

Who Moved Down to Pearl Harbor ?

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Who Moved Down to Pearl Harbor?¹

Sumio Hatano

1. 'International settlement' and 'Regional settlement'

When Chiang Kai-shek saw the outbreak of European War in September 1939 at Chung-king, he wrote in his diary, 'Our only attitude toward European War is to take side with democratic front and make an important step toward the settlement of the Sino-Japanese War by linking this problem with the European War in its peace making process'.²

At the same time, the Japanese government decided not to intervene herself to the European War. This is called as 'non-intervention' policy which was to concentrate in the settlement of the Sino-Japanese War. In order to break the standstill of the Sino-Japanese War, Chiang government (Chung-king government) sought its settlement by connecting themselves with the Anglo-American alliance, however Japanese government was eager to settle the Sino-Japanese War through bilateral (China and Japan) negotiation. Let me suppose the former one as the position of 'International settlement' and the later as 'Regional (bilateral) settlement'. Chiang consistently pursued the international settlement policy and finally devoted every effort to acquire his position as a member of the Allied Powers. And in December of 1941, he succeeded in participating the Great Britain and the United States to the Sino-Japanese War.

On the other hand, it seems that Japan altered her position of the 'Regional settlement' to the 'International settlement' in the autumn of 1940 actually. Contrary to Chiang's policy, the Japanese army aimed at the forceful southern advance (war with the Great Britain and the Netherlands) based on the Tripartite Pact of September 1940. The army inclined to believe that forceful southern advance as a member of the Axis Powers would settle the Sino-Japanese war. Moreover, the break down of the peace-making talks with Chung-king government (known as the Kiri Project), as a measure of 'Regional settlement', was obliged to approve the Wang Ching-wei regime in November 1940. These events of autumn 1940 were a turning point for Operations Division of Army General Staff especially to establish a political and military attitude toward a settlement of the Sino-Japanese war.³

However, the forceful southern advance ('southern war') policy of the Army General Staff was not the only option for the Japanese army. Around the end of 1940, in the army section, an idea came up that, if a peace condition between Japan and China would be filled, they would accept the US's mediation. Lt. Gen. Akira Mutoh, Chief of Military Affairs Bureau of Army Ministry, represented this idea. In that case, not permitting the intervention of third country to the settlement of the Sino-Japanese war was thought as important.

There we can find a mingle of negotiation with the U.S. policy and 'southern war' policy both in army.

This paper examines the actions and thoughts of Operations Division represented as Lt. Gen.

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- 1 This paper is the revised version of original text prepared for the International Conference: *Fifty Years After-The Pacific War Re-examined*, sponsored by the International House of Japan, at the Lake Yamanakako, on 11–14 November 1991.
 - 2 Sankei shimbun, *Shoukaiseki Hiroku*, 268; c.f. Lu, 'Yoroppa senso', 8–9.
 - 3 Hatano, 'Nanshin eno Senkai', 25–48.

Shin'ichi Tanaka and officers of Military Affairs Bureau represented as Mutoh in the context of US-Japanese relations of 1940–41. They acquired the power in the decision making process as the crises went on, and finally brought about a rupture to the US's deterrent strategy.⁴

2. Southward advance policy and US-Japan Talks

Shin'ichi Tanaka who arrived at the new post of Chief of Operations Division of Army General Staff in October 1940, wrote:

'It is almost impossible to settle the China Incident (Sino-Japanese war) by itself. The only solution of the China Incident is to connect this Incident with European war as a part of international problem. There is no doubt that we have no prospect in regional settlement policy'.⁵

In the changing circumstances of autumn of 1940, 'Regional settlement' policy of the Sino-Japan war was abandoned and Tanaka recognized that they should interlock this problem with the situation in Europe. Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoye showed the same opinion in January of 1940.⁶

And in his diary of the end of October, Tanaka wrote that aiming at direct-surrender of Chung-king government was 'secondary' and 'we can easily foretell that the overall settlements of the East Asian problem will consequently bring about a surrender of Chung-king government' (TD, Oct. 30). The 'overall settlement of the Eastern Asian problem' meant both 'northern war' (attack on Far Eastern territories of Soviet Union) and 'southern war' (attack on Great Britain's Far Eastern possessions). In cooperation with Axis Powers as a background of their deed, he aimed to free themselves from dependence to the Great Britain and the United States then create a sphere of self-sufficiency by committing themselves with both 'northern' and 'southern' war. And the settlement of the Sino-Japanese war would brought about aftermath the creation of firm status in East Asia. The central concern of Tanaka moved to both of 'northern and southern war' rather than the Sino-Japanese war itself. And 'northern war' was pressing problem.

In January 1941, the officers of Division of Operation summarized the memorandum as a draft of army, prospecting a couple of years ahead.⁷ The main points of the memorandum were:

(1) Resort to force of arms in a 'golden opportunity' and dominate the Southeast Asia and establish a sphere of 'self-sufficiency'.

(2) Maintain the policy of reconciliation with Soviet Union. And at same time, reinforce the military by deploying fourteen operations divisions in Manchuria and in colonial Korea.

