Far East" headed by Dr. Otto Kiep was sent to Manchukuo in the autumn of 1935 for the negotiation of building a three-cornered system of barter between Germany, Manchukuo and Japan, which was finally reached on April 20, 1936.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, a Japanese arms commission led by the president of Showa Steel Works inspected Krupp facilities and entered into negotiations for the purchase of Krupp's direct steel-manufacturing process.

However, for Germany, the problem of this triangle trading relationship was Japanese refusal to guarantee the possible Manchurian deficit in legal term, because German trade deficit with Manchukuo had to be restored by balancing Germany's exports and imports to Japan on the basis of four to one. Since the increased demand forced soybean prices to rise 50% within the year, Germany purchased more soybeans at ever higher prices, so that its annual trade deficit with Manchukuo grew from RM 28.9 million in May 1936 to RM 38.5 million in May 1937.¹⁸⁶ Accordingly, this three-year agreement was unfavorable for Germany economically, but its political

¹⁸³ Akira, Nobuo and Pauer, 79-81.

¹⁸⁴ Kirby, 155

¹⁸⁵ Fox 169, the "Arrangement for German-Manchukuo Trade" was finally signed by Kiep and the Manchukuo Ambassador to Tokyo, Hsieh Chieh-shih, on 30 April 1936 in the presence of Shikao Matsushima, the Director of the Commercial Affaire Bureau of the Japanese Office, coming into force on 1 June 1936.

¹⁸⁶ Kirby 156.

significance could be interpreted as a form of de facto recognition of Manchukuo and thereby constitute a major concession to Japan. On 9 March 1937, Dr Knoll was formally appointed as German trade commissioner to Hsinking of Manchukuo.¹⁸⁷

Political/ Ideological Aspect

Racial Question

The racial question had been an obstacle for German-Japanese rapprochement as the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service was introduced in April 1933.¹⁸⁸ The question of ‘non-Aryan’ was viewed by the Japanese as reminiscent of the racist ‘yellow peril’ by the Kaiser Wilhelm earlier in the Century, who had frequently used the words as slogan referring pan-European fears against Asian invaders like the Mongols and had backed Tsarist Russia against Japan during the Russo-Japanese War.

Hitler’s ideology and conception of foreign policy was based on his doctrine of race, a vulgarized version of Social Darwinism, and the principle of space based upon.¹⁸⁹ From this perspective, Hitler disliked all non-European peoples and did not place the Asians in his racist world order, except as supporters of his plans against Russia in case of Japan.¹⁹⁰ He admired Japanese martial spirit of Shintoism, a patriotist spirit of willingness to sacrifice themselves, uninfluenced by the Jews or Christianity, and their victory over ‘Slavic’ Russia in 1905.¹⁹¹ In his book *Mein Kampf*, he had already acknowledged that Japanese had adopted cultures created by others based on “the Hellenistic spirit and Germanic technology”, that he expected to become

¹⁸⁷ Fox, 213, cited from AA.9075/E637156-57, Memorandum by Voss, 10 March 1937

¹⁸⁸ John P. Fox, “Japanese reactions to Nazi Germany’s Racial Legislation”, *Weiner Library Bulletin* 22, no. 2 and 3, (1969): 46-50.

¹⁸⁹ Primary sources concerning Hitler’s ideas of race and space are *Mein Kampf*, *Hitlers zweites Buch*, *Ein Dokument aus dem Jahr 1928* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1961)

¹⁹⁰ Gerhard Krebs, “Pan-Germanism Meets Pan-Asianism: Nazi Germany and Japan’s Greater East Asia Policy,” in vol. II of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 302-322, (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009), 302.

¹⁹¹ Presseisen Ernst L., *Germany and Japan: A Study in Totalitarian Diplomacy, 1933-1941* (New York, 1969) 151

dominant in the whole of East Asia.¹⁹²

Hitler considered the Japanese race unique in the world, because of its supposed complete homogeneity in contrast to the bastardized peoples of Europe, America and the rest of Asia, since Japan had not been infiltrated and influenced by the Jews, “who would sooner or later strive to conquer this last stronghold of racial purity and independence, a bulwark against world domination by Jewish Bolshevism”.¹⁹³ For that reason, Japan was a prime target of Jewish intrigues. Hitler claimed that “World Jewry, aiming at world domination, was not only behind Britain’s machinations to destroy Germany in the First World War, but had later similarly tried to destroy Japan by stirring up tensions between London and Tokyo for that purpose”.¹⁹⁴

In October 1933, Japanese Ambassador Nagai Matsuzo informed von Bülow that Japan was uneasy about the classing of Non-Aryans in official German declarations.¹⁹⁵ Attempt to mitigate such resentment, Alfred Rosenberg stated that “we acknowledge the destiny of the Yellow Race and hope that in its own Lebensraum it will develop the specific culture born of its racial soul.”¹⁹⁶ He admitted Japan’s particular racial genius and stressed on the complementary relationship between Germany and Japan in international affairs. The German press was admonished to avoid expressions of ‘yellow peril’ as late as December 1933. In early 1935, when both nations started negotiating the Anti-Comintern Pact, another press directive made the reason for this unambiguously clear, which was ‘for Germany’s attitude towards other races leaves completely open the question of the worth of other races – especially when these races must not, for political reasons, be offended.’¹⁹⁷

Hitler himself in a speech of 30 January 1934 explained that “the National Socialist racial idea do not lead to the underrating or disparagement of other nations”,

¹⁹² Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 318–19.

¹⁹³ Werner Jochmann, ed. *Adolf Hitler. Monologe im Führerhauptquartier 1941–1944. Die Aufzeichnungen Heinrich Heims*, 723–4.

¹⁹⁴ Werner, 177, 280.

¹⁹⁵ Fox, 87–88, this complaint was complemented by similar expression by the Chinese as well.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁹⁷ Ernest Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda, 1925–1945* (Michigan 1964), 156.

although his public reference to the “innate superiority of the white man who was capable of colonization” remained vitiated official relations with Japan.¹⁹⁸ The Foreign Ministry showed anxious about the negative impact of deteriorated political relations with the nations in question and the loss of trade.¹⁹⁹ In an inter-Ministerial meeting on 15 November, it was suggested that the “Aryan legislation might be so phrased as to apply to Jews only and not to other non-Aryans such as the Chinese, Japanese and South Americans.”²⁰⁰ The Nuremberg Laws on 13 September 1935 further clarified the definition of race particular on Jewish rather than non-Aryan criteria in order to remove difficulties in the expected German-Japanese rapprochement.²⁰¹ Even though, Hitler’s mistrust of the Asians had never vanished, and in Japan sympathy was often expressed for the Jews as fellow Asians. This racial issue demonstrated how sensitive even the Nazi State was to external pressures and the undoubtful influence of the Foreign Office in the decision-making process.

Ideology and Shared Position in the World Order

Ideologies were mostly regarded as the foundation of the establishment of German-Japanese allied relationship, which were anti-communism, anti-League and revisionism. Although Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 was named with an ideological implication, there is no doubt that Realpolitik considerations were also involved. Aside from the anti-Communist campaign to consolidate the power of National Socialist regime inside Germany, the ideological element of anti-communism seemed more as a name justifying its aim of Lebensraum based on racism against the Soviet Russia, shared with Japanese expansionism. Instead of a constant ideological guidance, it has been shown that Germany always took a more pragmatic and opportunistic approach towards Russia.²⁰² Both the Nazi leadership and the Japanese army, particularly the Imperial Way School faction, were concerned with Soviet Russia as its position in

¹⁹⁸ Presseisen, 188.

¹⁹⁹ Fox, 91.

²⁰⁰ DGFP, C, III, 634-37, *Memorandum by von Bülow-Schwante*, 16 November 1934.

²⁰¹ Presseisen. 196.

²⁰² Weinberg, 75-81

world affairs was growing more influential and in an anti-German and anti-Japanese direction. Japan felt threatened by the Far Eastern encirclement that appeared to be foreboded by America's recognition of Russia in November 1933. Meanwhile, Hitler was concerned at Soviet Russia's increasingly closer cooperation with the Western democracies, especially after it joined the League in September 1934 followed by Franco-Russian Protocol and Russia-Czech Treaties on May 1935.²⁰³ Therefore, Hitler's initial consideration of an ideological agreement with Japan, seemed to have been motivated by a desire to counter Russia's growing international status through forming an anti-communist bloc of power, with the hope that Britain would join.

Compared to the ambiguous anti-communist ideology, a shared position between Germany and Japan in post-WWI global system was more attractive for both to build closer relationship. With the end of the war, the Treaty of Versailles between Germany and the Allies in 1919 and the Washington system in 1921 for a peace settlement in Europe and Asia, the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Germany was revived. Both countries were the foci and disadvantaged in such Versailles-Washington system, but they remained very distant in political and diplomatic relations in the first half of the 1930s. Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933, dissatisfied with its adoption of the Lytton Report. The Nazi regime followed suit in October. However, this double withdrawal was the outcome of their respective foreign policies, instead of common approach.

Japanese political and military ambitions reflected by its invasion to Manchuria in 1931 had been viewed by German Foreign Office as a danger to the peace of the Far East and its general balance policy in the region and it argued having no political interest in the Far East. Germany supported the adoption of the Lytton Report and non-recognition of 'Manchukuo' in 1933.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, Japan's dynamism had attracted the Nazis' attention for closer political relationship, who recognized Japan's

²⁰³ Sommer Theo, *Deutschland und Japan zwischen den Mächten 1935–1940: Vom Antikominternpakt zum Dreimächtepakt*. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1962) 64–68.

²⁰⁴ Kudo, Nobuo and Pauer, 64.

political importance in international situation, particularly concerning the Soviet Union. The new Nazi regime shared Japan's position of 'have-not' countries and of self-imposed isolation, their need to search for a 'like' nation, with equally revisionist and dynamic foreign policy aims for new world order. This common anti-status quo and anti-League position become clear and was utilized to justify their aggressive actions by 1937.²⁰⁵

Japan needed to create its new ideology because a full-scale war against China went beyond 'self-defense'. The newly aggressive standpoint was created not only by the hard-liners in the army, but also in the Foreign Ministry, which was regarded as pro-British. Shigemitsu Mamoru, Ambassador to the USSR, in 1937 considered the League of Nations 'a semi-propaganda institution of the left and proposed an 'East-Asian Monroe Doctrine' for Japan to establish its regional sphere of influence, inspired by counter images of 'anti-West' and an inferiority complex in parallel with a superior feeling of over modern China.²⁰⁶

On 7 September 1937, Hitler declared that the Versailles Treaty was 'dead' and Germany "was united in close friendship' with Italy and Japan to counter 'an attack on the civilized world'.²⁰⁷ On 20 February 1938, Hitler criticized the League because it was "not an institution of justice, but rather an institution for the defense of the wrong done at Versailles" and its ideals coincided "rather too closely with the exceedingly realistic interests of its chief powers", namely Britain and France.²⁰⁸ He said that his government refused "to allow their people to be sacrificed on the altar of the fantastic ideals of the League of Nations".²⁰⁹

Military/ Strategical Aspect

In 1920s, German-Japanese military contact remained at a low ebb. Their competed interest on the Shandong Peninsula was settled with the Treaty of Versailles,

²⁰⁵ Presseisen, 179.

²⁰⁶ Sommer, 236.

²⁰⁷ Presseisen, 330

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 335-336

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

when Germany ceded Shandong to Japan and lost all its colonies over the world. Thus, Germany no longer had any political or military presence in the Far East. Concerning Japan, although it gave former German interests in Shandong back to China at the Washington Naval Conference, it maintained the status of a major power in East Asia with Britain and the United States.²¹⁰

In this context, the idea of a Japanese-German partnership was initiated by some enthusiasts in Japanese and German navies. In 1924, German Navy's Lieutenant-Commander Wilhelm Canaris, who became the chief of the Military Intelligence Agency, proposed to assist the Japanese navy by technical cooperation, aiming at establishing a bilateral naval cooperation with Japan to block Britain and France. His proposal was based on the expectation of a strengthened Japanese navy, that could force the Entente powers to reorient the target of their foreign policies away from Europe to Asia.²¹¹ However, the progress made by the navies had been very slow.

The geopolitical significance of the Pacific region, especially Japan was illustrated by Karl Haushofer in his book "Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean" in 1924. It is doubtful to what extent Haushofer had influence Hitler's ideas and plan of expansionism as he wrote that "geopolitics is the scientific foundation for Lebensraum." ²¹² He saw the Eastern Eurasia were struggling for self-determination against the same oppressors, the 'space-owning imperialists', as Germans'. Such emotional factor led him to bring the Far East closer to German geopolitics and Haushofer's personal background biased him in favor of Japan, seen as the nucleus of the revolution in the East. Accordingly, common spatial problems and threats drew Japan and Germany together. Furthermore, Halford J. Mackinder's concept of 'Heartland', and his forecast of the confrontation between Russia and the 'oceanic powers', had influenced and shaped Haushofer's idea of a Eurasian alliance between

²¹⁰ Christian W Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich, ed. *Japanese-German relations, 1895-1945: war, diplomacy and public opinion*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 36.

²¹¹ Spang and Wippich, 92.

²¹² Donald Hawley Norton, 'Karl Haushofer and his Influence on Nazi Ideology and German Foreign Policy 1919-1945', (Clark University, 1965).

Germany, Russia, Japan and the emerging nationalist movements of India and China.²¹³

In the view of Alfred Rosenberg, who was considered the Nazis' chief ideologue, he was afraid of a potential Asian expansion at Europe's expense and to Japanese goal of expelling the 'white man' from East Asia. He saw the danger of barring the yellow peoples from emigrating to the America and Australian and of colonizing East Asia by the capitalist, which would push them to follow the footstep of Genghis Khan to the River Rhine. Moreover, he supported the slogan of 'East Asia for the East Asian' as to prevent the Jewish influence behind international capital fight against Japan's expansion in China.²¹⁴

The only incentive for Germany to have closer cooperation with Japan in military field was Hitler's dream of a German supremacy on the European continent. German military plans and strategic interests after 1933 centered on Hitler's expansionist program, which based on the ideas of race and space and foresaw several stages. His first step was to unite all Germans, including the Austrians and those living in Czechoslovakia, and then to promote a world leadership for the Germanic 'master race', including the British. Secondly, to gain the space, 'Lebensraum', for Germanic people, he targeted on the territories in Eastern Europe and a great part on Russian soil, the land area was inhabited by Slavs, an inherently inferior group, who were incapable of developing a culture.²¹⁵ The Germanic racial stock in the region had been eliminated by Slavic bourgeoisie with its Pan-Slavic and anti-German ideology, First World War and Bolshevik Revolution. The consequent amorphous block of Slav would be exploited by the Jews for the benefit of world capitalism. Therefore, in Hitler's view, Slavic Russians were too weak to gain world hegemony, as there was no racial value in Russian population.²¹⁶

In accordance with this goal of territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the

²¹³ Norton, 269-280.

