

Trying to Avoid a Japanese-American War: America's "Japan Connection" in 1937 and 1941

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In 1937 and 1941, a key group of American diplomats -- the "Japan Connection" -- struggled to prevent a Japanese-American war. The Japan Connection consisted of the experts on Japan in the U.S. Department of State and Foreign Service who consistently advocated American-Japanese cooperation between 1922 and 1952. Their ranks included William R. Castle, Jr., Joseph C. Grew, Hugh R. Wilson, Jay Pierrepont Moffat, and Eugene H. Dooman. From the late 1920s to the early 1950s, these American diplomats insisted that cooperation between the United States and Japan would block Soviet expansion, stabilize East Asian relations, and obviate the need for American globalism.¹

Although all of these men served in Japan during the 1920s and early 1930s, Castle, Grew, Wilson, Moffat, and Dooman formed a much looser aggregate than the well-studied "China Hands" who dominated the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department.² Unlike the China case, American diplomacy with Japan did not produce a tightly-knit cluster of specialists who shared frequent assignments in Tokyo.³ Castle, Grew, Wilson, and Moffat, in

¹Barney J. Rickman III, "The Japan Connection: The Ideology of American Cooperation with Japan, 1922-1952" (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 1990). This longer work includes Joseph W. Ballantine as a member of the Japan Connection, but space limitation precluded his inclusion in this article. For other works that explore the pro-Japanese members of American foreign policy establishment, see Marlene J. Mayo, "American Wartime Planning for Occupied Japan: The Role of the Experts," in *Americans as Proconsuls: United States Military Government in Germany and Japan, 1944-1952*, ed. Robert Wolfe (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984): 3-51, 447-472; John G. Roberts, "The 'Japan Crowd' and the Zaibatsu Restoration" *Japan Interpreter* 12 (Summer 1979): 383-415; Howard Schonberger, "The Japan Lobby in American Diplomacy, 1947-1952," *Pacific Historical Review* 66 (August 1977): 327-359; and Steven Schwartzberg, "The 'Soft Peace Boys': Presurrender Planning and Land Reform," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2 (Summer 1993): 185-216.

²For the contrast between American diplomacy with China and Japan, see Charles E. Neu, "The Origins of the Pacific War: American Relations with China and Japan in the 1920s" (unpublished paper, undated). For studies of America's China-oriented diplomats, see Russell D. Buhite, *Nelson T. Johnson and American Policy toward China, 1925-1941* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968); E.J. Kahn, Jr., *The China Hands: America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them* (New York: Viking Press, 1972); and Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., *The China Hands' Legacy: Ethics and Diplomacy* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987).

³Castle, Grew, and Moffat kept extensive diaries, now available at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Castle's diary, which opened to researchers in January 1985, is a particularly rich source. Along with his own ideas, Castle made detailed entries about his interactions with other members of the Japan Connection. The diaries of Castle, Grew, and Moffat helped solidify the Japan Connection. During critical periods, such as the start of the Sino-Japanese War, Castle, Grew, and Moffat circulated their diaries to keep each other informed of their views and actions.

fact, initially focused on other regions of the world. Because they entered diplomacy through the European sections of the Department, Castle, Grew, Wilson, and Moffat viewed Japan from the perspective of United States relations with Europe -- especially the Soviet Union. Dooman, on the other hand, was trained as a Japan expert, and he never ventured much beyond East Asian matters in his career. The American diplomats most active from 1922 to 1952 in promoting close U.S.-Japanese relations thus formed a "connection" united more by their ideas than by their assignments.⁴

The members of the Japan Connection formed their views on Japan during an era of Japanese-American cooperation in the 1920s.⁵ In part because of these circumstances, Castle, Grew, Wilson, Moffat, and Dooman agreed by 1929 that American policy in East Asia should be grounded on friendship with Japan, although the European-oriented members of the group reached this conclusion through a different path than Dooman. Strongly influenced by elitism, racism, and anti-communism, Castle, Grew, Wilson, and Moffat opposed an extensive commitment of United States resources to East Asia. Although East Asia merited American attention, Castle, Grew, Wilson, and Moffat hesitated to exert American leadership in the region because they argued that the United States had more important interests in Latin America and Europe.⁶ Japan's actions during the 1920s persuaded these four upper-class, European-oriented diplomats that the island nation represented the only instrument that could be counted on to block Soviet expansion in East Asia (a key goal for these four diplomats) and thereby allow the United States to preserve its power for use in regions they assigned a higher priority (i.e., Latin America and Europe).⁷

⁴ Because shared ideas helped unify the Japan Connection, I have argued elsewhere that these American diplomats held an "ideology." In this argument, I have borrowed Michael Hunt's "commonsensical" definition of an ideology as "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality." Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi. For a complete discussion of ideology these men shared and how those ideas changed over time, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection."