(3) Continue the Sino-Japanese war within present situation, and make efforts in search of an early settlement of the war by utilizing the change of international circumstances.

As for (1), 'golden opportunity' meant German invasion of British Isles to take place in near future. Expectations of German invasion of Britain were especially strong among the Army General Staff.

As for (2), the policy of reconciliation with the Soviet Union is originated from the lesson of the Nomonhan incident. However, preparation of operation forces in Manchuria and Korea meant that they would strike against the Soviet Union in good opportunity. So, officers of Operations Division did not conscious the reconciliation with the Soviet Union as permanent relation. Soon after the signing of the Soviet-Japanese neutrality treaty in April 1941, they saw this treaty as the period for reinforcing the power in Manchuria rather than easing the military tension with the Soviet Union.⁸

4 Hosoya, 'Miscalculations in Deterrent Policy', 97–115.

5 Tanaka, *Tanaka sakusenbucho no shougen*, 42–43.

6 Prime Minister Konoye's Diet speech in January 1941.

7 Boei kenshusho senshishitsu, *Dai-hon'ei rikugunbu*, 200-10; Imoto, *Sakusen misshi de tsuzuru shinajihen*, 490–94.

8 KD, April 14, 1941.

In short, the memorandum of January 1941 was confirmation of the southward advance policy sanctioned on 27 July 1940 at the Imperial Headquarters-Cabinet Liaison Conference. The southward advance policy of July 1940 depended to a large extent on an improvement of relations with Germany and the Soviet Union. As for Germany, the ultimate objective of the army concerning this issue was a military alliance against Great Britain and the Netherlands. The actual picture of the Tripartite Pact, born after meetings of Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka and Heinrich Stahrmer of German special envoy in September, objected at the United States and Great Britain. Initially seen as a military alliance against Britain, the Tripartite Pact of 27 September was transformed into an instrument to deter the United States, when Matsuoka revised the draft of the army and navy to include the United States. This result dissatisfied army officers.⁹

In spite of these dissatisfactions, Matsuoka continued the diplomacy to next stage. It was to strengthen the negotiation power of Japan by rapprochement the Soviet-Japanese relations and then formulate a 'four-power pact' actually among Japan, the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy. If they succeed in a 'four-power pact', Matsuoka wished to promise the United States to stop her involvement in the European war and engage in the settlement of Sino-Japanese war.¹⁰ This was the strategy of Matsuoka with Konoye's support.¹¹ Only Mutoh, who was engaged in the meetings of Matsuoka and Stahrmer, understood Matsuoka and Konoye's intention, among the middle-rank officers. That is a reason of accounting the Tripartite Pact as 'It is not a preparation of the US-Japan war but to avoid it.' at the chief's meeting of the Army Ministry (KD, Sept. 30).

On the other hand, Mutoh was interested in direct conversation with the United States. He progressively committed to the activity of 'John Doe Associates' known as unofficial advisers group on foreign policy, especially Tadao Ikawa and Father James M. Drought, from the end of 1940. And next year he sent Col. Hideo Iwakuro, chief of Military Affairs Section, to the United States.¹²

The unauthentic belief has dominant among the officers that 'Anglo-American powers are separable', as far as Japan's forceful southward advance is confined itself to the Far Eastern British territories, the Dutch East Indies and the Southern French Indochina. And it may not trigger a war between the United States and Japan.

As a result of basic reconsiderations it become necessary to scrap the 'opportunistic' southern advance policy, which was approved at the Liaison Conference in July 1940 and to formulate a new policy in accord with the international situations. Adopted by the army and navy on 17 April stated that the Japan's prime objectives to set up military base at the Southern French Indochina by using diplomatic measures. Although the use of military force in the southern region was confined to the cases when the Imperial self-existence has been threatened by the embargo or her national-defense was threatened by some measures. This confirmed the policy of not using the force in the 'good opportunity', which meant the German invasion to the British Isles.

However, there laid the deep-rooted discussion among operational officers and middle-rank navy officers about preserving the possibility of 'resorting to armed forces in good opportunity'. These discussions are reflected in inconsistency of the new policy paper of 17 April. In a supplementary note of this paper, it said 'the southern policy of Japan would flexibly responded, according to the rapid change of the world political situation'. The passage of 'rapid change of the world political situation' meant that in case of a collapse of Great Britain, they could reformulate the new southern policy in accord with that situation. The reason why the leaders of the army remained the new policy as mere agreement among

9 Hatano, 'Nanshin eno senkai', 38-46.

10 Hosoya, 'The Japanese-Soviet Neutrality Pact', 3-114.

11 Konoyu, 'Konoye Fumimaro ko tsuikairoku', 29 Oct. 1943.

12 Shiozaki, *Nichi-Ei-Bei senso no kiro*, 215-21.

army and navy was that they could not neglect its perspective for 'resorting to armed forces'. Especially, middle-rank officers of navy and the Operations Division detested limiting the free hand of using forces, by setting the principle of not using the force as a final decision.¹³

In sending the Draft Understanding between Japan and the United States, ambassador in Washington Kichisaburo Nomura took care to emphasize that not to use military means for southern expansion is the very base of this Draft Understanding (DJ, Document No17). Contrary to such caution, however, an optimistic view prevailed among middle-rank officers of navy and army who believed that an armed southern advance was compatible with adjustment of relations with the United States.