²¹⁴ Geoffrey Stoakes, *Hitler and the Quest for World Dominion*. (Berg, 1986) 168.

²¹⁵ Weinberg, 12-13.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Soviet Russia, from a more opportunist approach of Ribbentrop, who planned and promoted the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936, Japan could play a role in the east coordinating with Germany with regard to Japan as a long-time enemy of Russia and extremely anti-communist.²¹⁷ Given Japanese strength against British position shown in the WWI and against Russia in the Russo-Japanese war, Hitler expected Japan to pinned the Soviet troops in the Far East and to release the pressure of two-front war for Germany.²¹⁸ Colonel Eugene Ott's trip to Japan as a military observer during 1933 sent by the Foreign Ministry reported the advanced technical facilities and information of Japanese army and navy, which were important for Germany and could be mutually shared by cooperating with Japan.²¹⁹

Despite this shared strategic position against the Soviet, Germany and Japan had their individual military plan in Europe and East Asia, respectively, which were not coordinated with each other, and their great distrust was reflected by their conflicts of interest and difficulties in their military alignment during the war. More importantly, the first step before eastward movement to Russia had to be defeating France to ensuring not dangerous enemy at its back. To do so, Britain was expected to be allied with German side. Hitler hoped to persuade Britain to accept the arrangement that Germany would abandon world trade and naval ambition and Britain would rule an overseas empire, while Britain would not intervene German expansion in European continent.²²⁰ On many occasions Hitler even offered military assistance to the British Empire, against Japan and the United States given the conflict between Britain's oversea interests with Japan. Joachim von Ribbentrop was entrusted by Hitler to negotiate with Great Britain a treaty on German naval armament in 1935 as a part of his main task of bringing Great Britain into an alliance. As Hitler mentioned, a British-

²¹⁷ Gerhard Krebs, "Pan-Germanism Meets Pan-Asianism: Nazi Germany and Japan's Greater East Asia Policy," in vol. II of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 302-322. (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009), 306.

²¹⁸ DeWitt C. Poole, 'Light on Nazi Foreign Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, 25, (October 1946), 130-154.

²¹⁹ Fox, 102, cited from AA. 5703/E414030-42, Reported by Ott, Tokio 5 July 1935.

²²⁰ Weinberg, 14-15.

German war should be avoided since it would only benefit Japan and the US.²²¹ Accordingly, for Germany, Russia would be only considered beyond the period of domestic consolidation and rearmament, and so that the military alignment with Japan was not placed in a priority before an initial settlement with the western front.

Furthermore, the Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry held a different opinion with Hitler and discounted Japan's strategic importance for Germany regarding Russo-Japanese conflicts and Japan's weakness in the economic sphere. Colonel Otto Hartmann argued that a Japanese attack on Russia was unlikely to have any effect on the European political situation since the Japanese army's strategic, tactic and logistic weakness and it was "unprepared in training and equipment against the 'independent' Soviet Far Eastern Army without weakening the strength of the Red Army in Europe", while Japan would bring its European partner into conflict with England and America²²². A fact-based assessment of Japanese army made by German military experts on January 1934 concluded that "a comparison of power relations between the Soviet Union and Japan clearly shows that neither country believes it could sustain a war in the near future."²²³ Moreover, von Blomberg further warned that erratic of Japanese Army in politics that would led Germany into an open-ended commitment in Manchukuo crisis, and "opting for Japan would push Russia into the waiting and willing arms of France and would ran the risk of becoming isolated herself in world affairs".²²⁴

When Ribbentrop failed with his mission in London, by 1937, it had become clear that Britain would not agree with Hitler of giving free hand to Germany on the European continent in exchange for being granted a free hand overseas. In this new context, a German-Japanese military alliance, including not only Russia but also Britain as a potential enemy, became attractive again. Hitler anticipated that Britain would not quarrel with Germany based on the consideration that it could not afford

²²¹ Sommer, 284.

²²² Fox, 100.

²²³ Kudo, Nobuo and Pauer, 15.

²²⁴ Fox, 101-102.

wars with at the same time Italy in the Mediterranean and Africa and Japan in Asia. On the other hand, Japan hoped to limit the alliance only against the Soviet Russia, so that it hesitated to agree to Italy's proposal of expanding the treaty obligations to also against Britain. This hesitation, to certain extent, prompted Hitler to conclude the non-aggression pact with Stalin 1939, in order to avoid a war on two fronts, to weaken Britain's position and to open the way for attacking Poland.²²⁵

Therefore, the military interests of Germany in Japan were largely opportunistic. For geopolitical reason, their military activities were difficult to be coordinated, and they had disagreements and distrust on many issues. In regard to their shared position against the Soviet Russia, the effectiveness of their military alliance was questionable, and their alignment was built more based on shared ideology and revisionist world position.

Agreement with Japan: The Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936

Negotiation Process

Initial Draft Agreement

The chief negotiator of this agreement, von Ribbentrop, was officially appointed on 1 June 1935 as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on Special Mission under the authority of the Foreign Minister, von Neurath. In practice, he was acting on his own answerable to the Führer. Although the Foreign Office refused to recognize his attachment to the Office, Erich Kordt was appointed by the Foreign Office to the Büro in order to be informed with Ribbentrop's activities. In terms of von Neurath's statement in 1946, the Anti-Comintern Pact was formalized in von Ribbentrop's negotiations with the Japanese military authorities without any opportunity for Foreign Office to intervene the negotiations.²²⁶ Ribbentrop also testified this statement that from 1933 to 1934 he was approached by Hitler on the subject of establishing closer

²²⁵ Krebs, 306.

²²⁶ Fox, 173

relations with Japan, avoiding using official channels, but through an agency on behalf of the political leadership, named Büro Ribbentrop.²²⁷ Based on the evidence been known, the earliest attempt for Hitler's idea of implementing his anti-communist crusade with respect to Great Britain and Japan was made by von Ribbentrop's visit to London in November 1934 with Japanese Navy but been rebuffed.

Until May 1935, when Germany restored its military sovereignty and Russia signed the pacts with France and Czechoslovakia, the first step was approach by General Hiroshi Oshima, Japanese Military Attache at Berlin, and Friedrich Wilhelm Hack, a pro-Japanese businessman represented von Ribbentrop. In response, the Foreign Office repeated its opposition as made in 1934 that this was incompatible with a comprehensive Far Eastern policy of neutrality given no political interest of Germany in the region. Meyer replied to Eugen Ott's request of asking Nanking Mission to persuade Chiang Kai-shek for a Sino-Japanese rapprochement, that German authorities should not be involved in Sino-Japanese affairs.²²⁸ However, the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in August 1935, when resolution of accusing Germany and Japan was passed, prompted a further move to German-Japanese alignment.

On 20 September 1935, Oshima Hiroshi met with Hack and discussed the possibility and form of the agreement between Germany and Japan. Oshima proposed for an anti-Soviet military pact, which was agreed by Hack and Admiral Wilhelm Canaris. Canaris brought this to von Blomberg and received a negative response after consulting with von Reichenau.²²⁹ Nevertheless, while it was arguable whether Germany or Japan was the prime instigator of such a pact, the first talk took place in October 1935 between Hack, von Ribbentrop and Oshima. Regarding Oshima's proposal, Ribbentrop raised the possibility of including Poland and Britain. After concluding the Anglo-German Naval Agreement on 18 June 1935, Ribbentrop seemed

²²⁷ Fox, 175-176

²²⁸ DGFP, C, II, 446-49, Trautmann/AA, Peking 2 February 1934.

²²⁹ Fox, 177.

to be confident of forming a pro-British and anti-Soviet front with Japan and Poland.²³⁰ But he also recognized the overwhelming domestic opposition in the Third Reich and Hitler's remaining unclear attitude, so that the negotiations were proceed under strictest secrecy. Based on the accessed evidence, the War Ministry was informed on 30 October 1935 for a highly secret report about "Agreement with the Japanese General Staff", and the Foreign Ministry was informed in November 1935 together with a secret Chinese approach from Wang Ching-wei to Hitler through Hermann Kriebel and Edmund Fuerholzer, both examples of the amateur in diplomacy upon the National Socialist scene, of a Sino-Japanese compromise and a common anti-communist front.²³¹

On 7 November 1935, von Blomberg met with Canaris and Hack to discuss the War Ministry's stance concerning the problem might be resulted by such agreement on German relations with the Soviet Union. Von Blomberg made clear to von Ribbentrop of the Army's opposition against any military agreement with Japan on 22 November, and von Neurath as usual warned the consequence of German interests in China. The Ministry of Economics also required on 7 December to be well-informed about the negation concerning discussions in Manchukuo. These opposite voices appeared to make no difference at this stage to Hitler, who approved on 25 November of Hermann von Raumer's draft agreement and on 27 November confirmed Ribbentrop's actions with a 'firm resolution'.²³² To avoid an open breach with the Soviet Union, the pact with Japan would ostensibly be directed against the Comintern. Having obtained the Führer's consent, the negotiators wasted little time and came up with a draft anti-Comintern agreement and a draft military annex committing the Japanese and German armies to certain conditions in dealing with the Soviet Union on 30 November.

²³⁰ More about Anglo-German Naval Agreement, Eva H. Haraszti, *Treaty Breakers or 'Realpolitiker'?* *The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935* (Boppard am Rhein 1974).

²³¹ Fox, 179

²³² Ibid., 181-183

Stalling Negotiation

However, this draft agreement was not further proceeded until July 1936 and it had been blocked for both international and domestic reasons. The China factor came to first as the barter deal of German weapons for Chinese raw materials was moving ahead rapidly. At the same time, the Japanese Army's military actions incensed the Chinese strongly by separating Northeast China from the rest of the country. Despite a positive reply by Hitler on Kriebel's proposal for mediating Sino-Japanese relations and the possibility of incorporating China into the anti-communist agreement, the unbridgeable gap in Sino-Japanese relations was proved by the attempted assassination of Wang on 1 November 1935 accusing his 'soft' policy towards Japan. Ribbentrop, thereby, saw the little possibility for Germany to mediate and responded nullifying the proposal of a 'Japan-Germany-China' pact.²³³ Another important factor complicating the Japanese-German negotiations was Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and the formation of the Hoare-Laval Plan by Britain and France in reaction, who sought to appease Italy and end the Italian-Ethiopian conflict in order to keep Italy as a counterbalance against Germany. From Hitler's point of view, the plan was viewed a repeat performance of the Stresa Front, an April 1935 agreement among Britain, France and Italy to form a united stand against Germany.²³⁴ As a result, diplomatic relations with Britain was back to the priority of German calculation, in which Japan was placed in an awkward position.

Facing the changing international situation, von Neurath on 9 December had a meeting with Hitler, in which he clearly expressed a strong perception of danger, warning that after Britain settling the Italian dispute soon and it would likely direct its diplomatic attack on Japan and Germany. He criticized the Ribbentrop and Canaris move towards rapprochement with Japan, saying that "the Japanese people have nothing to give us".²³⁵ In terms of Karl Ritter, Neurath's estimation concerning Britain

²³³ DGFP, C, IV, 829-31, *Memorandum by von Erdmannsdorff*, 18 November 1935

²³⁴ Nobuo, 213

²³⁵ ADAP, C-IV, *Dirksen an Erdmannsdorff*, 1 January 1936, pp. 930-8

had impressed Hitler to pressure on Ribbentrop-Oshima negotiations to be limited to the ideological level of anti-communism and further discussions on military issues to be handled by Hitler himself and von Neurath.²³⁶ Accordingly, Foreign Minister Neurath, standing along with the Wehrmacht, had played a crucial role in shaping the basic character of the Anti-Comintern Pact, which signed one year later, to be restricted on the ideological level. At the end of 1935, the first round of anti-Comintern agreement negotiation was stagnated.

Although the negotiation was stalled, German Ambassador to Japan, von Dirksen continued continually pushed the agreement in Tokyo and Berlin. As a diplomat, however, in his memorandum with von Erdmannsdorff, von Dirksen recognized von Ribbentrop's authority in Japanese issues and Foreign Office's interference only on the level of technical apparatus. He pointed out that "the negotiation had already come to the front and the Foreign Office was in no position to disavow".²³⁷ Moreover, he rejected the possible reaction to German-Japanese alignment from France and the US or the proposal of including China, because China was regarded as Japanese sphere of interest that Germany would be able to participate in exploitation. With regards to Britain and its position as a Pacific power, Dirksen suggested a Germany-Japan-UK alliance would be an ideal political arrangement. Considering Russia, while he was more cautious that the German-Japanese agreements should not place Germany in a position that automatically be involved into a war with the Soviet Union, since the risk of a bilateral war with Russia was greater for Japan than for Germany, he stressed on, however, the shared geopolitical and ideological interests between two powers.

Domestic and International Reactions

The rumors about a German-Japanese military alliance in the media worldwide, which provoked serious agitation inside German government. On 20 January 1936, the *Morning Post*, a London newspaper, for instance, reported that a military pact between

²³⁶ Nobuo, 214

²³⁷ DGFP, C, IV, 948-957, von Dirksen/von Erdmannsdorff with enclosure, Tokio 1 January 1936.

Berlin and Tokyo had been signed on 4 January. The Wehrmacht replied with rejecting the report by London post and emphasized the matter was essentially a political matter that only the Foreign Office, which also opposed an agreement with Japan, could deal with, in order to keep Ribbentrop outside from military affairs.²³⁸ Apart from domestic unrest, the Foreign Office tried to pacify the resentment from outside and reply to request for verification by China, Britain and France. Von Bülow authorized Trautmann to deny such reports, and von Ribbentrop issued a denial in Berlin after consulting with Hitler. Meanwhile, it could be seen from von Bülow's reply to von Dirksen's letter on 15 February, he only stated to disown von Ribbentrop from the Foreign Office, facing the fact that he secret negotiations were undertaken by Hack on behalf of the political leadership of Nazi.²³⁹ Nevertheless, von Dirksen continued to make ambiguity by describing von Ribbentrop's position as "a high-ranking official of the Foreign Office" to Japan.²⁴⁰

In March 1936, the Wilhelmstrasse's attitude to von Ribbentrop's negotiations with the Japanese Army was affected by the "profound anxiety" expressed by the Vice Minister and new Prime Minister Hirota about the effect of the Russo-French Pact ratified on 27 March to Russia's position in the Far East and Wehrmacht's deeper engagement in China.²⁴¹ Von Bülow's attitude of worries about the Wehrmacht's headlong tilt towards China was also demonstrated in his reception to von Reichenau before the latter's trip to China to ratify the Klein-Hapro agreement on 4 May.²⁴² When von Reichenau pointed out the incompatibility of Reichswehr's interests in China with German-Japanese agreement, von Bülow said the participation of the Army, the Abwehr, also in the Japanese negotiations. He said though imprecisely that "the Foreign Office would not actively oppose a political or military agreement with

²³⁸ Tajima Nobuo, "Fighting Behind the Scenes: Developments in German Far East Policy, 1935–1936," in vol. II of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 199-237. (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009), 215.