⁵ Akira Iriye, "Japan's Policies Toward the United States," in *Japan's Foreign Policy, 1868-1941: A Research Guide*, ed. James W. Morley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 435-443. For a detailed discussion of international relations in East Asia during the 1920s, see Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

⁶ Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 47-49.

⁷ To Castle, the Japanese were natural friends for the United States in the East Asia. Unlike the Chinese, Castle claimed that the Japanese were a civilized people who could be trusted, and he further asserted that Japan wanted cordial relations with the United States. William R. Castle, Jr., *Diary*, 16 March 1929, vol. 14, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. For more detail on the views of Castle, Grew, Wilson, and Moffat,

Dooman, on the other hand, by the 1920s had risen through the ranks as a member of the first generation of U.S. Department of State-trained experts on Japan. As is often the case with area experts, Dooman approached Japan with a deep appreciation for its culture and its people.⁸ Dooman agreed with the other four members of the Japan Connection that the United States should avoid alienating the Japanese and should encourage the island nation to remain an active member of the western-dominated international order.⁹

After 1929, the members of the Japan Connection attempted to influence American foreign policy in accordance with their pro-Japanese ideas. William Castle, as U.S. Ambassador to Japan and later as Under Secretary of State, led the Japan Connection from 1929 to 1933 in shaping President Herbert Hoover's East Asian policy.¹⁰ The Japan Connection's power, however, steadily deteriorated under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Between 1937 and 1941, the Japan Connection struggled to prevent a Japanese-American war. In 1937, Grew, Dooman, Moffat, Wilson, and Castle successfully urged restraint in response to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. By 1941, however, the national and international contexts of power had shifted to eliminate the Japan Connection's influence. Despite frenzied efforts, these American diplomats failed to produce a Japanese-American rapprochement before the disaster at Pearl

see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 1-49. At this time, historians are allowed to paraphrase the Castle Diary, but direct quotes are not permitted by the Castle family.

⁸ See comment by John Carter Vincent, an American expert on China, that "The China Hands could make a better case for China than China could for itself, and the Japan hands could make a better case for Japan than Japan could for itself. No question about it, we were partisans. It got into your blood." Quotation by Vincent in Martin Weil, *A Pretty Good Club: The Founding Fathers of the U.S. Foreign Service* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), 214.

⁹ During the 1920s, both Dooman and Ballantine argued that Japan's movement toward liberal democracy represented a genuine stage in modernization, and they opposed actions, such as the Immigration Act of 1924, which offended Japan and thereby weakened the pro-Western, "moderate" elements in the Japanese government. Eugene H. Dooman, Interview, May 1962, Transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, New York, 14-16; and Joseph W. Ballantine, "Memoirs, 1888-1970," Box 1, Joseph W. Ballantine Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford, California, 51-53, 62-64. For more detail on the views of Dooman and Ballantine, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 49-61.

¹⁰ With help from Second Secretary of the American Embassy in Tokyo Dooman, U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland Wilson, and Grew, who became U.S. Ambassador to Japan in 1932, Castle worked with President Hoover to undermine Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson's more coercive policy toward Japan. For example, Castle helped restrict the U.S. response to Japan's expansion in Manchuria from 1931 to 1933 by publicly undermining the attempt by Stimson to threaten possible American sanctions against Japan. Castle also altered the American stance during the London Naval Conference of 1930. For the Japan Connection's actions during the Hoover Administration, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 62-122. For a summary of Castle's activities during the Manchurian Crisis, see Barney J. Rickman III, "Ideology and Influence: William R. Castle, Jr. and the Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1933," Paper presented at the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Conference, College Park, Maryland, August 1990.