3. The Diplomacy of Matsuoka and the US-Japan Talks

The Draft Understanding on 18 April was welcomed by the Operations Division and Military Affairs Bureau as well as Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoye, because it specified the mediation plan of peace making conditions for Sino-Japanese relations. Tanaka interpreted the Draft Understanding presented the 'extending the time' of the United States, which aimed to prevent the forceful southward advance of Japan and proceed the American participation to the European war.¹⁴ Tanaka thought, although it was a 'extending the time', if Japan could make advantageous settlement of the China war and secure strategic resources by southern policy, she would be able to prevent from the American intervention to the European war and US-Japanese war.

Behind what sustained the activity of the 'John Doe Associates', there was the domestic and international political situation of both countries. In the Japanese side, there was a group of strong supporters, such as Prime Minister Konoye and Mutoh, chief of Army Affairs Bureau, who wished the settlement of the Sino-Japan war in the early stage. And there existed the appeasement policy as global strategy of the United States and Great Britain to give the precedence to defeat the Hitler and take the 'extending the time' strategy in order to delay the collision with Japan in the Pacific region.¹⁵

However, 'extending the time' was not an ultimate goal of the United States itself. We must note that promotion of the US-Japan talks was brought by the progressive initiative of Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who believed the world's prosperity and peace would be brought about by establishment of the free-trade system under his four principles. According to four principles, attempts of building the 'New Order' in the East Asian and Pacific region by using Japanese force was not acceptable. So the main purpose of the US-Japan talks was to eliminate the 'expansionist' by supporting the 'moderate'.¹⁶ That is to say, 'extending the time' policy or the appeasement policy was not ultimate objectives for the United States.

After coming back from Europe, Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka tried to replace the US-Japan talks into new dimensions, though he was not willing to avoid the Draft Understanding. As noted in a new memorandum, Matsuoka stated that any understanding with the United States would have been based on an American commitment not to become involved in the European war and a promise to recommend peace talks with Japan to Chiang Kai-Shek (DJ No.46). Nomura hesitated to present this memorandum to Hull, but Matsuoka already conveyed the content through the American ambassador to Soviet Union Laurence Steinhardt, when he visited Europe (DJ Nos.11, 37).

Even though Matsuoka didn't succeed in concluding a 'four power pact', he staged a diplomatic coup

13 Hatano, *Bakuryo tachi no shinjuwan*, 10–20.

14 Tanaka, *Tanaka sakusenbucho no shougen*, 108.

15 Shiozaki, *Nichi-Ei-Bei senso no kiro*, Chaps. 3–4.

16 Utley, *Going to War with Japan.*, 138–156.

by signing the Neutrality Pact with Soviet Union of April 1941. He planned to emphasize the commitment of military obligations in the Tripartite Pact and draw American commitment not to become involved in the European conflict.¹⁷

The opinion of Matsuoka was quite opposite to Tanaka and Muto's opinion about flexible response in US-Japan talks in fulfillment of the military duty of the Tripartite Pact (IM). And in the making process of the 'Draft of understanding of 12 May', Matsuoka insisted to pursue the military obligations of the Tripartite Pact and amended the draft and sent it back to the United States. The attitude of Matsuoka frustrated the U.S. Government much, and then Hull stated the oral statement on 21 June saying that compromise would not exist against the Nazi-supporting countries. And he left the Washington D.C. for vacation.

And at same time, comprehensive draft was handled to Nomura by Hull on 21 June, which was unacceptable for the Japanese government; (1) It implied the Chinese representative as Chung-King government, (2) The indirect denial of the Manchuria, (3) The withdrawal from China mainland of station forces, (4) The application of 'the principle of nondiscrimination' to the Asia-Pacific region and the denial of the 'New Order', and (5) Break away from the Axis alliance.

Matsuoka analyzed this proposal's aimed was to break Japan away from the Tripartite Pact and alter its position to the Allied countries. He thought this was to overthrow the Great East Asian policy (DJ, No.99).

The change of Hull's attitude came from the outbreak of the German-Soviet war. Right after the Japan's conclusion of the Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union, Hull stated that the Soviet Union doesn't fight by itself though she would try to make other countries to fight (DJ, No.16). However, the German-Soviet war changed the view completely and for America it could be counted as resistance power against Hitler. The United States received reliable information that the German-Soviet war was imminent, early in June. One of concerns of the United States was Japan's military actions against Soviet Union, in the case of German attack to the Soviet Union. The northward advance of Japan inevitably causes the split of fighting power of the Soviet to east and west. The fear of the United States can infer from the President Roosevelt's asking Prime Minister Konoye to deny reports of impending the Soviet-German war, through the American ambassador Joseph C. Grew.¹⁸ Thus the United States increased aide to the Soviet Union and made close co-operation among America, Great Britain, Soviet, and China. And at the same time, the U.S. uncompromisingly negotiated with Japan in order to prevent Japan's attack on the Soviet Union.¹⁹ This brought about the U.S.'s comprehensive draft to Japan on the 21 June (a day before German attack on the Soviet Union).