²³⁹ Fox, 191

²⁴⁰ Weinberg, 344

²⁴¹ DGFP, C, V, 267-271, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 10 March 1936.

²⁴² Zhen-Du, 329–30.

Japan”.²⁴³ Given such view of Foreign Office, at the conference on 27 May 1936, von Blomberg voiced again with Göring their reservations about Japan and the Army’s opposition to admitting Japan as a military factor in the Far East or reliable partner aiming to ensure at least that the agreements with Japan would not bind Germany in a military sense. In a report been draw with Blomberg’s order, “The State of Japan’s Defence Economy”, it pointed out that Japan’s military power would not able to support her to make a war against either China or Soviet Union alone. Meanwhile, he promoted strongly the pro-China policy and said to Reichenau that his visit to China was ‘with the Führer’s full approval’.²⁴⁴ Accordingly, although the Wehrmacht argument concerning Japan fitted into the position of the Foreign Office of staying neutral, the dissatisfaction in the Wilhemstrasse to the Wehrmacht was increased.

In June 1936, Nazi inclinations towards Japan were further strengthened by Ambassador Mushakoji’s interview with Hitler on 9 June. Mushakoji had succeeded in convincing Hitler that Japan shared common form of government, ideology and ‘fullest sympathy for deeper cooperation with Germany based on value’.²⁴⁵ On 19 June, Mushakoji asked authority’s position on the Klein project from von Neurath. The seriousness of Mushakoji’s protest against the German-Chinese agreement, which was reported having a strong military orientation targeting Japan, persuaded a change of the Foreign Office’s attitude regarding its ‘balance-sheet’ in the Far East.²⁴⁶ According to Hans Georg Voss, “Japan would either use military means on China or apply pressure on Germany by suggesting the possibility of Japan-Soviet reconciliation if we adhere to the China policy and go against Japan.”²⁴⁷ Therefore, the implications of Reichenau’s policy, which undermined the Japan-China balance in Germany’s Far East policy and called for German government to make a commitment that could have a profound impact on the Far Eastern international system as a whole,

²⁴³ ADAP, C-V, pp. 466–7.

²⁴⁴ Nobuo, 218.

²⁴⁵ DGFP, C, V, 603-604, *Memorandum by the State Secretary and Head of the Presidential Chancellery, Otto Meissner*, 9 June 1936.

²⁴⁶ Nobuo, 220.

²⁴⁷ ADAP, C-V, Aufzeichnung Voss (Record by Voss), 18 July 1936, pp. 732–4.

led Foreign Office to change its position.

Second Round of Negotiation

Due to some changes of international situation, including the Spanish Civil War that broken out on 18 July 1936 and Britain's declaration of its policy of non-intervention in Spain, Hitler's view of anti-Bolshevist Russia was reinforced and the worries about Japanese indiscretions might disturb the English line of German policy deemphasized. Consequently, in Hitler's estimation, Britain had fallen, and Japan's strategic importance has risen. As Hitler remarked a month later in his memorandum on the Four-Year Plan, "apart from Germany and Italy, only Japan can be regarded as a Power standing firm in the face of the world peril" of bolshevism.²⁴⁸ Moreover, the February Incident in Japan strengthened the influence and power of the army significantly and impressed the Germans concerning their shared political system that Japan was on the way to "a form of government as fine as their own".²⁴⁹ For the Japanese, the Soviet agreement with Outer Mongolia on 8 April, following the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact by France also increased the attractiveness of Germany as a restraining factor on Soviet policy in the Far East.

From July 1936, the second round of formal negotiation began between Ribbentrop, Mushakoji and Oshima through diplomatic channel. This time, the German proposal did not include a 'military annex', and the questions of whether or not to release the agreement publicly and the tone of the preamble were at the center of negotiation. Moreover, to protect the economic relationship with China, Germany would not allow its negotiations with Japan to include the recognition of Manchukuo.²⁵⁰ The Germans and Japanese army were for making public the agreement, but the Japanese government against. On 23 October 1936, the initial Anti-Comintern Pact had been reached.²⁵¹ According to Knoll, "the Foreign Office had

²⁴⁸ Weinberg, 344-345.

²⁴⁹ Presseisen, 201

²⁵⁰ Fox, 196.

²⁵¹ DGFP, C, V, 1140-1141, *German-Japanese Exchange of Notes on the Occasion of the Initialing of the Agreement against the Communist International*, Berlin 23 October 1936

been kept completely in the dark about the agreement, but only asked for technical assistance a few days before the agreement was initialed.”²⁵²

Nevertheless, from the initialing of the pact to its final signature on 25 November 1936, the Foreign Office had contributed in dealing with the problem with regard to the Russo-German Treaties of Rapallo and Berlin and Sino-German relations. On 30 October 1936, Ambassador Mushakoji warned the Foreign Office that the recent closer Sino-German military collaboration would endangered the Anti-Comintern Pact being accepted through the Privy Council in Tokyo and required ‘reassurance’ of Germany to Tokyo.²⁵³ On 4 November, Colonel Thomas explained to von Erdmannsdorff the Army’s project in China would be adjusted in conformity with current political requirement and then Dieckhoff informed this to Muchakoji.²⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Foreign Office reacted to Chinese complaint by making explanation about the nature of the pact as “defensive measure for domestic police protection against communism, which was not directed against any third state and contained nothing about the supply of war materials.”²⁵⁵ Given a German-Japanese pact being inevitable, the Foreign Ministry contacted Georg Thomas of the War Ministry on 4 November to work out remedial measures regarding the project of Reichenau in China.

The Final Anti-Comintern Pact

The pact finally signed on 25 November 1936 included a secret and important addendum formulated by the Foreign Office. On the one hand, the ‘public’ obligations of the Anti-Comintern Pact as a purely political agreement was not contradicted to the provisions of the Treaties of Rapallo and Berlin, which kept the ‘back door to Rapallo open’, at least considered by German government.²⁵⁶ On the other hand, Article II of the Secret Supplementary Agreement to the Pact implied a new coordination of Germany and Japan as a de facto allied relationship, that under its terms both countries

²⁵² Fox, 200.

²⁵³ DGFP, C, V, 1160-1161, *Memorandum by Dieckhoff*, 30 October 1936.

²⁵⁴ ADAP, C-VI, pp. 19–20, *Aufzeichnung Erdmannsdorff* (Record by Erdmannsdorff), 4 November 1936.

²⁵⁵ Fox, 201.

²⁵⁶ Weinberg, 347.

agreed “not to conclude treaties with Soviet Russia contrary to the spirit of this Agreement without mutual consent”.²⁵⁷ On 23 October von Ribbentrop confirmed Mushakoji’s telegram to Japanese Foreign Minister that “the spirit of the Secret Supplementary Agreement is alone decisive for the future policy of Germany towards the USSR”.²⁵⁸ As a consequence, with this secret agreement, the pact was an ‘anti-Soviet alliance’ which had been converted into “an association of dubious strength by a variety of reservations”.²⁵⁹ The existence of this secret agreement was also concerned by the Chinese government due to its domestic communist problem. On 2 December, von Weizsäcker instructed Trautmann to reply to Chinese Government that no secret military agreement or alliance existed between Germany and Japan, and the War Ministry made a similar assurance as well.²⁶⁰

The formal text of the Pact provided merely for cooperation between the two countries in opposing the Communist International, set a five-term and opened for other countries that might wish to join. The German government had acknowledged the truth of secret agreement to Ciano when he visited Germany in October, but otherwise Berlin and Tokyo publicly denied the existence of secret agreement. By the additional agreements, Germany and Japan promised “not in any way to assist Russia in case of an unprovoked attack or threat of attack by the Soviet Union on the other partner” and agreed “no political treaty to be signed with the Soviet Union not in accord with the anti-Comintern Pact without the consent of the other”.²⁶¹ These secret commitments were accompanied by secret reservations. The Japanese was agreed to be excluded from the “scope of their obligations of any treaties on fisheries concessions or border questions, precisely the subjects of greatest immediate importance in Japanese-Soviet relations”. The Germans, on the other hand, modified the new pact to be compatible with the German-Soviet treaties of Rapallo and Berlin

²⁵⁷ Fox, 203, cited from AA. 2871.564569-74, Secret Supplementary Agreement to the Agreement Against the Communist International. Berlin 25 November 1936

²⁵⁸ DGFP, C, V, 1140-1141, *German-Japanese Exchange of Notes on the Occasion of the Initialing of the Agreement against the Communist International*, Berlin 23 October 1936.

²⁵⁹ Weinberg, 347.

²⁶⁰ Fox, 204-206.

²⁶¹ Nobuo, 267

with an additional explanation.²⁶²

To sum up, the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 had three peculiar characteristics. First, only a roughly sketched ideological agreement was transformed into a formal treaty. Second, despite the secret protocol, the pact lacked concrete arrangements, as it was an ambiguous promise to cooperate against communism rather than a substantial anti-Russian alliance. Third, although the pact was concluded in Germany, it was signed by Ribbentrop, as Ambassador to Britain, which implied that the German Foreign Ministry purposefully distanced itself from the pact.

German-Japanese relations from 1937 to 1938

Sino-Japanese War and the Brussels Nine-Power Conference

After the Sino-Japanese War broke out on 7 July 1937, Germany, which had been pursuing pro-Japan and pro-China policies simultaneously, had been placed in a difficult situation. On 28 July, von Weizsäcker criticized Japan that “Japan’s attempt to evoke the Anti-Comintern Pact to justify its actions in China as a struggle against communism is an utter perversion.”²⁶³ The Foreign Office took an attitude not to support the Japanese action, as it was primarily for egocentric expansion and would likely cause communist spread in China. By contrast, Hitler displayed an equivocal attitude toward Japan on 16 August that “we will retain our alliance with Japan; however, in the current war between Japan and China, Germany must maintain its neutrality”. Given the provisions under the agreement with China, “they will continue to be provided as long as payment is made by foreign exchange and the supply of raw material”.²⁶⁴

While the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was searching for a way out of this predicament, Ishiwara faction of the Japanese army also sought to settle the was in

²⁶² Nobuo, 268.

²⁶³ DGFP, D, I, 606-607, *Memorandum by Weizsäcker*, 28 July 1937

²⁶⁴ DGFP, D, I, 612, *Memorandum by Neurath*, 17 August 1937

China as quickly as possible in order to be prepared for war with the Soviet Union. This common agenda resulted in a mediation attempted by Trautmann. However, with the atrocities committed against Chinese soldiers and civilians by Japanese army and increasing political demands on the Kuomintang government, the Sino-Japanese conflict was in an uneasy deadlock. On 16 January 1938, Japanese Prime Minister Konoe declared they “henceforth have no dealings with the Kuomintang”, marking the close of all paths towards a negotiated peace.²⁶⁵

However, when Chiang Kai-shek appealed to the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty and the Brussels Conference was convened in October 1937, Hitler regarded it was as an opportunity to make Japan approach both Germany and Italy.²⁶⁶ Observing the Japanese refusal and Soviet acceptance of the invitation to the conference, Hitler decided not to send a delegation to the Nine-Power Conference. It also gave chance to pro-Japanese enthusiast, von Ribbentrop, to illustrate the position of international community of pro-Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War and to promote his pro-Japanese policy for the revisionist Germany. As the Ambassador to London, he had relatively easy access to Hitler and presented a one-sided view of the Far Eastern situation emphasizing Japan’s chances of victory over China. In a memorandum of 19 September for the Führer, von Ribbentrop supplemented his pro-Japanese reporting by stating that Oshima had proposed a joint economic plan based on earlier negotiation with Germany in China, considering the serious losses in German economic relations with North China and Shanghai as a direct result of Japanese actions.²⁶⁷ Although the Foreign Office view such Japanese blandishments as worthless, Ribbentrop and von Dirksen appeared to accept the validity of Japanese promise about the prospects of such German-Japanese cooperation.²⁶⁸ Von Ribbentrop argued that by establishing a pro-Japanese regime like Manchukuo in China, Germany’s economic situation there could be improved, compared to the difficulties which he suggested had existed in

²⁶⁵ DGFP, D, I, 819-20, von Dirksen/von Neurath, Tokio 16 January 1938

²⁶⁶ Nobuo, 267.