Harbor. A comparison of 1937 and 1941 demonstrates the Japan Connection's declining role in shaping America's Japan policy.¹¹

During this period of escalating Japanese-American tensions, Grew emerged as the most influential member of the Japan Connection, but as the American Ambassador in Japan, Grew never attained the level of influence held by Castle during the Hoover Administration. Often isolated in Tokyo, Grew depended on fellow members of the Japan Connection in Washington to argue for his recommendations.¹² In 1937, Moffat and Wilson supported Grew within the Department, while Dooman worked with the Ambassador in Japan and Castle helped as an "informed outsider" in Washington, D.C. By 1941, the Japan Connection had lost its strong base within the Department, and its members failed to reverse the increasingly anti-Japanese nature of American foreign policy.

After 1933, Grew and Castle pursued the same pro-Japanese program through different mediums. Unlike Castle, Grew decided to remain in official service as the U.S. Ambassador to Japan.¹³ Castle, on the other hand, refused to serve under Franklin Roosevelt.¹⁴ Relying on his personal wealth, Castle did not hold a job after he left the State Department in March 1933. Instead, Castle established himself as an "informed outsider" in Washington, D.C.¹⁵ Besides

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the Japan Connection's actions from 1933 to 1941, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 123-202.

¹² For Grew's anger at what he believed was Secretary Hull's refusal to keep the Tokyo embassy informed of American policy, see Grew's comments in Castle, *Diary*, 5 July 1935, vol. 28; and Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 233 (page references are to the reprint edition). Besides the studies already cited, Grew's views and actions on Japan have been explored in Nakamura Masanori, *The Japanese Monarchy: Ambassador Joseph Grew and the Making of the 'Symbol Emperor System,' 1931-1991*, trans. by Herbert P. Bix, Jonathan Baker-Bates, and Derek Bowen (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992).

¹³ Foreign Service officers, according to Grew, "must be prepared to shift our loyalty if not our thinking" after a new president is elected. Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 2:1448. Under the new Administration, Grew set out to keep "the boat [i.e., Japanese-American relations] from rocking." Grew to Hornbeck, 8 May 1933, "Grew, Joseph C., 1933," Box 184, Stanley K. Hornbeck Papers, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace.

¹⁴ Besides his friendship with Hoover, Castle's elitism prevented him from working for a candidate who, Castle claimed, appealed to the lower classes. Castle, *Diary*, 8 November 1932, vol. 21. See also *ibid.*, 4 October, 9 November 1932, vol. 21.

¹⁵ Frequently consulted by foreign emissaries, American politicians, and State Department officials, Castle kept abreast of foreign affairs in the hope that he could be return to the State Department when the Republicans regained the White House. Castle, *Diary*, 13 May 1933, vol. 23. See also *ibid.*, 26, 28 March 1934, vol. 24; 12 March 1935, vol. 27; 23 June 1935, vol. 28, and 25 October 1935, vol. 29.

private conversations with American and foreign officials, the former Under Secretary publicized his views through numerous speeches and articles.¹⁶

Despite their different positions, Grew and Castle agreed on the basic tenets of American foreign policy in East Asia.¹⁷ Although frustrated by continued Japanese aggression in China, Grew and Castle remained convinced that the United States must not risk war to stop Japan.¹⁸ Based on their strident anti-communism and because they assigned a higher priority to Latin America and Europe than to East Asia for U.S. involvement, Grew and Castle refused to block forcefully Japanese expansion, and they flatly rejected any tactics that risked escalation.¹⁹ In sum, Grew and Castle advocated a passive policy toward Japanese aggression in China. Although they admitted that the United States should protest Japanese actions that infringed on U.S. treaty rights in China, they remained adamant that the United States must avoid any action that might provoke Japan.

From 1933 to 1937, the Roosevelt Administration followed this passive policy toward Japan, but Roosevelt and Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, never accepted the ideological premises of this stance as envisioned by the Japan Connection. The President and his Secretary, unlike the Japan Connection, shared a more global vision of American foreign policy. Persuaded that the United States had to oppose any nation that endangered free trade and international respect for treaties, Roosevelt and Hull wanted to prevent Japan as well as other "revisionist" powers such as Germany and Italy from carving the world into autarkic economic spheres.²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid., 20, 22 December 1933, vol. 23; 21 January 1934, vol. 24; 11, 18 June, 8 July 1934, vol. 25; 7 January, 10 March 1935, vol. 27; 5, 23 March 1936, vol. 30, and 5 April 1936, vol. 31.