Tanaka analyzed accurately that sudden swing of policy of the United States caused from the impact of the German attack to the Soviet Union. And as a background of this swing, there existed the dynamics of power balance between the Axis countries and the Allied countries.²⁰ Although it didn't necessarily brought operations officers to quit the negotiation immediately, it is no doubt that the United States appeared as hinderer of settlement of the Sino-Japanese war. It is true that this pressured them to think that there is no option left, other than forceful southern expansion.

4. German-Soviet war and New National Policy

The sanctioned new national policy at the Imperial Conference on 2 July, 1941 decided the station to

17 Matsuoka to Ohshima (9 June, 1941), DJ, No.100.

18 Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 399-400.

19 Yoshii, *Nichi-Doku-I sangoku domei to nichibei kankei*, Chp.5; Heinrichs, *Threshold of War*, 141-143.

20 Tanaka, *Tanaka sakusenbucho no shougen*, 108-109.

the Southern French Indochina and war with the Soviet Union in case the situation should turn out to be 'extremely advantageous'. The whole decision making process of this new national policy was aimed at subduing the Operations officer's opinion of forceful northward advance.

On 6 June, Tokyo received information from Ambassador Hiroshi Ohshima in Berlin that a German-Soviet war was imminent. The interest of Operations Divisions and Military Affairs Bureau moved to 'northern war' than 'southern war'. Especially, Operational Division insisted that the outbreak of German-Soviet war did not necessarily mean the arrival of disadvantageous international situation but chance for 'northern war'. They say that it would provide a chance to strike the north and remove the threat. The Military Affairs Bureau agreed to the idea of northward advance in case that the German-Soviet war unfolded to German advantage, though they considered it not immediately. According to the diary of Commander Akiho Ishii, who was a officer of the Military Affairs Bureau and a member of drafter of new national policy of 2 July, the aim of the new national policy was drafted to define the Japanese policy, 'not to rush at the Soviet Union hastily'. Another reason was to put down Foreign Minister Matsuoka who changed his opinion from southward advance to northward advance, under the situation that the German-Soviet war was inevitable (IM). The sentence, 'strengthen the situation of preparation for southward advance' included aimed to deter the northward advance.

Associated with the southward advance, the sentence, 'determined to make a war with the Great Britain and the United States', was parenthesized to the new policy of 2 July, because they respected the original draft of the navy. This doesn't necessarily mean that navy had intention to fight against the United States and Britain. As Ishii pointed out, they saw this campaign as the pretext for reinforcing the sea power (IM). Inside the Operational Division, there were group of people who predicted that there will be no intervention by United States and the Great Britain about the forceful stationing of Japanese troops to the Southern French Indochina, if the war got along with Germany's plan²¹

Even there existed a people who planned to extend its forceful southern advance to the Dutch East Indies and Malaysia. However, the decisions of most officers of Military Affairs Bureau confined the forceful southward advance to the Southern French Indochina for the time being. This was same with naval officers. Behind this idea, there laid the ambiguous expectations about nonintervention of the Great Britain and the United States of not committing themselves to the advance of the Southern French Indochina.

These expectations account partially why the officers lacked the consideration of the reaction which sending troops to the Southern French Indochina brings to foreign countries. Another reason, that we must consider, is the policy making style of Japan which was trapped in a vicious circle, that the foreign affairs became the domestic issue and then foreign policy loosed the flexibility.

The reinforcement of the ties between Japan and the Southern French Indochina was pre-arranged program in the spring of 1941. But as a means of strengthening ties, greater importance was attached to the military means than diplomatic and economic means. They knew the impact of using the military option inevitably causes the international reflection, and they made consideration under its pressure. So it was on 6 June, just after Tokyo received the information about the outbreak of the German-Soviet war, the military option was selected in the confusion of re-consideration of national policy.

Especially, central concern of the Operations officers was about the 'northern war' instead of problem in the Southern French Indochina. As Ishii pointed out, in formulating the new policy of 2 July, they had to emphasize the southward advance policy, in order to subdue the opinion of the northern advance, by all means. That is to say, the station to the Southern French Indochina was no longer a foreign affair than domestic issue (ID). And, Japan did not have to think about the Anglo-American reaction, because

21 Tobe, 'Dokuso-sen no hassei to nihon rikugun', 271-280.

it was already a domestic affair in her consciousness.

5. Impact of 'Kantoku-en' and total embargo

Operations Division regarded the new policy of 2 July as it opened the possibility of 'northern war' proceeding 'southern war' in case of the German-Soviet war. The preparation for 'northern war', called in a secret code 'Kantoku-en', gave an extensive impact to both domestic and foreign policy of Japan. More than 500,000 troops, materials and horses were mobilized secretly to Manchuria.