²⁶⁷ DGFP, D, I, 758-759, *Memorandum for the Führer by von Ribbentrop*, 19 September 1937

²⁶⁸ Fox, 250, cited from AA.5647/H002217-18, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 11 September 1937

normal Sino-German economic relations.²⁶⁹

Enlargement of the Anti-Comintern Pact

Von Dirksen was consistently making effort to give some form of substance to the German-Japanese cooperation. In December 1936, Oshima approached the military authorities in Germany with a draft of a German-Japanese military agreement to supplement the Anti-Comintern Pact, including exchanges of information about Soviet Russia, intelligence sharing, delivery of war materials, and a proposal of joint commission for ‘general consultation’.²⁷⁰ In March 1937, the new Japanese Foreign Minister Naotake Sato, a strong advocate of friendly relations with the Anglo-American nations, commented on the Anti-Comintern Pact to be unnecessary “if the Comintern has not existed.” Aiming at to keep the Pact alive, von Dirksen recommended to Sato without consulting with the Wilhelmstrasse that Germany would welcome a ‘Sino-Japanese Ausgleich’, through which Germany could cooperate with Japan without conflict of interests in China. On 23 April, von Neurath ordered von Raumer with Hitler’s approval, to cease any activity against the Comintern which went beyond the terms of the Pact.²⁷¹ On 6 July, after a discussion with von Blomberg and Göring, Keitel told Oshima that the German position was unchanged and there could be no written agreement between the two armies. In the following day, however, an agreement on intelligence matters was concluded between the Abwehr and Oshima. At the end of June, von Neurath emphasized to von Raumer that the Foreign Office opposed any Japanese intention to publish a notice on the creation of the joint commission on the basis of the Anti-Comintern Pact, and cooperation concerning Russia were to be limited to an exchange of information only.²⁷²

It has to be admitted that von Ribbentrop’s personal influence had played a key role in achieving Italy’s accession to the pact and to convince Hitler and influencing

²⁶⁹ Fox, 253

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 209-210, cited from AA. 919/295096-98; AA. 919/295107.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 215-216, cited from AA.100/65678-87, von Dirksen/AA, Tokio 24 March 1937; 919/295136, Note by von Neurath

²⁷² Ibid., 224, cited from AA. 919/295163-64, von Mackensen/Tokio, 8 July 1937

German policy into a more pro-Japanese direction and thereby determining Germany's position in Sino-Japanese War. As early as January and February 1937 he began work through von Raumer to bring about Italy's accession to the Pact.²⁷³ To Ribbentrop's understanding, Italy's accession to the German-Japanese pact was, as he intimated to Ciano on 22 October, "a stage on the path to a military alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan in anticipation of the inevitable conflict with the western powers".²⁷⁴ He reiterated the inevitable development of a Pact negotiations between Germany and Japan "constructed a small wooden bridge so as to be able to build later a great permanent iron bridge between the two nations".²⁷⁵

The Foreign Office responded to this enlargement project with a clear opposition, due to its consideration of threat to Anglo-German relations and to Germany's policy of neutrality in the Far East.²⁷⁶ On 2 June 1937, von Neurath, basing himself on Hitler's authority, rejected a proposal by Schumberg of Referat Deutschland of the Foreign Office that it would be in Germany's interest to support Italo-Japanese negotiations for an Anti-Comintern Pact.²⁷⁷ Moreover, Neurath regarded the extension of the Axis to Japan to be against German interests. In a meeting with Italian Ambassador to Germany Attolico in February 1937, Neurath commented on Ribbentrop's plan for a German-Italian anti-communist treaty as his personal intention to win Hitler's favor by acting as the champion and commander of anti-communism. He said that German-Italian relations were not "a tactical link but reflected a community of interests fixing on a genuine and beneficial peace".²⁷⁸

In Rome, Attolico was trying to rouse Ciano, who was repeating a warmongering attitude, from his inclination for the Axis, and pointed out that "Ribbentrop tried to drag Italy to the German side to try to forestall his downfall, since Ribbentrop failed

²⁷³ DGFP, D, I, 750-752, *Memorandum for von Ribbentrop by von Raumer*, 17 August 1937

²⁷⁴ Ciano's Diary, 24.

²⁷⁵ Ishida Ken, "The German-Japanese-Italian Axis as Seen from Fascist Italy" in vol. II of *Japan and Germany: Two Latecomers to the World Stage, 1890 – 1945*, edited by Kudo– Akira, Tajima Nobuo, Erich Pauer, 262-301 (GLOBAL ORIENTAL LTD, 2009), 274.

²⁷⁶ DGFP, D, I, 760, *Memorandum by von Neurath*, 22 September 1937; 15, von Weizsacker/ Rome, 19 October 1937

²⁷⁷ Fox, 220-221.

²⁷⁸ Ken, 282.

in his mission to accomplish a rapprochement between Britain and Germany".²⁷⁹ Although by October 1937, a total war had not been in Ciano's expectation given the unfinished Germany military preparation, he criticized Attolico and von Neurath of their conspiring with each other against the Axis, meanwhile responded that "they don't want to do something which will disturb London, and then they are afraid of Ribbentrop's personal success."²⁸⁰ On 19 August 1937, Mussolini's speech in Palermo mainly attacked Bolshevism in the Mediterranean.²⁸¹

On 20 October, Neurath told the Italian side that the policy of 'neutrality' towards Japan and China was recognized by Hitler and Ribbentrop's plan ran in clear contradiction to it. However, on the next day, receiving Hitler's consent, Ribbentrop decided to visit Rome for the purpose of maintaining his prestige.²⁸² To Hitler, on the one hand, concerning the failed mission of Ribbentrop in London, he approved that involving Japan to the Axis would strengthen Germany's position against Britain. On the other hand, this was still felt to be too early and unnecessary to consider a direct military alliance with Japan. Given Hitler's recent authorization for the maintenance of arms deliveries to China, it appeared that von Ribbentrop was less aware of that Italy's association with the German-Japanese ideological pact would add complications to Germany's position in the Far Eastern.

By early October the decision was taken by von Ribbentrop and Oshima, and certainly with Hitler's authorization, to convert the Anti-Comintern Pact into a tripartite pact with Italian accession. According to von Raumer's later testimony, von Ribbentrop told him that "the Führer wants the accession of Italy to the Anti-Comintern Pact to hit the Brussels Nine-Power Conference like a bomb", and the enlarged pact was actually signed three days after the conference opened.²⁸³ Aside from the obvious failure of Ribbentrop's 'mission' in London, Hitler's approval to this

²⁷⁹ Ken., 273

²⁸⁰ DGFP, D, I, 760, Memorandum by von Neurath, 22 September 1937

²⁸¹ Ken, 284

²⁸² Ibid., 273

²⁸³ Sommer, 86

decision was motivated by the desire of binding Italy to Germany's side rather than letting her conclude an independent act with Japan.²⁸⁴ Even though, it has been shown that Hitler wanted von Ribbentrop to work on this matter with von Neurath, and rebuked Ribbentrop for not giving any information to Neurath. However, since the latter opposed this policy von Ribbentrop sent von Raumer to Rome on 18 October to negotiate with Ciano.²⁸⁵ On 21 October von Neurath made a last-minute attempt to get this policy reversed by flying to Berchtesgaden for an interview with Hitler, but to no avail. On 22 October von Ribbentrop flew to Rome to take charge of the final negotiations.²⁸⁶ On 6 November 1937, Italy joined Japan and Germany's Anti-Comintern Pact.²⁸⁷

Italy's Accession and the Question of the Great Britain

The significance of this enlarged pact to German foreign policy in the Far East centered on the question of the Great Britain, meaning the change of nature of German-Japanese relationship under Anti-Comintern pact to an anti-British alliance together with Italy, who had favorable relations with the Soviet Union but tense relationship with the Britain in Spain and in the Mediterranean. Italy's accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact thus gave the Pact an anti-British character, since it was the major common interest linked Italy and Japan. As a response to Brussel Conference, Italy showed strong willingness to cooperate with Japan in military sphere regarding their common enemy of Britain. Mussolini made the statement on 1 December that "the roaring boom of a gun in the Far East loudly overwhelms a resolution adopted in Geneva," and Ciano declared the plans of Singapore, the British naval stronghold in Asia, "in order to arrive at the military agreement which alone can decide the issue with England".²⁸⁸ On 11 December 1937, Mussolini announced the Italian withdrawal

²⁸⁴ Fox 254

²⁸⁵ DGFP, D, I, 16-18, von Hassell/AA, Rome 20 October 1937

²⁸⁶ Sommer, 67

²⁸⁷ For more information about Italy's accession to Anti-Comintern Pact and further Axis formation, see Richard L. DiNardo. "Axis coalition building." In *A companion to World War II*, edited by Thomas W. Zeiler and Daniel M. DuBois. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Issraeljan, V. and L. Kutakov. *Diplomacy of Aggression: Berlin-Rome-Tokio Axis, Its Rise and Fall* (Moscow, 1970).

²⁸⁸ Ciano's Diary, 39.

from the League of Nations.²⁸⁹

Italian Ambassador in Tokyo, Auriti wrote on 15 January 1938 that further Japanese expansion made opposition to Britain more significant than to the Soviet and would inevitably lead to a clash with the British Empire. He added that Italy was more significant for Japan than Germany because Britain could take a short cut through the Mediterranean to Asia.²⁹⁰ In parallel, Japanese vice-foreign minister Shigemitsu Mamoru admitted in his report that Fascist Italy posed the biggest threat to the British Empire. At the time of concluding the Anti-Comintern Pact, both the Japanese Military and the Navy Attaché expressed their aspiration to conclude a military treaty with Italy. Navy Attaché Hiraide Hideo said that the common enemy for Japan and Italy was not only communism but also Britain, as its presence would hinder their future expansion.²⁹¹

By contrast, for Nazi Germany, its policy towards Britain was more cautious. For the moment of writing *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's plan for Germany's expansion included an alliance with the United Kingdom. With the change of power-political situation in Europe and the failed Anglo-German rapprochement, his policy regarding Britain had been shifted to ensure its neutrality and non-intervention, but not as directly contradictory as Italy and Japan. By late 1937, it became clear that Hitler aimed to acquire the new territories without regard for Britain, though he sought to avoid antagonizing Britain directly. On 5 November, just one day before the signature of the Anti-Comintern Pact, Hitler delivered an important speech on the future of Germany's foreign policy to executive members of the military and the Foreign Ministry, in which he announced that 'the defeat of Czechoslovakia and at the same time Austria must be our prime objective,' and predicted, furthermore, that in that scenario 'Britain will not enter into war against Germany.'²⁹² The document known as the Hossbach Memorandum did not give war against Britain a high order of priority, as compared to

²⁸⁹ Ken, 284

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 279

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Weinberg, 35.

Mussolini's aggressive anti-British words to Ciano. This was all part of the 'grand design' of Nazi foreign policy during 1938 and 1939 to neutralize Great Britain, in this way to bring about the changes required in Central and Eastern Europe as a necessary preliminary to the ultimate 'Holy War' against Soviet Union.

Even though Hitler abandoned his original revisionism with British cooperation, in order to prevent the deterioration of Anglo-German relations, Foreign Office persistently declared that the Axis was searching for a favorable peace. During an unofficial visit of the leader of the Privy Council, Halifax, to Germany in November 1937 for the purpose of emphasizing international cooperation outside the League, Hitler and Neurath tried to persuade Halifax that Germany did not want a catastrophe in Europe.²⁹³ It seemed Halifax had been convinced as he praised Hitler as a 'banner bearer of anti-communism', which gave German conservatives the illusion that they could join hands with Britain in an anti-Soviet policy.²⁹⁴ For that same reason they groped for the mediation of the Sino-Japanese War, which could complicate the international situation and bring a malign influence upon their relations with Britain. Hitler even alienated Ribbentrop and encouraged the Foreign Ministry in its peace mediation between Japan and China so as to impress Britain into trusting Germany as a peace-loving nation.²⁹⁵ Accordingly, the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact was not actively urged by Germany as it related to the recognition of Manchukuo and the danger of isolation and the quarantine of the enlarged Axis from the West, except the role played by Ribbentrop.

It was Ribbentrop who sought to steer this change of attitude on Hitler's part towards the creation of an anti-British axis of Japan, Germany and Italy. On 2 January 1938, Ribbentrop drafted a memorandum to Hitler, in which he argued that Britain was Germany's implacable enemy and proposed the pro-Japanese policy "to form, quietly but unwaveringly, an alignment against England, in practice, to strengthen our friendly

²⁹³ ADAP, D-I, Nr. 31.

²⁹⁴ Ken, 289

²⁹⁵ ADAP, D-I, Nr. 524.

ties with Italy and Japan and in addition wining over all countries whose interests conform directly or indirectly with ours.”²⁹⁶ Ribbentrop, personally, was conscious that the Japan-Germany-Italy anti-communist pact should be considered as an alliance of the revisionist nations against the satisfied nations.²⁹⁷

As usual, though von Ribbentrop bypassed the Foreign Office and asked Oshima in January 1938 whether “there was not some way in which Germany and Japan might be brought closer together by means of a treaty otherwise”.²⁹⁸ Von Ribbentrop approached Oshima and not Ambassador Togo because Togo would oppose the idea as he was afraid that a closer liaison with Germany would involve Japan into conflicts with Britain and the Soviet Union, and it would contribute nothing to a solution of the China problem. Oshima’s reply in June 1938 laid to certain uncertain foundations for the agreements eventually concluded in 1940 and 1942.

To sum up, this Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact marked the formation of an alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan, built on the shared ideologies of anti-communism and revisionist world views. However, the consequence of concluding such enlarged pact was more significant and reflected the Realpolitik and the opportunistic Axis diplomacy more than rational decisions.²⁹⁹ Their peculiar ideologies, racism, fascism and expansionism, which were utilized for persuading their own people, were so exclusive and showed even a serious discrepancy among the Axis as well. Even anti-communism could not maintain common ground among the Axis during the period from the conclusion of the German-Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact in November 1936 to the accession of Italy to the pact in November 1937. Moreover, their individual plan of military expansion according to their apprehension of the new revisionism and of new order between Axis powers were not coordinated with each other’s and they lacked crucial common interests for the trilateral agreement applied to all three

²⁹⁶ DGFP, C, I 132-137, Ribbentrop note to the Führer, 2 January 1938

²⁹⁷ Presseisen, 167-171.

²⁹⁸ Fox, 293

²⁹⁹ The argument has been also argued by Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler’s Germany: Starting the Second World War, 1937–1939*, 1970; Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*, London: Longman, 1987.

members. Apart from the explanation of escaping from their international isolation, the concluding of the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact bought very few substantial political, economic and strategic advantages, but instead, it led the situation to become uncontrollable and complicated. The almost defunct anti-Comintern alignment between Germany and Japan was revived and transformed into an open military alliance primarily concerning antagonism with the British Empire all over the world as a result of Italy's accession. This alliance linked the dynamic happened in Europe with East Asia and changed the balance of power between revisionist and status quo.