¹⁷ For examples, see *ibid.*, 22 April 1933, vol. 22; 16 December 1933, vol. 23; 1, 2 May 1934, vol. 24; 20 September 1934, vol. 26; 23 January 1935, vol. 27, and 23 June 1935, vol. 28; Grew to Castle, 20 August 1934, 12 December 1935, 9 March 1936, "Japan, 1932-1961," Box 10, William R. Castle, Jr. Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa; Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan: A Contemporary Record Drawn from the Diaries and Private and Official Papers of Joseph C. Grew, United States Ambassador to Japan, 1931-1941* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), 145-152, 154, 165; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 212-215.

¹⁸ Castle, Diary, 26 March 1934, vol. 24; 18 June 1934, vol. 25; 23 July 1935, vol. 28; 6, 13 December 1935, vol. 29, and 12 March 1936, vol. 30; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 224-225.

¹⁹ Grew, *Ten Years*, 164-165; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 217-220.

²⁰ For Roosevelt's views, see Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 3-20; and for Hull, see Jonathan G. Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 5-6. See also Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 178-179, 193.

Yet, ever conscious of domestic and international limitations on American action, the President and his Secretary often compromised their principles.²¹ With respect to Japan in the early 1930s, both Roosevelt and Hull remained committed to preserving American treaty rights in East Asia, but they pursued a non-active policy because they had little choice. When Roosevelt entered the White House, the Great Depression still restricted American foreign policy. England and France, moreover, refused to challenge Japan. For Roosevelt and Hull, a passive East Asian policy represented a tactical delay, not a strategic withdrawal. Until a more opportune time, the Roosevelt Administration would neither confront nor accept Japan's assertive stance in East Asia.²²

Castle, Grew, Wilson, Moffat, and Dooman, however, were willing to accept an enlarged role for Japan in East Asia. Unlike Roosevelt and Hull, the Japan Connection ranked blocking Soviet expansion (via U.S.-Japan cooperation) and preserving American power (for use in Latin America and Europe) as top priorities for U.S. policy in East Asia. The Japan Connection viewed securing free trade and international respect for treaties as less important goals. For Castle, Grew, Wilson, Moffat, and Dooman, U.S. interests in East Asia (and elsewhere) were best served by avoiding any action that might alienate Japan and by seeking opportunities for American-Japanese cooperation.

An example of the differences between the Roosevelt Administration and the Japan Connection arose in the mid-1930s over the question of an accommodation with Japan. Both Grew and Castle contemplated a rapprochement with Japan whereby the United States would recognize Japan's expanded power in East Asia in return for a firmer guarantee by Japan of American rights in China. Grew and Castle hoped that a new arrangement with Japan, besides stabilizing Japanese-American relations, would discourage Soviet expansion into East Asia.²³ The Roosevelt Administration, however, refused any such accommodation with Japan.²⁴

For the Japan Connection, the Roosevelt Administration presented a very different national context from the Hoover years. The members of the Japan Connection now had to

²¹ For examples by Roosevelt, see Dallek, *Roosevelt*, 65, 127, 131, 143.

²² Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 224-225. For Roosevelt's early East Asian policy, see Dorothy Borg, *The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938: From the Manchurian Crisis Through the Initial Stages of the Undeclared Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

²³ Castle diary, 15 January 1935, v. 27, and 14 June 1936, v. 31; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 221-225.

contend with a Secretary of State and a President who did not share their conception of American foreign policy in East Asia.²⁵ The members of the Japan Connection could not hope to change the more globally inclined views held by Hull and Roosevelt. Instead, the Japan Connection had to appeal to the pragmatic nature of the Secretary and the President while avoiding the appearance of being pro-Japanese.²⁶ This changed national context confined the Japan Connection to a defensive posture in the years preceding Pearl Harbor. Although these American diplomats could at times successfully urge restraint, they failed in 1937 to persuade the Administration to accept Japan's dominance of East Asia.²⁷

II. 1937: Start of the Sino-Japanese War

During 1937, the Japan Connection successfully met the challenges of this new national context. The Japan Connection convinced Hull that the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in July did not warrant a major initiative by the United States. Instead, Grew, Dooman, Moffat, Wilson, and Castle urged the Secretary to continue his passive policy toward East Asia. Despite his growing anti-Japanese sentiments, Hull accepted the arguments of the Japan Connection, and the Secretary deftly deflected attempts by others in the U.S. government to pursue an actively hostile policy toward Japan.²⁸

After a small clash of arms on 7 July 1937 escalated into full-scale fighting between Japanese and Chinese troops, Grew immediately advised the State Department to continue its passive policy toward East Asia.²⁹ An offer to mediate the Sino-Japanese dispute or any other pressure on the Japanese to compromise, Grew argued, was doomed to failure. Japan was

²⁴ Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (New York: Longman, 1987), 27-29.