After the decision of new policy of 2 July, Tanaka and his staffs concentrated on the preparation of 'northern war' until they would abandoned the operation plan for north within the year in early August (WD, 9 Aug.). The negative factor in the scenario of northward advance were, a shock of the total embargo, the situation of Soviet-German war and climate condition which makes the northern operation possible. If the aim of the U.S. oil embargo and freezing assets was to restrain Japanese northward advance, it succeeded in the case. However, it must be noted that the Operations Division, including Tanaka, did not gave up the plan but just changed the schedule from 1941 to after spring of 1942. Actually, increased Kwantung Army in Manchuria was maintained in 16 divisions, all prepared for 'northern war'. The Army General Staff utilized the existence of the Kwangtung Army for diplomatic pressure.

Top readers of Army General Staff abandoned the 'northern war' within the year of 1941, and at the same time, to promote a preparation of 'southern war' against the United States and Britain till the end of November became the decision among them (WD, 9 Sept.). Commander Shigeru Fujii, who was a staff of Naval Military Affairs Section and always had touch with Commander Ishii, wrote in his diary in late August, 'the army abandoned a war against Soviet Union this autumn and winter, but after their southern operation done in this winter, they plan to come back next spring'.²² For Operations Division the battle field had been always at north it was preferable to finish the southern war before northern war. The intention of Operations Division brought the 'time' factor to a national decision making and came to promote the decision of 'southern war'.

On the other hand, as noted above, station to the Southern French Indochina of 28 July didn't necessarily mean southward war for most officers. According to the logic of the new policy of 2 July, the army was on the verge of the US-Japanese war, because the total embargo exactly threatened the 'self-existence and self-defense'. Ishii recalls that the word 'threatening of the self-existence and self-defense, necessarily start a war', written in new national policy of 2 July was mere cheer up, however the supposed situation become real. However army's officers did not immediately decided to start the war (IM). The affliction of army's officers continued from early August to middle of the month. The Secret War diary on 13 August wrote:

'We wonder whether the United States is wishing the lasting peace of Pacific region to the future, or wishing the temporary peace, just to cope with the present difficulties. If the real picture was a former, we have a chance to break through the situation by diplomatic measures'.

On 16 August, the navy submitted a new draft to army. The essence of that draft was, to promote a preparation for war and proceed with the diplomacy simultaneously until they have no way left for diplomatic solution (wait until middle of October), then start a war (WD, 16 Aug.). According to the diary of Commander Shigeru Fujii, this original plan was prepared before 3 August, by the First Committee of Naval Defense Policies, and right after the imposition of total embargo. This got consensus in navy then proposed to army.²³

22 Diary of Commander Shigeru Fujii, August 30, 1941.

23 Ibid., Aug. 3.

Tanaka strongly opposed to navy's draft because it omitted army's conditions that they can not complete the preparation for the war (full mobilization), unless the 'decision to fight' become nation's will. Contrary to this, Navy couldn't agree with the draft saying, that they promote a preparation of a war putting the determination of 'decision for a war' as a premise, and at the same time, seek for diplomatic settlement. Navy could separate 'preparation for a war' and 'decision to fight' in their whole process. A chief of Operations Division Tanaka, leading the Army General Staff, strongly insisted to add 'prompt determination' to the draft and had a severe discussion concerning this issue with Mutoh and Naval Affairs Bureau Takazumi Oka, who expected the diplomatic solution, about their reluctance (WD, mid-Aug.).

Anyway, 'preparation of a war' and diplomatic negotiation had a time limit, and according to the decision at the Imperial Conference on 6 September, they set time limit of the diplomatic negotiation as early October, and completion of preparation for military operation as end of October and the start of the operation as early November.

And also at the Imperial Conference on 6 September, the Emperor implied his opinion, reading Meiji Emperor's poem and wished that preparation of a war should be subordinate to the diplomatic measures. Prime Minister Konoye was afraid of army's run to an extreme, once the mobilization has exercised. So he wished the Emperor to appeal it at the Imperial Conference.²⁴ Even after the Imperial Conference, Tanaka showed the data of starting war at the Liaison Conference.²⁵ A military operational requirement began to bind action and option of the government.

6. The summit meeting and China problem

The Foreign Minister Teijiro Toyoda in 3rd Konoye cabinet tried various diplomatic measures to ease the US-Japan crises brought about by the Japanese station to the Southern French Indochina. And at the same time, Prime Minister Konoye proposed President Roosevelt to have a summit meeting. How did officers look at this?

First of all, the contents of Toyoda's diplomatic measures were told to the American ambassador Grew to ease the American anxiety that they have no intention to advance into other country of this area, other than station to French Indochina (25 July), counter-proposed the draft similar to President Roosevelt's proposal on neutralization of the Southern French Indochina (decision of liaison conference on 4 August), promised the fulfillment of the Soviet-Japan neutrality pact to Soviet Union (decision on 4 August) and the decision of Britain-Japan negotiation dealt with the security of Thailand (decision of liaison conference on 16 August). For Operations Division officers who worked out the policy of southward advance or northward advance according to the new policy of 2 July, these process of finding the way out was the policy against the decision at Imperial Conference. So there existed the opposition against Toyoda diplomacy and its promoter Mutoh.