The New Regime and Recognition of Manchukuo

The consequence of this tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact on German foreign policy was demonstrated in the Far East. A public military commitment to Japan implied its incompatibility with Wehrmacht's commitment to China. The recognition of Manchukuo had been always a question as it symbolized the pro-Japanese decision for German foreign policy in the region. In April 1937, the German-Manchukuo trade agreement of 1936 had been negotiated for a renewal until 1940.³⁰⁰ Even though, on 1 December 1937, Hitler told Mushakoji Kintomo that Germany could not recognize Manchukuo since they imported iron ore from China indispensable to their military build-up. While Hitler emphasized that a strengthened Germany would also profit Japan, Neurath underlined German connection with China as essential for mediating the Sino-Japanese War. The Japanese side claimed that if Germany recognized Manchukuo, China would abandon its resistance and Japan could supply these goods from the occupied land.³⁰¹

German interest in China represented by the Wehrmacht led by von Blomberg was finally eliminated in February 1938, when von Blomberg and von Fritsch were recalled. At the same time, aiming for conformity to carry through his plans for foreign expansion, institutional moves were also seen in the diplomatic area, von Neurath was

³⁰⁰ Fox, 218, cited from AA.9075/E637133-34, Memorandum by Ritter, 20 May 1937

³⁰¹ Ibid., 218-219

replaced with Ribbentrop. With the new regime in place, in March 1938 Germany issued its ultimatum to Austria and then annexed it, following that, on 30 May Hitler issued a secret directive for the military partitioning of Czechoslovakia by 1 October.³⁰² In the process of this series of crises, it became increasingly necessary for Germany to deter the United Kingdom from taking action. To this end, on 20 February 1938, Hitler made the statement to declare recognition of Manchukuo as a concession to Japan, that “by deciding to take this step we make a final break between a policy which is fantastic and incomprehensible, and one which implies a sober respect for real facts.”³⁰³ Hitler ordered the withdrawal of Germany’s military advisory group in China, and eventually on 24 June decided to recall Trautmann.³⁰⁴

³⁰² DGFP, C, II, 281-285, Directive for Operation Green, 30 May 1938

³⁰³ DGFP, C, I, pp. 682-283, Ribbentrop to the German Embassy in Hankow, 21 February 1938

³⁰⁴ DGFP, C, II, 716, Ribbentrop to the German Embassy in Hankow, 24 June 1938,

Chapter Three: German Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy-Making in the Far East

German Foreign Policy-Making from 1933 to 1937

By examining the dynamic relations between Nazi Germany with China and Japan, respectively, it has been shown that the domestic politics and foreign policy-making in the Third Reich had played a crucial role. Therefore, this chapter will start with discussing Nazi Germany's foreign policy-making structure and processes and how it changed from 1933 to 1938 before analyzing its implications on the Far Eastern policies.

When Hitler came to the position of the Reich chancellor in 1933, he mentioned rarely about foreign affairs practically in the first cabinet meetings.³⁰⁵ The priority for him concentrated on domestic transformation including internal consolidation and indoctrination, build-up of the armed forces and economic progress, which were not only the prerequisite given the existing realities, but also an integral part of for Hitler's grand foreign policy and long-term expansionist plan.³⁰⁶ Hitler as the top decision-maker initially determined from the beginning the major foreign policy objectives with the advice of those ministers related and later mainly of Göring and Ribbentrop, while over the years, he had taken decisions in an increasingly high-handed manner. Nevertheless, the greater goal and general direction established by the Nazi leadership had to be fulfilled through a step-by-step progress and the definite plans with date and alternatives had not been worked out at the beginning. Specific policies or methods were "left to the favor of the moment, practical application of power circumstance in which they were able to act".³⁰⁷ Correspondingly, it has been shown postponed changes in the personnel who conducted Germany's relations with foreign countries. Aside from

³⁰⁵ Weinberg Gerhard, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933–36*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) 29.

³⁰⁶ Weinberg, 25-33

³⁰⁷ Jacobsen, 53.

traditional bureaucrats, such as von Schacht and von Blomberg, who stayed in charge of economic and military affairs, Hitler did not manage to replace von Neurath by Alfred Rosenberg owing to the insistence of Paul von Hindenburg.

Therefore, it suggested a dual approach of the foreign policy-making in the Third Reich. On the one hand, the missions like total registration, indoctrination and control of the Germans and the elimination of political ‘opponents’ could not be left to the traditional offices of the state, like the Foreign Ministry. From the beginning, Hitler sought new party organizations and unconditionally loyal henchmen to support him for accomplishing his political objectives. On the other hand, due to the lack of qualified experts for this task trained in the party, he had to employ conservative nationalist elites even though these were regarded as lagging behind the Nazi spirit. Hitler never allowed the NSDAP leadership to take control of the whole foreign policy decision-making process and because of their radical-revolutionary nature, the foreign political demands proclaimed by the Nazis prior to 1933 could not be accomplished with the support of the conservative apparatus of the Foreign Office. A crucial precondition for this was these traditional state officials’ support of revisionist policies and rearmament, the so-called traditional-nationalistic objectives. For instance, Neurath gave his assent to Ribbentrop’s insistence on conscription, as he viewed German rearmament could accelerate the revision of the Versailles Treaty. Most diplomats shared Hitler’s negative image of the League as a complement of the Versailles Treaty and advocated a strong military as indispensable to a great power.³⁰⁸

This dual approach of foreign policy-making reflected a tactical disguise during the period of concealed aggression to 1938, which led to the making of some compromises, tactical retreats as well as partial renunciation. This ‘cover-up’ was shown, for example, by the press, which was ordered not to refer indiscriminately sections in *Mein Kampf* to foreign policy but only as ‘a historical source’. Rosenberg said to a French journalist in 1935 that “*Mein Kampf* contained many points about

³⁰⁸ Jacobsen, 89-90

Germany's policies towards Eastern Europe which were not worth discussing today, and Germany wanted to get its house in order and avoid war.”³⁰⁹ Goebbels later explained the tactical approach of the Nazis by arguing that “they always had to place themselves in relationship to the forces available to them”.³¹⁰ It always depended on how much reliable power could actually be possessed.

However, this tactical approach practiced by the Führer triggered the disputes over competency, influence and implementation of objectives among diverging power blocs of state in the decision-making structure of the totalitarian system. The apparent contradiction between Nazi theory and practice had bewildered both state and party officials who did not really understand that necessity of this for dialectical reasons. Despite shared revisionist political goal of ‘Greater Germany’, they had taken a different view until 1938 of the underlying principles and believed that only each one’s proposal would provide the fastest and least dangerous answer. From the beginning, although the Nazis were, both openly and clandestinely, against the so-called ‘peace offensive’ ideas of traditional conservatives, they were rarely able to replace the Foreign Office. However, it had been shown those Nazis’ ignorance and unawareness of the activities of others and the arrogance of their missions contributed to the actual objective pursued by the Führer.³¹¹ In a bureaucratic Nazi system, they intended to gain the trust and favor of the dictator, which was also important for themselves to expand the power base at home. In addition, Hitler lacked a sufficient overview for the organization of foreign policy, and meanwhile, supported the struggle among his subordinates to consolidate his own power.

To sum up, during 1933 to 1937, owing to Hitler’s tactic disguise, which meant rearmament with appeasement, on the one hand, the conservative revisionist senior officers were still playing a major role German foreign policy-making; on the other hand, radical party members were also active in pursuing their revolutionary ideas

³⁰⁹ Jacobsen, 54

³¹⁰ Ibid., 90

³¹¹ Ibid., 87-88.

either individually or with Hitler's instruction. At the stage of preparation for war and domestic consolidation, the contradiction between conservative and radical revisionists were not very visible in foreign policies.

Implications on Foreign Policy Making in the Far East 1933-1937

This dual approach of German foreign policy making was reflected by two separate policies pursued by the Wehrmacht and the Nazis simultaneously in the Far East, characterized by the conclusion of two agreements, the Hapro Agreement with China and the Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan. In the context of Sino-Japanese conflicts and certain commitment made by German authorities contained in both agreements, the Hapro and Anti-Comintern Pact were to some extent incompatible with each other. However, as they were signed in the same year of 1936, it is important to examine the negotiation processes of two agreements, respectively, in order to understand why they could be reached simultaneously and its implications on the Far Eastern foreign policy making of the Third Reich.

Two-Level Game

The negotiation processes illustrated in the previous two chapters show that domestic politics and foreign policy are inevitably entangled. It would be insignificant to ask if it is the domestic politics determines international relations or the reverse, because neither a purely domestic or external analysis was able to give an answer by itself. However, the importance of such question is to find how domestic politics was involved in international negotiations and to what extent it could play a role in shaping foreign relations. Putnam's Two-level Game provided a conceptual framework for understanding how diplomacy and domestic politics interact.³¹²

According to the theory, the process of reaching an international agreement requires negotiations on two levels. At the international level, Level I, the negotiators

³¹² Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427-60.

bargain with each other to maximize their national or organizational interests representing their states. Nevertheless, government is not a unified actor, but consisting of different government organizations and their interests and influence in decision-making. Therefore, for the Tentative Agreement initially signed by the negotiator on Level I to be entry into force, it requires a further step on the domestic level, Level II. Depended on different types of political system, this further step could be constitutional ratification in the sense of democracy, but also could be agreement by relevant sectors and interest groups who was supposed to provide necessary support for the implementation of the initial agreement, such as financial guarantee or diplomatic support. In terms of Putnam, the only constraint on the ratification process is that “the final ratification must be simply ‘voted’ up or down and any modification to the Level I agreement counts as a rejection, unless that modification is approved by all other parties to the agreement”³¹³. Neither of the two games can be ignored by central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain interdependent, yet sovereign.

Consequently, on the domestic level, negotiators seek to minimize the obstacle or pressure from the oppositions, which might be bureaucratic agencies, interest groups, social classes or public opinion. The key factor determining whether ‘ratification’ can be achieved or not is the ‘win-set’³¹⁴, which is defined as “for a given Level II constituency as the set of all possible Level I agreements that would ‘win’, that is, gain the necessary majority among the constituents, when simply voted up or down” or accepted by all of the decision-makers and interests groups relevant with certain influence in the Level II decision-making process. The larger win-sets make Level I agreement more likely. Putnam further explained the determinants of the win-set, including the distribution of power, preferences and coalitions among Level II constituents, as well as the institutional structure and the negotiators’ strategies on the Level I.

³¹³ Putnam, 436

³¹⁴ Ibid, 442

In the case of this thesis, the most important determinant is whether the domestic constituents to deal with are with homogeneous or heterogeneous interests to the chief negotiator on the Level I. In the former case, the agreement would still be possible to reach if the negotiator could manage to maximize his gains and minimize the losses or risk in the agreement at Level I. By contrast, with a heterogeneous conflict between negotiator and domestic oppositions, it would be less likely to achieve the same final agreement as the initial one if domestic oppositions do play a role in domestic decision-making. The heterogeneity could be the factional contradictions on one issue, also different preferences on the several issues involved in a multi-issue negotiation. Thus, the chief negotiator faced with trade-offs across different issues. Another key determinant is how great is the autonomy of decision-makers of Level I from their Level II constituents, which largely depends on the political institutions of Level II. The greater autonomy he has or the closer relationship between the negotiator and the chief decision-maker of the country, the more likely the final agreement to be achieved.

The Rapro Agreement

The major problem that aroused difficulties on the Level II in this case was the nature of the agreement to be a purely private economic contract or a formal military-industrial agreement guaranteed and Reich credit, with certain kind of military commitment. The chief negotiator on the Level I was initially a private entrepreneur called Hans Klein, and later became von Reichenau of the Wehrmacht, dealing with Nanking Nationalist government from the Chinese side. And the domestic opposition came from mainly the Foreign Office, including both the headquarter in Berlin and Ambassador to Japan, Nazi member von Dirksen.

On the international level between negotiators from Berlin and Nanking, three issues were raised led to controversies and required for further negotiation on the domestic level. Firstly, due to the Klein-Canton problem, the Nanking government asked the German side, Reichswehr and Foreign Office, to replace Klein with official government representative and showed its interpretation to such agreement as a formal

treaty between two governments. Secondly, the Reich Guarantee provided by the Economic Ministry and Reichsbank accompanied with a credit agreement was also a necessary precondition required by both Chinese and German sides for the implementation of this barter agreement. Thirdly, as a result of the first problem, the Reichswehr, which had increasing military involvement in Kuomintang Government's ongoing war with the CCP and Japanese army, had taken over the responsibility of further negotiation and would represent the German side to sign this agreement. Moreover, concerning the content of this barter agreement, the Chinese provided raw materials for military purpose in exchange for arms equipment and industrial products from Germany. It thus implied the Hapro Agreement to be not only a commercial contract, but also military-industrial cooperation between two countries, with to certain extent military commitment made by Reichswehr to China, at least perceived by the Nanking government and von Reichenau.

Given these issues, Hapro Agreement was brought to the Level II negotiation in the Third Reich, between the Reichswehr Ministry, Economic Ministry, Foreign Ministry as well as Hitler and the Nazi Party, each with different interests and considerations. For the Reichswehr, von Blomberg sought to deepen its military-industrial cooperation with the Chinese government in the long-term along with the engagement of military advisers in Nanking. He therefore agreed to admit the military characteristic of the agreement and pushed the agreement to be accepted domestically in order to get the Reich Guarantee for the delivery of raw material, especially tungsten from China as soon as possible for the purpose of rearmament. He viewed China as a long-term partner, who could support Germany's economic and military-industrial interests and nationalist-revisionist plan to make Germany to be a great power again, and they were mutually benefited from each other.

On the other hand, the Foreign Ministry opposed this agreement because the military commitment made by the Reichswehr to Nanking would dis-equilibrate the 'neutrality' of Germany's official position pursued since 1931 in the Far Eastern crisis. In the view of Foreign Office, who diplomatic handled the Army's interests in China

as well as involvement of German economic circles in the Chinese economy, insisted that Germany did not have a political interest in the Far East, so that the best option for it was to keep neutral, avoiding committing Germany in the Far East war which could not bring Germany any advantage and probably have negative effect on Germany's situation in Europe concerning Russia in particular. While the Foreign Office came to recognize the undoubted military and economic benefits that Germany obtained from China, nevertheless its members often showed doubt about the capabilities of the Chinese and the Chinese economy, especially when the question of German government financial involvement in this trade came up for discussion. Based on such consideration, the Foreign Ministry hindered the approval of Reich Guarantee since they saw the risk of deeper involvement of German enterprises and government in China due to its internal instability.

Regarding the attitude of Nazis, who sought to achieve an agreement with Japan for political and military cooperation, they were not involved in the negotiation on the Level II given the dual approach of German foreign policy making structure. Although von Dirksen expressed opposition and critics against such agreement as it would threaten Nazi policy in Japan, his voice had only very limited influence in the Foreign Office. For Hitler himself, it is hard to tell what extent he was acknowledged about Reichswehr's military activities in China, he didn't pose serious objection against the Reichswehr's negotiation, because he also thought such agreement served German interests for rearmament. Since Hitler did not have a clear Far East policy at the time, he left the issue to state ministries to consider, so that he approved the agreement after convincing by von Blomberg about the importance to rearmament.

The win-set that all decision-makers in this case could accept in both countries was a military-industrial agreement, and the key reason for the final approval of this agreement was the homogenous interests on the domestic level in the Third Reich. Hitler and the War Ministry were both agreed with the rearmament as the priority of Germany at that stage. The dual policy-making structure enabled those senior ministerial officers like von Blomberg to make an important voice in decision-making.