²⁵ Besides being close friends, Castle and Hoover shared similar ideas about American foreign policy. Stimson, on the other hand, held a global vision of American diplomacy that closely resembled Roosevelt's views. For the friendship between Castle and Hoover, the ideas that they shared, and their disagreements with Stimson, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 62-73.

²⁶ On the danger of appearing pro-Japanese, see Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 213.

²⁷ For later efforts by Grew and Dooman in 1939 to achieve an American-Japanese accommodation, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 172-174.

²⁸ Utley, *Going to War*, 3-22.

²⁹ For the continuation of Japanese penetration in north China after 1933 and the growth of Chinese resistance, see Michael Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 39-40; Grew, *Ten Years*, 193-194; Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 236-237; and Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 41-46.

committed to resisting western influence in East Asia, Grew maintained, and he correctly predicted that Japan would refuse an offer of mediation. Instead, Grew counseled the Department to send notes to Japan "only . . . where such protests might be expected not to aggravate the situation" ³⁰ Grew argued that this policy had improved Japanese-American relations in the preceding four years and that this stance would help restrain Japan by avoiding "irritation which would merely . . . spur the Japanese to further aggression." ³¹ In the hope of keeping "Japanese-American relations on a fair equilibrium," the Ambassador tried to restrict American diplomacy to actions for "the record." ³² To achieve this goal, Grew consistently advised informal protests against Japanese actions, and he opposed American participation with other western powers in castigating Japan. ³³

In forming these recommendations, Grew depended on Dooman, the new Counselor of the American Embassy in Tokyo. From 1933 to early 1937, Dooman ran the Japan desk in the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs in the Department, but in late 1936, Grew requested that Dooman be assigned to Tokyo. Dooman eagerly accepted the appointment because he had chafed under the stern style and pro-Chinese orientation of Stanley Hornbeck, the chief of the Far Eastern bureau. ³⁴ Even before Dooman arrived, Grew predicted that they would be "as thick as thieves,"

³⁰ Grew to Cordell Hull, 14 July 1937, U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1937* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), 3:164-166 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*, followed by appropriate year). See also Grew to Hull, 13 July 1937, *FRUS*, 1937 3:157.

³¹ Grew, Diary, 14 July 1937, vol. 85, Joseph C. Grew Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. On 24 July, Grew further cautioned the Secretary that, while Japanese violations of American treaty rights had to be noted, "the manner and method" of American protests was critical. "Common sense" dictated, according to Grew, that American responses avoid being "unnecessarily irritating." Grew to Hull, 24 July 1937, *FRUS*, 1937 3:255-256.

³² Grew, Diary, 13 August 1937, vol. 85; Grew to Norman Armour, 25 September 1937, and Grew to Erle R. Dickover, 25 September 1937, vol. 83, Grew Papers; and Grew, *Ten Years*, 214-216.

³³ Grew to Hull, 6 August 1937, *FRUS*, 1937 3:340-341. In the years before Pearl Harbor, Grew stressed preserving good Japanese-American relations more than safeguarding American treaty rights in China because he speculated that the United State could do little to protect its interests in China without risking war. Grew's constant fear of possible Soviet expansion in East Asia also pushed him to oppose a vigorous stance toward Japan. Grew pursued this policy of accommodation, moreover, despite his expectation that the Japanese would continue to increase their penetration of north China. Grew, Diary, 21, 22 July 1937, vol. 85; Grew to Dickover, 25 September 1937, and Grew to Hornbeck, 10 July 1937, vol. 83, Grew Papers; Grew to Hull, 23 July 1937, *FRUS*, 1937 3:251-253, and Grew, *Ten Years*, 221.