On 1 August, the former Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita sent a paper to Prime Minister Konoye, titled 'One opinion on the present situation'. The essence of his paper was pointing out the incompatibility between the US-Japan negotiation and station to the Southern French Indochina.²⁶ Konoye wrote back on 3 August, with preliminary remark, saying that he is feeling sorry for miscalculation of the influence brought about by the station to the Southern French Indochina²⁷:

24 Ibid., Sept.3, 1941.

25 Kido koichi nikki kenkyukai, *Kido koichi nikki*, entry into Sept. 26, 1941.

26 Arita, *Hitono menochirio miru*, 135-140.

27 Ibid., 141-142.

'We are not bringing the incompatibility. No matter how hard we may try to normalize the US-Japan relations and settle the conflict, the middle-rank officers, both army and navy, hinder us to find our way out. The problem is their control'.

He thought the obstruction of the negotiation with the United States is 'middle-rank officers', so we can suppose that Konoye was wishing the summit meeting with President Roosevelt in order to avoid their interference. Commander Ishii, recollecting the past, wrote the idea of the summit meeting was 'good strategy' as a circuitous route, because making consensus with the Operational Division's hard-liner was difficult question. Anyway, Konoye decided the direct conversation with Roosevelt which was the typical opinion of 'moderates'.

In knowing the idea of summit meeting, Army General Staff opposed intensively. Tanaka was worried about the Konoye's compromise to Roosevelt, causes the chance to change the political situation as dependant to the Anglo-American relations, weakening the tie between the Axis powers.

Mutoh and Army Minister Tojo, who conferred from Prime Minister Konoye, predicted that refusal of summit meeting will inevitably bring about the resignation of Prime Minister Konoye. Then they persuaded Tanaka, that in the case, the army have to take themselves upon heavy responsibilities, and he agreed to summit meeting (TD, 5 Aug.). The conditions for carrying out of the meeting was not to promise any agreement which increases the dependence to the Anglo-American relations and break away from the Axis countries.

As the summit meeting proposal was rejected on 2 October, the main point of issue moved to the China problem from the Tripartite Pact.

Looking back the history of the US-Japan talks, there was scarcely a positive proposal on Chinese problem but from Japanese side. It is not because the Japanese Government thought the Axis alliance important, but because Konoye was afraid of touching the problem which might hinder the progress of the US-Japan talks. At the meeting on 28 August, Hull emphasized Chinese problem as an important factor for both countries. And he also pointed out that basic conditions for peace between Japan and China must not give a bad influence to the US-China relations (DJ No.170). It meant that if Japanese wish for peace in the Asia-Pacific region, how to deal China is an unavoidable problem. The United States eventually reached the idea that they cannot comply with the summit meeting unless there was an agreement regarding the 'actual application' of Hull's four principles (Presidential message of 3 September).

The Military Affairs Bureau realized that the focus of the US-Japan talks is the problem of stationing troops in China. Commander Ishii who drafted the Japanese statement thought, if they admitted the peace making program of the United States, their effort in the Chinese Mainland after the Manchurian Incident would be in vain (IM).

The American oral statement on 3 September pointed out that the necessity of the settlement of 'specific principle problem' was the premise to realization of the summit meeting (DJ No.182). Commander Ishii drafted a 'Basic conditions for peace between Japan and China' because the policies of both countries are able to modify. It comprised army's requirement including anti-communism, stationing Japanese troops in China for peace keeping, uniting the Chiang Kai-Shek Government and Wang Ching-Wei regime and the recognition of the Manchuria government (DJ No.224). Based on Ishii's new drafting, the army focused their attention on the problem of stationing troops in China.

On the other hand, the Foreign Ministry tried to focus on the problem about the interpretation of the Tripartite Pact than the China problem through the Draft making against the oral statement on 3 September.

At the consideration of the counter-plan, Military Affairs Bureau compromised to the Foreign Ministry's position on the Tripartite problem, and didn't compromised to the position on the Chinese

problem insisting their station in China. That is to say, the problem concerning the Tripartite Pact was not a major point for the army (IM). The 'Basic conditions for peace between Japan and China' was added to the draft of 25 September, and the content of this draft was important for Military Affairs Bureau (DJ No.229)

The Foreign Ministry carried through their position of participating in the European war based on the Tripartite Pact 'independently' in both draft of 6 and 25 September. The Ambassador Grew praised their effort as 'Japanese Government ... actually has shown a readiness to reduce Japan's alliance adherence to a dead letter by its indication of willingness to enter formally into negotiations with the United States'.²⁸ But it couldn't change the attitude of the United States.