In such domestic context, the homogeneity was shown in the negotiation between the heads of War Ministry, Economic Ministry and Foreign Ministry, who could all be regarded as conservative nationalists and moderate revisionists. They shared the view of making Germany to be a great power again, but this could be fulfilled in the long-term process. Therefore, despite their disagreement over the deepening of Hapro agreement, they were comparative easy to make concession and compromise with each other. For homogenous interests, the conflicts could be solved by minimizing the risk been taken by each interest group, for instance, minimizing the risk of Reich Guarantee and removing Klein to prevent further provocative behaviors that would complicated the situation.

In addition, the Foreign Office's principle of neutrality and balance strategy in the Far East was re-balanced by the undergoing negotiation of Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan by Ribbentrop. Despite its doubts about China, it was always quick to defend German interests and activity in China against any Japanese criticism, pointing out that Germany had the right to pursue here interests in that country without having to contend with complaints from Japan. Compared to Reichswehr's military involvement in China, the Foreign Ministry was more opposing the Nazi Party member's engagement with the Japanese Army for a risky plan. However, for the party organizations, the Foreign Ministry could not substantially act to block their activities owing to the relationship between the State and Party in the Third Reich. Therefore, to certain extent, by permitting Reichswehr's project in China, it could avoid the inclination of Germany's position in the Far East resulted by uncontrolled party's involvement in Japan. The Foreign Ministry did not really have key interest in the agreement, instead, its mission was to defend and maximize the national interest of Germany through diplomatic means and minimize the risk been taken, avoiding making political commitment in the Far East that could place Germany in a dangerous position. As a consequence, given the pressure by von Blomberg and approval by the Führer, the Foreign Office accepted the 'military' characteristic of the agreement. The final agreement was concluded after signing the credit agreement as guarantee.

The Anti-Comintern Pact

Similar as the Hapro Agreement with China, the problem in negotiations was also centered on the nature of this pact to be only an ideological agreement or military alliance. On the level I, international level, von Ribbentrop and Hack on the German side, and Oshima on the Japanese side. Based on personal relations between Ribbentrop and Oshima, shared ideological and political ideas of anti-communism and militarist authoritarian regime and common international position of anti-League revisionist, they agreed with an ideological, political and military alignment as the initial anti-Comintern pact, though the negotiation had been proceeded secretly. This reflected the way of behaving of the NSDAP party organizations, acting individually and avoiding using official channels, and they believed that they were committed to fulfill the goal of the Führer. However, when the Foreign Ministry received the report about the undergoing negotiation, it became known and debated on the domestic level.

The Foreign Ministry and Wehrmacht Ministry strongly opposed the pact. For the Foreign Office, Germany should avoid being involved into Japanese expansionist activities in the Far East, including Sino-Japanese war and possible conflict between Japan and Russia, as well as avoid leading to unpleasantness in Sino-German relations. Maintaining its promise of neutrality remained the focus of the Foreign Office since they had no political interest in the region. It also criticized the adventure in diplomacy by Party amateurs who were negotiating on behalf of the political leadership of the country. For the Wehrmacht Ministry, apart from that a German-Japanese alignment would definitely harm its significant industrial-military interest in China, the more important thing be considered was the incapability of Japan to win the war either with China or with Russia. Therefore, the Army was not willing to commit itself to Japanese provocative and radical behavior, and Germany was not ready for a major war, which might likely to be resulted by its involvement in Japanese conflicts with the Soviet Russia. Therefore, von Neurath went to Hitler, convincing to reject this initial agreement, at least no military commitment. Hitler agreed with von Neurath's suggestion and the negotiation was temporarily stalled.

The win-set of this agreement to be able to accept by all decision-makers in Germany was an ideological alignment. The initial military commitment agreed between Japan and Ribbentrop was not possible to be passed on the Level II because of firstly the heterogeneity between chief negotiator of Level I, Nazi radical revolutionary Ribbentrop, and domestic opposition of conservative revisionists, including both Foreign Ministry and War Ministry. They were contradicted in their different view of 'German interest' or 'Nazi interest' and revisionist plans for the future. Secondly, at the stage of tactical disguise, Hitler was still in agreement with conservative factions' plan of rearmament and did not have a clear preference in the Far East, so that accepted von Neurath's suggestion and did not officially stand on Ribbentrop's side pushing for military alliance. The Foreign Office's authority and experience in the field of 'normal' diplomatic relations with Japan was generally recognized to be paramount, even by the Nazi leadership. Although Ribbentrop and von Dirksen were continually pushing the signing of pact, the initial design for a political-military alignment was not able to be agreed on the domestic level due to the heterogeneity on the domestic level concerning this issue.

Due to the changing power-political situation in Europe and strong desire of Japanese army and von Dirksen, the second round of negotiation start by Ribbentrop again through official channel. Although von Blomberg remained opposed any agreement with Japan, regarding the foreign ministry, it did not made compromise to accept the original proposal for a military alliance, but it accepted the ideological agreement. This compromise was driven by the increasing military engagement of Wehrmacht in China, which to some extent broke the balance of Germany's position in the Far East and led to Japanese protest to the Foreign Office. Therefore, to maintain Germany's balanced position in the region, the Foreign Office joined the negotiation and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 with Japan on behalf of the state officially.

However, the special relationship between state and party enabled the Nazis led by Ribbentrop to conclude a secret agreement by the NSDAP with Japan without informing the ministries, which met the interests of Nazis and the Japanese Army

without violating the balance on the surface, but also was the root of the problem after 1937. This secret agreement fulfilled the desire of the two sides on the Level I, without going through the 'ratification' process of Level II indicated the nature of the totalitarian regime of the Third Reich, which had been reflected increasingly visibly. When the Foreign Office made it clear that it would not work to achieve Hitler's desire of a closer German-Japanese relationship, he simply left it to get on with its business of diplomacy while he quietly used para-diplomatic channels to get what he wanted. Meanwhile, the personal relations of individual ambassadors who were supposed to be under the leadership of Foreign Ministry, showed an importance of influence decision-making process. Although unofficial channels of communication played a more significant role in the general field of German-Japanese relations during the Nazi regime, it was the Foreign Office's contribution towards an easing of tension in those relations, because of Nazi Germany's racial legislation and the possible effects for the Japanese, that helped ease the way for von Ribbentrop's secret negotiations.

Implications on Foreign Policy-Making

The conclusion of the Haparo agreement and Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936 was to a large extent the result of the foreign policy making structure of the Third Reich between 1933 and 1937. During this period, both the Nazi leadership and the conservative senior ministers did not have major contradictions over the rearmament plan and the revisionist idea of making a great Germany again. Moreover, Hitler was still not able to dominate all of the policy-making and did need the support of senior officers to conduct his plan at the initial stage for tactical convenience and also for minimizing the repercussion from both domestically and internationally. Most importantly, Hitler did not have a clear policy in the Far East and any urgency to make a choice between China and Japan. Therefore, a dual approach of foreign policy making structure resulted in separate policies were pursued by different decision-making bodies.

In this policy making structure, on the one hand, those conservative revisionist officers, in the Reichswehr, Economic and Foreign Ministry could remain contribute

to the final foreign policy-making in the Far East defending their own interest in the decision-making. Hitler's insistence on 'every-thing for the armed forces' made him put no objection on Wehrmacht's project in China. On the other hand, although the Nazi individuals could not play a key role in the government decision-making but only in the party function, at least on the surface, they acted independently pursuing the Nazi interest in Japan based on their own understanding and concluded secret agreement without informing the state ministries.

Concerning the role of Foreign Office, it acted between the Reichswehr's and Party's interests in the Far East and tried to keep a balance between Germany's policies in China and Japan. It made compromise with the Wehrmacht in Hapro agreement because they were homogenous but refused to accept the military characteristic of the pact with Japan as its heterogeneity with the Nazi Party. Although Foreign Office did not have key interest in the Far East but only served as an instrument of foreign policy making, its policy of 'neutrality' was maintained, though difficultly with ambiguity, through diplomatic handling for some compromises in the negotiation processes of both agreements.

German Foreign Policy-Making from 1937 to 1938

After 1936, as Hitler felt more confident and eager for its plan of expansion, Nazi Germany's foreign policy-making structure had been changed significantly, which indicated the domestic Nazification of government that finally achieved in 1938. Revisionist ideas targeting the Versailles might be a mean of propaganda for consolidating domestic opinion and undermining resistance abroad, but it could never be a guide for foreign policy. Only wars could secure the vast agriculturally useful lands and space for Germany providing raw materials she needed for her population.³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Weinberg Gerhard, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Starting World War II 1937-39*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 18.

It was this difference in the conception of war revealed the heterogeneity and contradiction between the Nazi revolutionaries and conservative revisionists. This was particularly troublesome for military leaders, who were reluctant to run the risk of a general war which they feared Germany would lose in the end as she had lost the last one. The war understood by senior military officers was that, if it came, Germany ought to make her own military preparations conform to the needs of that kind of war, that is to direct all her energies and resources to the establishment of a broad basis for a war of attrition.³¹⁶

By contrast, the war in Hitler's mind was an entirely different type. He was doubtful of Germany's ability to win a war of attrition, and thus wanted to build up a quick and substantial head start over others in rearmament, "a rearmament in breadth rather than depth and to utilize the temporary military superiority in a short, isolated war that would strengthen Germany for the next such war by broadening her population or industrial base and terrorizing potential opponents".³¹⁷ Such war plan, namely Blitzkrieg, required rapid rearmament and isolation of potential opponents. It aimed to achieve his ultimate goal based on the ideology of race and space, consisted of a two-phase program. The short-term one, to improve Germany's military-political situation, required conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia, while the long-term one to solve the German space problem through further expansion to Russia for Lebensraum.³¹⁸

In the view of Hitler, the short-term task was preliminary to the long one because by seizing lands, better borders, additional divisions recruited in the annexed territory and economic resources would strengthen Germany's military forces, which would be ready by around 1943-45 for achieve the long-term goal. The short-term goal was expected to be reached much earlier, and Hitler had put high emphasis on the prospects and circumstances for that. The conflicts in the Mediterranean which might precipitate

³¹⁶ Weinberg, 39-40.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 19.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 18-20

a war between Italy and the Western powers arising out of the Spanish Civil War and struggle for sphere of influence could create potential opportunity for a sudden move, since the Britain and France might not tolerate Italy's presence in the Balearic Islands.³¹⁹

Such war was justified in public and at meetings with his political associates and his military advisers in a same way as the argument made before 1933. While there was no objection raised targeting at the long-term aims, the short-term plans were criticized dealt with calculations of the risks involved. Although the annexation of Austria and destruction of Czechoslovakia were agreed as for achieving the aim of German foreign policy by von Blomberg, von Neurath, and von Fritsch. But the opposition was concerning the assessment by Hitler that Britain and France would stay out from intervening in Germany's actions in Central Europe. The conservative nationalists were afraid of running the risk of a general war. In June 1937, von Blomberg issued the general directive that he opposed the intention of Germany to start a general war, so that Germany did not have to worry about an attack from the others because of "the opposition to war in almost every country and the inadequate preparations for war in the Soviet Union as well as other nations".³²⁰

As a result of the foreign exchange and materials allocation crisis of 1936, Hitler suddenly decide to start the Four-Year-Plan as well as to expound his views on the tasks ahead and problems in the rearmament program to executive members of the military and the Foreign Ministry on 5 November 1937, in which he made clear that "the defeat of Czechoslovakia and at the same time Austria must be our prime objective."³²¹ After receiving Hitler's comments on 5 November, new directives were given to navy and air forces in accordance with the general war. In spite of Blomberg reservations at the November meeting, the directive could hardly be resisted without an open break with the Führer himself. Even though, he did run into objections when

³¹⁹ Weinberg, 38.

³²⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

³²¹ Ibid., 34.

he issued these directives on his own authority. In January 1938, von Neurath also expressed doubts about imminence of a war by Italy with the Western Powers in the Mediterranean, but no vigorous response could be received from Hitler.³²²

With the initial success of rearmament and changing power-political situation in Europe, Hitler wanted totally dependent and pliant instruments in order to implement aggressive policies, which required both military changes and diplomatic reshuffling. An occasion arose at the beginning of 1938, which thus facilitated the annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia. On 12 January von Blomberg married a young woman who turned out to have a policy record of moral offenses. Göring hoped to utilize the opportunity he had helped to create in order to become minister of war himself. Hitler took advantage of what looked like wonderful excuses to get rid of a whole series of generals and diplomats, and to take over the position of commander-in-chief of the armed forces himself.³²³ In February 1938, von Blomberg and von Fritsch, both of whom had expressed doubts about Hitler's plans, were recalled. Consequently, by key command personnel changes followed by a change in the command structure, the army was brought to "closer to the state and its ideology", reflecting the nature of the National Socialist system.³²⁴

At the same time, Hitler made further institutional reforms in the diplomatic area as well for to conform the foreign policy-making to his will as a completely subservient instrument. Ribbentrop, who were long-time political cronies, was appointed to replace von Neurath. German Ambassador to Japan, von Dirksen was appointed to the position of Ambassador to the United Kingdom; and von Mackensen of the SS was appointed Ambassador to Italy.³²⁵ Through these changes of February 1938, Hitler reformed the military and diplomatic structure to be more pliant to carry through his plans for expansion and to strengthen his own position. It marked "the process of totalitarianization had moved to absolute effectiveness and that all the events proceed

³²² Weinberg, 39

³²³ Ibid., 43-48.

³²⁴ Ibid., 49.

³²⁵ Ibid., 50.

logically out of the concepts of the Führer’’.³²⁶ Consequently, a more radical course of Nazi Germany’s foreign policy was followed.

Implications on Foreign Policy-Making in the Far East 1937-1938

Ribbentrop and the Tripartite Anti-Comintern Pact

When the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 7 July 1937, Germany, both von Neurath and Hitler at first refused to take a stand giving the consideration of avoiding committing itself to Far East battlefield. However, the eventual shift to commitment to Japan could be viewed as a passive result of radical moves of Nazi revolutionaries accompanied with major change of the foreign policy-making structure in the Third Reich.

German-Japanese alignment was initially built for the purpose of the Soviet Russia, which was the task of Hitler’s long-term plan of expansion for Lebensraum, which was expected to occur much later after short-term tasks. As Germany was not ready yet to start war directly with the Soviet, military commitment to Japan was afraid to irritate the western countries and the Russians. For this long-term goal, it did not receive strong critics from traditional conservative bureaucrats, who also shared the idea of revisionism, but did not want a total war in Europe. To this end, Britain was considered to join hands with Germany in an anti-Soviet policy or at least to keep non-intervention in German eastern expansion. For the same reason, German Foreign Ministry tried to stay neutral and mediate Sino-Japanese War, which would bring a malign influence on their relations with Britain. After 1937, when Ribbentrop failed with his mission of approaching for an Anglo-German alliance in 1936, Hitler still tried to avoid antagonizing Britain directly and sought to neutralize Britain. Therefore, it was not in German interest in the view of traditional bureaucrats and most likely of Hitler as well to make military commitment to Japan at that stage.

However, this was no longer the case after Italy’s accession to Anti-Comintern

³²⁶ Weinberg, 51.

Pact and the change of power-political situation on the European continent. The dual policy making structure of the Third Reich enabled the Party leading members to act on their own for certain purpose without asking the state organizations. Von Ribbentrop's idea of Nazi foreign policy for Hitler's great goal and vision of revisionism was not only anti-Soviet, but also anti-Britain, so that he pursued an active pro-Axis policy for a tripartite military alliance with expansionist Japan and fascist Italy. As the ambassador to London, he held a closer contact with Hitler and he achieved to convince Hitler to build more substantial relationship with Japan, sacrificing Germany Army's interest in China. For Hitler, his approval to Ribbentrop's behavior was to certain extent driven by the failure of rapprochement between Germany and Britain and the desire to bind Italy further to Germany's side rather than Italy's undergoing approach with Japan bilaterally. However, the consequence of Italy's accession to the pact might be out of Hitler's expectation.

Italy's adhesion to the Pact on 6 November 1937 not only meant its enlargement but a redesign, which metamorphosed it from anti-Soviet cooperation into an anti-British block, since it was the shared interest between Italy and Japan. It also marked the globalization of German-Japanese relations, connecting the international relations in East Asia to the other side of the world. When uncompromising attitudes grew, and self-centered aggressive rhetoric multiplied in 1937, the German-Japanese bilateral relations could only be analyzed in their multinational context. This had changed the balance of power in Europe and the position of Britain in it. Although Hitler still believed that Britain would not intervene its expansion plan to Czechoslovakia and Austria and Germany only needed to deter the United Kingdom instead of entering into war, three Axis powers began to seek military expansion individually, especially concerning Italy in Mediterranean and Japan in Asia, according to their apprehension of the new revisionism and of new order increased their antagonism with the British Empire. Italy's relationship with Britain was much tenser than the other two which Mussolini's increasing aggressive anti-British attitudes and behaviors. German-Japanese relationship was consequently driven to this dynamic context on the

European continent, with the enlarged Anti-Comintern Pact. Mussolini, Tokyo and Ribbentrop shared the view that the containment policy by Britain was no longer exist and Britain was Germany's implacable enemy. As a result, German-Japanese relations was inevitably transformed from an ideological alignment serving for the long-term goal to anti-British military alliance together with Italy with short-term outcome. This military commitment implied to Japan led to obvious incompatibility with the pro-China policy of conservative bureaucrats.

Reshuffle of Government and the Final Decision

The dispute between Neurath and Ribbentrop was not fought directly in the field over Japan but in the context of an internal power rivalry over foreign affairs between 'pro-Axis' and 'pro-British'. Nevertheless, with Italy's accession, it became apparent that Ribbentrop had won against Neurath setting the path to a military alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan. The disagreement between pro-Britain and pro-Axis policy reflected also the contradiction between Nazi revolutionaries and traditional conservatives. Their different understanding and visions of revisionism had been seen in Hitler's readiness to launch his short-term plan to Austria and Czechoslovakia by the end of 1937. A possible Anglo-German war or any risk that driven Germany into a total war as an outcome of such short-term expansion, which Germany was not yet able to win, was worried and criticized by those conservative bureaucrats in the Wehrmacht and Foreign Office. The heterogeneity between the conservatives and revolutionaries had been uncovered and their contradictions could no longer be tolerated by each other. Therefore, Hitler decided to replace these non-party senior officials, especially von Blomberg and von Neurath, with his trusted subordinates like Ribbentrop in order to implement the more radical move and the Blitzkrieg without any objection. With such military and diplomatic reshuffle, Hitler completed his Nazification of government organizations, indicating the total loss of decision-making power of traditional conservative faction in the Third Reich.

This domestic reorganization of government also meant a disequilibrium of

German interests in the Far East between China and Japan. The different plans between the conservatives and Nazi revolutionaries on the European continent also suggested different policy towards the Far East. With Italy's accession to the pact, the rivalry between pro-Chinese and pro-Japanese factions was linked with and become identical with the pro-Britain and pro-Axis factions in Europe in German domestic factional struggle. The radical revolutionary decision-makers arbitrarily pursued their individual interest or shortsighted advantages in the changing situation, but its implications on a global scale had not fully considered.

The choice for Germany in the Far East, which was originally not necessary to be made immediately, was made indirectly by the winning of pro-Axis faction in the decision-making structure of the Third Reich by February 1938. The Wehrmacht's interest in China had been weakened in the calculation of the German domestic policy-making and domestic opposition was too weak to hinder the increasing interest of the Nazi Party with Japan. Given the military character adding to the pro-Japanese one, the two separate policies became increasingly incompatible as the difference between two interests was heterogeneous and with the fact that the Sino-Japanese war was impossible. When those conservative revisionist bureaucrats lost their power to defending their interests in China and in the Far East, a pro-Japanese policy was inevitably made although the radicals had mis-estimated the capability of Japan to win the war. This opened the way for Hitler to adopt the policy von Ribbentrop had been advocating, first symbolized by the recognition of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, announced in Hitler's speech of 20 February.

Conclusion

Nazi Germany's foreign policies in the Far East from 1933 to 1937 was characterized by a 'balance' between two separate policies, which were a Sino-German cooperation centered on industrial-military trade and a German-Japanese rapprochement for political and ideological alignment. These two policies represented the 'German' interests particularly pursued by the German Army in China on the one hand, and the 'Nazi' interests in Japan on the other. They were materialized in two agreements concluded in 1936: the Haplo Agreement and the Anti-Comintern Pact. Given the context of Manchuria Crisis and the following Sino-Japanese War, such separate policies appeared to be incompatible with each other and caused troubles to Germany's announced 'neutrality' in the region, especially when both agreements were intended to be transformed to imply certain military commitment. Nevertheless, this ambiguous neutral position had been maintained until April 1938 and was replaced by a pro-Japanese commitment, after a series of changes of international and domestic situations.

In order to determine the underlying reason why Germany had successfully maintained such 'balance' between its respective interests and policies in China and Japan, as well as why this 'balance' was eventually broken, this thesis studied the processes during which these policies had been made and the role different decision-making bodies played. It has been found that the making of such policy of 'balance' was a reflection of the dual structure of domestic foreign policy-making in the Third Reich between 1933 and 1937. Its discontinuity in 1938 was the result of a major change of the Reich's decision-making structure on the domestic level, instead of a rational calculation of the importance of so-called 'national interests' in foreign policy-making on the state level or purely external factors on the international level. This shift of Germany's Far Eastern policy indicated the triumph of Nazi radical revolutionaries in domestic power struggle over traditional conservative revisionists and the incompatibility of the policies between conservative bureaucrats and the Führer's

greater plan, as well as implied the completion of Nazification within the Reich's government.

By examining German interest and policy-making processes in China and Japan, respectively, this thesis finds that the Reich's Far Eastern policies represents the interests and the influence of different stakeholders and governmental bodies, involving both traditional and new partisan elements, and they showed both continuity and discontinuity of the policies before 1933. After seizing power in January 1933, Adolf Hitler became with no doubt the top decision-maker in the Third Reich and set out the general principle of Nazi Germany's foreign policy based on his political philosophy and long-term expansionist goal. The application of this Nazi foreign policy in the Far East region would be an alignment with Japan in accordance with the intent of its policy in Europe targeting the Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, it was oversimplified to assume a clear cut of change in Germany's foreign policy-making from a republic assailed by internal conflict to a totalitarian state ruled by Hitler and the National Socialist Party. The application of the political concept of "Great Germany" pursued by traditional German soldiers, diplomats and civil servants since Versailles in China was also shown in Sino-German military-industrial cooperation, which had been even enhanced after 1933 for the purpose of rearmament.

This ambiguity till 1938 was caused by, first of all, that Hitler himself didn't have strong interests in the Far East and lacked a clear single policy and a global view including the region. Neither economic interests in China nor political interests in Japan was viewed as significant by Hitler, so that he didn't pose clear objective to either of them. Furthermore, at this stage, traditional conservatives' revisionist policies aiming at making Germany great again and the priority of rearmament were in line with Hitler's strategy, thus he allowed different factions and government bodies to compete themselves. By doing so, Hitler could not only minimize negative reactions from outside the country, but also consolidate his power domestically. Owing to Hitler's tactic disguise for the purpose of rearmament and his inability to replace old senior officials in German government with Nazi

members, both traditional conservative revisionists and radical revolutionaries could retain certain independence of decision-making and make influence in the foreign policy-making of Third Reich. As a consequence, on the one hand, some conservative revisionists, von Blomberg of the Reichswehr in particular, promoted an accelerating development of Sino-German relations as China became one of Germany's most important suppliers of raw materials with the deeper involvement of German military advisers in China. On the other hand, Ribbentrop and other Nazi activists, who viewed themselves as serving Nazi goal on behalf of Hitler's will, pursued closer political and ideological relationship with Japan to the end of a military alliance for global expansion through para-diplomatic channels.

Both sides were trying to materialize their interests and policies into formal agreements, and they came out with two draft agreements with China and Japan, respectively, either of which contained certain military terms that could erode the ideal German policy of 'neutrality' insisted on by the Foreign Office, as an instrument to pursue German interests abroad led by von Neurath. However, from the initial agreement to the final 'ratification', both agreements faced difficulties from the Foreign Office's opposition and the Chinese or Japanese complaints due to the inherent conflicts between the different parts of German Far Eastern policy. The negotiation processes of two agreements provide a microcosm of the Reich's foreign policy-making processes as a whole and demonstrate how the 'balance' before 1938 was maintained successfully. On the one hand, the Hapro Agreement was eventually signed with an official credit agreement by the Reich government and the military commitment made by the Wehrmacht to Nanking was accepted. This achievement not only was due to the Wehrmacht conservative leaders' remained decision-making authority, but also reflected the homogenous relationship between the Wehrmacht and Foreign Office. On the other hand, Ribbentrop's initiative with the Japanese Army for a political as well as military agreement was opposed by the Foreign Office given their heterogenous interests. Thus, only an ideological pact was concluded in the end, though a secret military agreement was signed by Ribbentrop without informing the

government. Such ideological nature of the pact avoided it from posing visible contradiction with the agreement with China. Furthermore, considering the timing of two agreements, the negotiation of the Anti-Comintern Pact led the Foreign Office to make a compromise in the Hapro Agreement and vice versa. As a consequence, given Hitler's indifferent attitude, common goal of rearmament and the consequent foreign policy-making structure of the Third Reich, the Foreign Office was able play a certain role of diplomatic handling in both agreements to keep the 'balance' of German policies in the Far East.

This 'balance' was broken after the reshuffle of the Nazi government, after which the conservative faction lost all decision-making power and influence. The thesis finds out that this change was directly because of the external factor of formal breakout of the Second Sino-Japanese war that forced Germany to make a choice, as most historians interpreted, but was fundamentally resulted by the radical transformation of the Reich's decision-making structure. Rather than a situation of dilemma between China and Japan, either faction saw no alternative to its own policy. Therefore, Germany's position in the Far East was a matter of which faction had the decision-making power. The 'anarchic-impulsive dictatorship' of decision-making structure led Nazi activists to act independently without communicating with state departments, and it was also doubtful whether Hitler was informed in advance. While German Foreign Office re-claimed its neutral position and sought for mediation after the Sino-Japanese War in July 1937, Ribbentrop's move of driving Italy into the Anti-Comintern Pact transformed the implication of the pact to an anti-British alliance, and linked German-Japanese relations directly with the power-political situation on the European continent, making Germany's commitment to Japan become public and inevitable. It also implied the winning of pro-Axis faction over the pro-British one in the Third Reich, which was identical with the pro-Japanese and pro-Chinese factions. Meanwhile, with the change of power-political situation in Europe and the progress of rearmament, the heterogeneity and contradictions between those conservative bureaucrats, especially von Blomberg and von Neurath, and Hitler was revealed regarding their disagreement

over the war plans. Therefore, the reshuffle of government was eventually carried out by Hitler in order to make the decision-making structure to be able to implement his further plans. Accordingly, a Nazi policy of pro-Japanese commitment was resulted in the Far East after 1938.

The examination of the Third Reich's foreign policy in the Far East from 1933 to 1938 provides a useful example reflecting the foreign policy-making structure and processes in such totalitarian state that was highly centralized, but full of struggles between different decision-making bodies. The inherent conflict in the Far East was duplicated inside the Third Reich. This study shows that German foreign policy-making from 1933 to 1938 consisted of a variety of channels of decision-making. Therefore, the crucial questions that has to be asked in order to understand Nazi Germany's foreign policies are not only what the goal and principle of the Führer, Adolf Hitler, was at the time, but also to what extent the decisions made by other German policy-makers were corresponded with Nazi lines and could be accepted by Hitler. In the case of the Far East, the German Army's goal in China came to serve the Nazi's goal as much as Germany's goal initially; however, given the changing power-political situation in Europe and Hitler's war plan, Nazi's goal in Japan eventually ran counter to Germany's in China. In addition, the Third Reich's foreign policy-making in the Far East demonstrated different revisionist perceptions and strategies concerning Germany's position in Europe and in the global stage after the Versailles, and how the conservative revisionist concept of 'Great Germany' and Nazi radical revolutionary revisionism were coincident and contradicted with each other in the process of implementation. By including the Far East region into Nazi Germany's foreign policy studies, more comprehensive and diverse perspectives of analyzing this particular historical period towards the Second World War can be dug out.