Hull preferred to avoid a war with Japan, though withdrawing the troops from China was more important for peace and stability of the East Asia in post-war. Japan's breakup with Axis powers was given to the withdrawal of troops from China. The telegram from ambassador Nomura on 28, 30 September noted that the United States are willing to intervene themselves in European war, and they want to omit the threat of the Axis powers in their back. So, even if there was a possibility to succeed in this point, stationing problem will be the biggest problem (DJ No.234, 238)

7. Last Talks with the US

Hull's memoranda of 2 October repeatedly emphasized the four Principles while requiring the concession of Japan. And what he definitely rejected as 'need to think about the objection' was the stationing problem. Also he indicated the declaration of withdrawal of Japanese troops from the Southern French Indochina and China, in order to demonstrate Japan's good will for future peace and stability of Japan in the Pacific region, is necessary.

Nomura saw the United State's intention of 2 October memoranda, as 'overall ignorance' of Japanese draft of 25 September and their persistence to the draft of 21 June. If we focus to the Tripartite Pact problem, it was true. Though America lost their interest in this problem and ignorance to it was natural. Anyway, there was no prospect for summit meeting, unless Japanese government conceded like Nomura's view (DJ No.260).

According to the Secret War Diary, meeting of Army ministry's officers including Tanaka and Mutoh, ended with the conclusion that, 'there is no hope in diplomatic settlement. We should immediately decide a war and ask the Emperor', and the opinion of officers became increasingly unyielding after presentation of Hull's memoranda on 2 October (WD, Oct.5). What stimulated them especially in the memoranda was not about the Tripartite Pact, that demanded them to clearly alter their position beyond the 'independent' position in the Pact, but was the article of withdrawing the troops from China which Hull definitely rejected as 'need to think about the objection' (IM). Nomura indicated the same way. The Foreign Ministry prepared the withdrawing program and submitted it to the Liaison Conference on 4 October bypassing the army. However, it was rejected. The memoranda of 2 October angered not only army but also foreign ministry's officials.²⁹

Thus, the memoranda of 2 October made a wide range of opponents in the government. And finally they had to leave decision of reconciliation to a negotiation between top leaders of military and government section. However, in the series of negotiation, Army Minister Tojo was especially uncompromising.

Muto mentioned about the American attitude as 'they are just bargaining', and Japan shouldn't

28 Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 441.

29 Amau Eiji Nikki shiryoshu kankokai, *Amau Eiji nikki, shiryoshu*, 313.

withhold her opinion.³⁰ It was true that the United States thought Chinese position as important, but it was not 'bargaining'.

Army Minister Hideki Tojo became new Prime Minister on 18 October. Kido recommended Tojo because he was the only person who could control the uncompromising army's middle-rank officers, in order to make the decision at the Imperial Conference on 6 September to begin all over again.³¹ The War Guidance Section wrote 'The die is cast' in their diary on 18 October, because it was quite natural to think that the Japan-US talks would break down under the Tojo cabinet. But in that evening, the Emperor ordered the re-examination of the national policy, despite the decision at the Imperial Conference on 6 September.

Criticized by officers of the Operations Division as a betrayer, Tojo submitted a draft to the Liaison Conference, saying that they should promote the US negotiations and preparation for a war simultaneously until the last day of November. This was on 2 November (decided at the Liaison Conference on 5 November). The officers of Operations Division took the word 'preparation for a war' as to promote preparation as 'strategic development' unless the US's overall acceptance, and 'we should proceed our plan, premising the war' (KD Nov.5). Diplomacy was already a measure to promote their operational advantage, which meant to be the 'deceptive diplomacy' (disguised diplomacy) without any concession.

At the Liaison Conference on 2 November, two drafts for a compromise with the United States called 'Proposal A' (Ko-an) and 'Proposal B' (Otsu-an) were adopted. The contents of 'Proposal A' showed explicitly a time limit and place of stationing troops, and abandoned the special interest in China. It was the biggest concession in the history of the US-Japan talks. This was because the new Foreign Minister Togo Shigenori strongly presented the time and place about the troop withdrawal where as Tojo and Muto took the initiative to relax the 'Basic conditions for peace between Japan and China' (IM, KD, Oct. 22).

The 'Proposal B' was planned originally by Foreign Minister Togo, though its process was not clear enough. The well-known 'Proposal B' was plan of provisional agreement. In order to secure the oil supply, it proposed to move Japanese troops from the Southern French Indochina to Northern French Indochina, not referring to China problem and the Tripartite pact. The leaders of the Army General Staff strongly opposed to 'Proposal B'. They insisted to add the article of which the United States would promise the no-interference of bilateral negotiations between China and Japan, and to omit the article of immediate withdrawal from the Southern French Indochina. Togo agreed with the former idea though rejected the latter, arguing that 'If we omit the item of withdrawing the troops from the Southern French Indochina, we can't carry out diplomacy'. The leaders of the army conceded for fear that if they keep on rejecting the withdrawal from the Southern French Indochina, it will inevitably causes the resignation of Foreign Minister Togo then general resignation of the Konoye cabinet, and the following cabinet may take policy to avoid a war.