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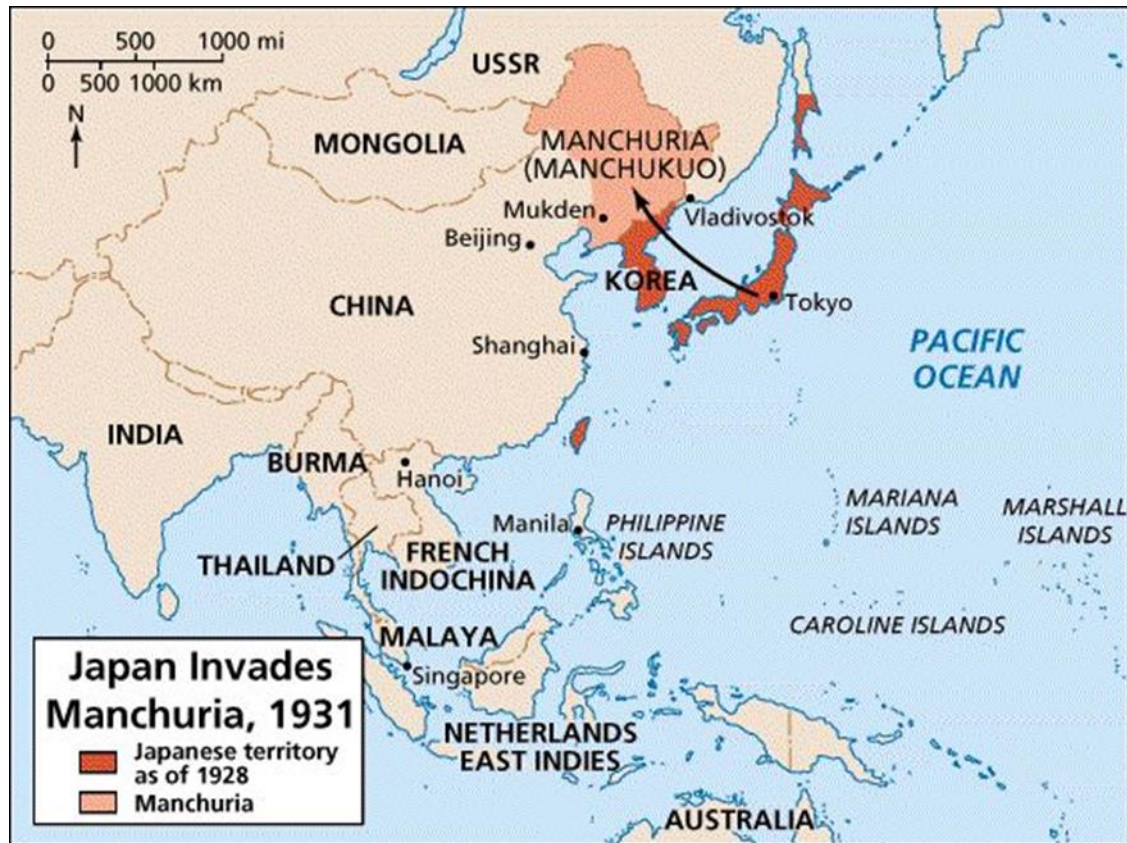
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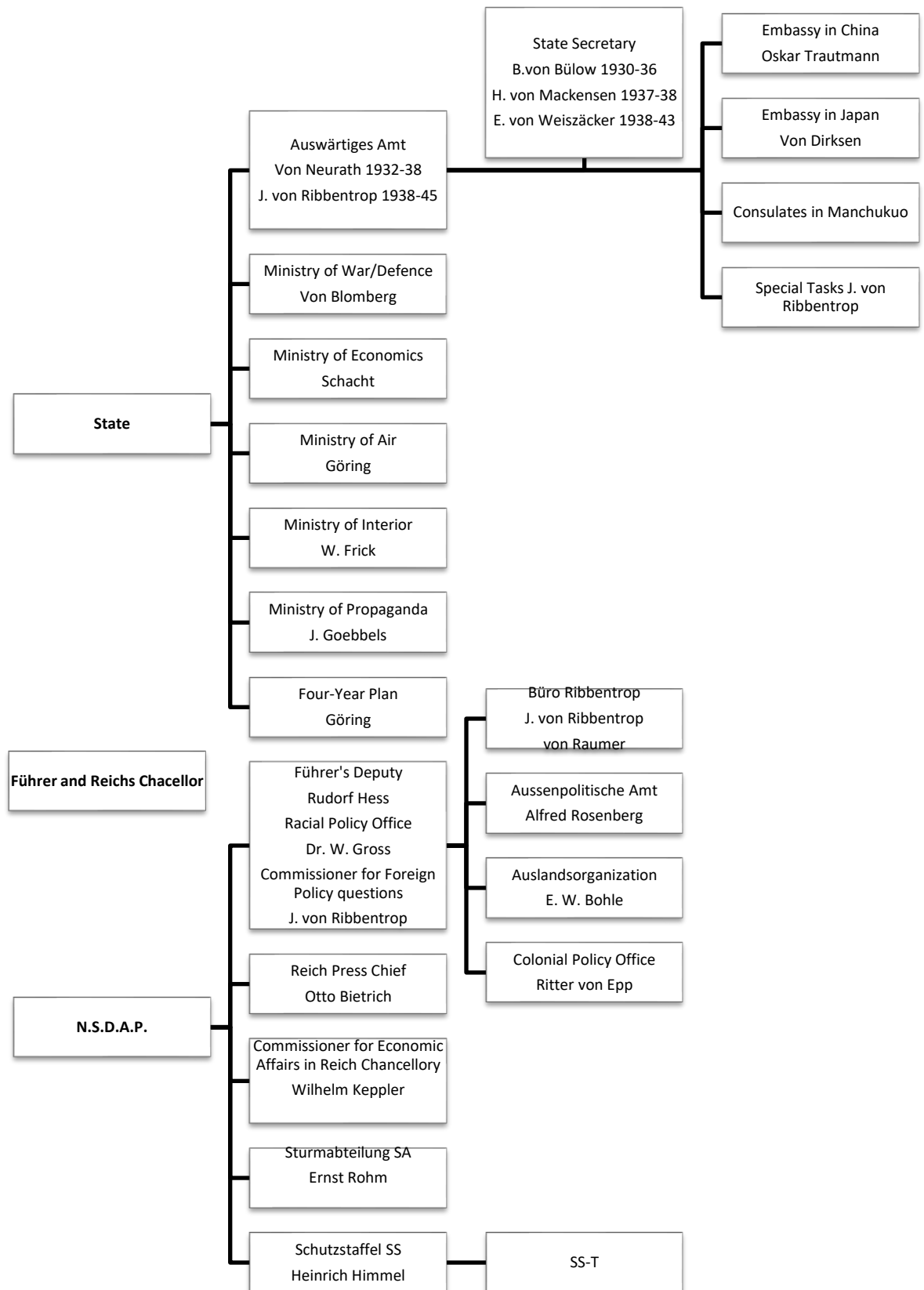
Appendices

Map: Japanese Invasion of Manchuria (Manchukuo) 1931³²⁷



³²⁷ Source: <https://www.mrallsophistory.com>

The Foreign Policy Making Structure of the Third Reich 1933-1938 (As affecting Far Eastern Policy)



Dramatis Personae

Name	Position
Germans	
Paul Josef Goebbels	Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda 1933-1945
Alfred Rosenberg	Leader of the Foreign Policy Office of the NSDAP (APA) 1933-1945
Hermann Göring	Reich Minister of Air 1933-1945; Reich Plenipotentiary of the Four-Year Plan
Wilhelm Keppler	German businessman; Hitler's early financial backers
Ernst Wilhelm Bohle	Chief of the Auslands organization (AO)
Heinrich Himmler	Reichsführer of the Schutzstaffel SS
Constantin von Neurath	Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs 1932-1938
Joachim von Ribbentrop	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on Special Mission; German Ambassador to the Court of St. James's 1936-1938; Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs 1938-1945
Hans von Seeckt	Chief of German Army Command 1920-1926
Werner von Blomberg	Minister of War; Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces 1933-1938
Julius Curtius	Foreign Minister of the Weimar Republic 1929-1931
Bernhard W. von Bülow	State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry
Erich Ludendorff	First Quartermaster-General of the German General Staff 1916-1918
Max Bauer	German artillery expert in the First World War; military and industrial adviser to the Republic of China
Georg Wetzell	Head of the Truppenamt in the Reichswehr, Adviser-General 1930 to 1934
Carl Duisberg	German chemist and industrialist
Georg Thomas	Head of the Defence Economy and Armament Office in the OKW
Walter von Reichenau	Field Marshal in the Wehrmacht;

	Chief of Staff to the Inspector of Signals at the Ministry of the Reichswehr
Hjalmar Schacht	Reich Minister of Economics 1934-1937 Reichsbank President 1933-1939
Alexander von Falkenhausen	German General; military advisor to Chiang Kai-shek
Oskar Trautmann	German Ambassador to China
Krupp von Bohlen	President of the Reichsverband der Deutschen Industrie
Eberhard Kinzel	General of the Infantry of Wehrmacht
Karl Blessing	Reichsbank Director
Hermann Kriebel	German Consul-General in Shanghai
Colonel Curt Preu	Deputy of Hapro
Herbert von Dirksen	German Ambassador to Japan
von Erdmannsdorff	German diplomat, German Foreign Ministry
von Krösigk	Reich Finance Minister
H. von Mackensen	State Secretary at the Foreign Office 1937-1938
Ernst Von Weizsäcker	State Secretary at the Foreign Office 1938-1943
Wilhelm Keitel	Chief of the Armed Forces High Command OKW 1938-1945
Wilhelm Canaris	German admiral; Chief of the Abwehr, 1935-1944
Eugene Ott	German Military Attaché and Ambassador to Japan
Otto Hartmann	German Military Attache to Moscow
Erich Kordt	German diplomat in London
Friedrich Wilhelm Hack	German diplomat and businessman in Japan
Hermann von Raumer	SS-Standartenführer
Karl Ritter	Director of Economic Department, German Foreign Ministry
Werner von Fritsch	Commander-in-Chief of the Army
Ulrich von Hassell	German Ambassador in Italy
Frohwein, Albert Eduard	Senior Counselor in Department II, German Foreign Ministry
Richard Meyer	Director of Department IV, German Foreign Ministry
Hans George Voss	German Diplomat, German Foreign Ministry

Chinese	
Chu Chia-hua	Minister of Communications of the Kuomintang government
Sun Fo	Premier of the Nationalist Government of the Republic of China
Weng Wen-hao	Head of National Resources Commission
T. V. Soong	Chinese Minister of Finance and Vice President of the Executive Yuan
Chen Chi-tang	New Guangxi Clique army commander
Wang Ching-wei	Premier of the Republic of China; Head of State of Manchukuo
H. H. Kung	Chinese Republic's Minister of Finance

Japanese	
Hiraide Hideo	Navy Attaché of Japan
Hiroshi Oshima	Japanese Military Attache at Berlin 1934-1938; Japanese Ambassador to Germany 1938-1939
Kuniaki Koiso	Chief of the Japanese General Staff in the Imperial Japanese Army
Sadao Araki	Japanese War Minister
Nagai Matsuzo	Japanese Ambassador in London
Shigemitsu Mamoru	Japanese Ambassador to the USSR
Fumimaro Konoe	Japanese Prime Minister 1937-1939
Naotake Sato	Japanese Foreign Minister 1937
Shigemitsu Mamoru	Japanese Ambassador in London 1938-1943; Foreign Minister of Japan 1943-1945

Italians	
Bernardo Attolico	Italian Ambassador to Germany
Galeazzo Ciano	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Fascist Italy 1936-1943
Giacinto Auriti	Italian Ambassador to Japan 1933-1940

List of Tables

Table 1. German Imports and Chinese Exports of Tungsten Ore 1929-1938 (tons)

Year	Total German imports of tungsten	German tungsten imports from China	Total Chinese exports of tungsten
1929	3,774	1,998	8,799
1934	4,385	2,510	4,706
1935	7,881	4,784	7,383
1936	8,726	5,091	7,650
1937	11,372	8,037	16,518
1938	14,200	8,962	11,335

Source: Data adapted from Willian C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1984) 231, cited from “Die Wirtschaftliche Krafte Chinas” *Nachtrag*, 4.

Table 2. German Imports of Chinese Ores and Metals, 1932-37

Year	Total imports from China (Million RM)	Metal imports from China (Million RM)	Mental imports as percent of total (%)
1932	54.0	1.2	2.2
1933	41.0	3.1	7.6
1934	51.0	6.6	12.9
1935	56.2	8.6	15.3
1936	69.2	8.0	11.5
1937	93.8	21.1	22.5

Source: Kurt Bloch, *German Interests and Policies in the Far East* (New York, 1939), 29.

Table 3. German Trade with China, Excluding Manchuria, 1933-37 (Million RM)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total
1933	75	41	116
1934	73	51	124
1935	90.5	56.2	146.7
1936	125.8	69.2	195
1937	168.9	93.8	262.7

Source: Data adapted from Willian C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1984) 221, cited from Beverley D. Causey, *German Policy Toward China, 1918-1941* (Ph.D.diss., Harvard University, 1942).

Table 4. German Arms and Ammunition Shipments to Major Customers, German Government Statistics, 1935-36

Year	Nation	Exports (Thousand RM)	Percentage of all arms exports(%)	Year	Nation	Exports (Thousand RM)	Percentage of all arms exports(%)
1935	Britain	1,089	10.5	1936	China	6,405	28.8
	China	841	8.1		Chile	1,326	6.0
	Chile	825	8.0		Britain	1,251	5.6
	Netherlands	760	7.4		Hungary	1,206	5.4
	Japan	120	1.2		Japan	171	0.8

Source: Data adapted from Willian C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1984) 191, cited from Beverley D. Causey, *German Policy Toward China, 1918-1941* (Ph.D.diss., Harvard University, 1942).

Vita

Qi Wang was born in Qingdao, China in 1993. After spending her youth in her hometown, she moved to Canberra, Australia at the age of 17, where she attended the Australian National University, majoring International Relations, minoring German Language and Culture, and specializing in Asia-Pacific Security. These were three years of development and growth, both intellectually and personally. She participated in different committees and societies and organized many international forum and symposium about international hotspot issues. She had also her first part-time job in a Confucius Institute in Canberra, where she was making effort to spread traditional Chinese language and culture to other countries. She then found her enthusiasm in Tibet in voluntary teaching and field survival activities.

In 2016 she decided to open up a new academic path in a different cultural environment. Therefore, she came to Vienna as the heart of Europe and started her postgraduate study in the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. At this institute, she discovered her new interests, especially in European history. Aiming to build a whole knowledge framework of world history, she wrote her thesis linking the East Asian history to the one centered on the European continent.

Pledge of Honesty

On my honor as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Qi Wang