The discussion about 'Proposal A' and 'Proposal B' demonstrated that the key of concluding an agreement between Japan and the United States was whether the latter would approve a direct negotiations between Japan and China while relaxing the conditions for peace. In other words, whether the United States would admit Japan's position of 'Regional settlement' (bilateral settlement) was the point at issue. It is said that when Hull stated his private opinion about committing the China problem to direct Sino-Japanese talks (DJ No.312, 318), Togo expected the settlement would prohibit interference from a third power to the China issue by utilizing the US's power (DJ No.322).

Togo didn't believe that the negotiations based on 'Proposal B' would bring about a modus vivendi between the United States and Japan. However it seems that he expected the concession of the United

30 Ito and Shiozaki, *Ikawa Tadao nichibei koshō shiryō*, 351–352.

31 *Kido Koichi nikki*, 918.

States in the Chinese problem could be drawn out if Japan maintained a tough position. Actually he didn't answer any request for small concessions from Nomura in the final stage (DJ No. 373, 390).

Army officers were surprised at his hard-line attitude and worried about an agreement made upon 'Proposal B'. Ishii predicted that even if they reached an agreement on 'Proposal B', the US would hesitate to supply oil to Japan and consequently strengthen the ABCD encirclement. If that happened, Japan would lose its ability to fight sooner or later (IM). Moreover, he was worried of the 'moderates' coming back in Japan (KD, December 1)

8. 'The die is cast'

The US-Japan talks concerning the 'Proposal A' and 'Proposal B', turned out to be quite different from what Togo had expected. At first, Hull insisted the ordinal 'talks' for peace making process in the Pacific region was preliminary 'conversation', and if the basic conditions for the US-Japan talks were established, the formal negotiation with the Great Britain, the Netherland and China and other concerning countries are essential (DJ No.312, 328, 334, 339). It exactly denied the 'Regional settlement' position of Japan.

On 7 November Hull revealed that there are having the talks about China problem with China, Great Britain and Netherlands, and insisted that they cannot admit the conditions that violate the sovereignty of the China for stability of the Pacific region, (DJ No.365).³² The settlement of Chinese problem is no longer a bilateral problem than an international problem.

Hull was unwilling to approve the 'Proposal B' because it noted that the United States would promise the no-interference of bilateral negotiations of China and Japan. He also stated that it is inseparable to assist the Great Britain and Chiang Kai-shek against German expansion policy. The Chinese battlefield was recognized as one on the extension of the European battlefield (DJ No.380).

Although Hull made efforts to establish a *modus vivendi*, he didn't intend to repeat the bitter experience in Munchen (DJ No. 340), and they need more time to prepare for the war with Japan.³³ This plan which delivered on the 22nd and the 24th to ambassadors of Great Britain, Netherland, China and Australia, triggered out oppositions. If the three month reconciliation between the US and Japan were made, it would not restrict the Japanese invasion into China. Chiang Kai-Shek thought that the United States was trying to compromise with Japan at the expense of China.³⁴ Although Hull needed time, he could not 'abandon' China (DJ No.413).

Hull's note on 26 November was a 'disappointment' for Foreign Minister Togo, though it was a 'luck' for officers of Operations Division who were concerned about an agreement upon 'Proposal B' (WD, Nov. 27). For officers of Operations Division, Hull's note helped to integrate Japan's national opinion regarding the war while giving them a perfect reason to start a war.

Hull's note denied the irrational position regarding a 'Regional settlement' between China and Japan and by strengthening the solidarity of the ABCD side, had ultimately shown that the 'International Settlement' is the only way for peace.³⁵ At the very last talks, Hull strongly condemned Hitler's expansionism and especially encouraged Japan to breakaway from the Axis alliance. This might be the last appeal to keep Japan in the framework of the 'International settlement' for building a peace in the Asia-Pacific region (DJ No.335, 344, 345).

32 DJ, 312.

33 Utey, *Going to War with Japan*, 165-66; Kimball, *Churchill and Roosevelt*, 267 (Roosevelt to Churchill, Nov.7, 1941).

34 U.S. Dept. of States, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*; Vol.4, 640-47, 654; Utey, *Going to War with Japan*, 174-75.

35 c.f. Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War*, 175-76.

Abbreviations;

- DJ Gaimusho, ed., *Nihon gaiko bunsho; Nichibei kosho* [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, the US-Japan Talks in 1941]. 2 vols., 1991.
- WD Sanbo-honbu senso shido-han [War guidance section, the army general staff], 'Kimitsu senso nisshi' [Secret war dairy] deposited in the War History Department of Japanese Defense Ministry. (This dairy was published by Kinseisha, Tokyo, in 1998)
- IM 'Ishii Akiho taisa kaisoroku' [Unpublished memoirs of Col. Akiho Ishii] 1949.
- TD 'Tanaka Shin'ichi chujo gyomu nisshi' [Diary of Maj. Gen. Shin'ichi Tanaka Shin'ichi]. deposited in the War History Department of Japanese Defense Ministry.
- KD 'Kimbara Setsuzo chujo gyomu nisshi' [Diary of Maj. Gen. Setsuzo Kimbara].

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