³⁴ Peter A. Adams, "Eugene H. Dooman, 'A Penny a Dozen Expert': The Tribulations of a Japan Specialist in the American Foreign Service, 1912-1945" (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1976), 57-95.

and throughout the next four years, Grew constantly consulted Dooman and relied on him for information about Japanese politics and for early drafting of important documents.³⁵

Grew and Dooman received strong departmental support from Jay Pierrepont Moffat and Hugh Wilson, two other members of the Japan Connection. After a two-year stint in Australia, Moffat returned to the Department in July 1937 as Chief of the newly-reorganized Division of European Affairs.³⁶ Wilson, who had served as the American Minister to Switzerland since 1927, then joined Moffat in the Department in August as an Assistant Secretary of State.³⁷ Besides formulating American policy toward Europe, Wilson and Moffat supported a cautious stance toward Japan because the two men, like Grew and Dooman, wanted an East Asian policy that would, in Moffat's words, "safeguard our nationals, preserve our interests and keep us out of all involvement."³⁸

Hull's unique management style allowed Wilson and Moffat to influence America's East Asian policy. Especially when the Secretary was "puzzled about a situation," he held rambling conferences in his office where all the top officers in the Department, regardless of specialization, offered their recommendations.³⁹ Together, Wilson and Moffat exercised a strong voice in this setting.⁴⁰ Through Wilson and Moffat, Castle strongly seconded the passive policy advocated by Grew and Dooman. During the latter half of 1937, Castle met with Wilson and Moffat often to

³⁵ Grew to Eugene H. Dooman, 9 February 1937, vol. 83, Grew Papers. For Grew's high appraisal of his Counselor throughout 1937, see Grew, Diary, 1 November 1937, vol. 85.

³⁶ Before going to Australia, Moffat had honed his bureaucratic skills from 1932 to 1935 as Chief of the old Division of West European Affairs.

³⁷ For Wilson's excitement at being able to work with Moffat in shaping American policy, see Wilson to Moffat, 30 June 1937, vol. 12, J. Pierrepont Moffat Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

³⁸ Moffat to Norman Davis, 8 September 1937, vol. 12, Moffat Papers.

³⁹ Moffat, Diary, 31 July, 1 August 1937, vol. 39; and Wilson to Grew, 28 August 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Hugh R. Wilson Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library. See also James C. Thomson, Jr., "The Role of the Department of State," in *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations, 1931-1941*, by eds. Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 87-88; and Utley, *Going to War*, 9. For Moffat's close relationship with Hull, see Moffat, Diary, 29, 31 July, 1, 3, 12, 16 August, 1, 22 September 1937, vol. 39.

⁴⁰ Grew realized his dependence on support from Wilson and Moffat for his recommendations, and he praised them as a "stabilizing influence" in the Department. Grew to Wilson, 30 September 1937, "Grew, Joseph C." Box 2, Wilson Papers. Likewise, Wilson and Moffat appreciated Grew's position in Tokyo, because the Ambassador had the ability to "be very firm without being antagonistic." Moffat to Grew, 18 December 1937, vol. 12, Moffat Papers.

discuss the American stance toward Japan, and Castle reinforced their opposition to any coercive action against the island nation.⁴¹

In the Department debates of 1937, Wilson and Moffat repeatedly conflicted with Stanley Hornbeck. Although promoted to political adviser to the Secretary in 1937, Hornbeck continued to dominate the Division of Far Eastern Affairs because his former assistant, Maxwell Hamilton, succeeded him as the division chief.⁴² The dispute between Wilson and Moffat, on one hand, and Hornbeck, on the other, revolved around how much coercion the United States could use, or threaten to use, in its East Asian policy. In 1937, Hornbeck argued that the United States could safely threaten Japan.⁴³ Hornbeck's abrasive personality, however, encouraged Hull to consult Moffat and Wilson. Annoyed by Hornbeck's lack of tact and his verbose memoranda, Hull complained that the former Far Eastern Chief "just fusses at me all the time."⁴⁴

During the early months of the Sino-Japanese war, the Department followed the cautious policy advocated by Grew, Dooman, Wilson, Moffat, and Castle. In his first public statement after the outbreak of fighting, Hull on 16 July faulted neither Japan nor China, but instead presented a very general list of American principles including avoiding force in the settlement of disputes and international respect for treaties.⁴⁵ Although increasingly angry at the Japanese, Hull assured Grew on 29 July that his policy would be "not to make uncalled for and likely to be futile protests or gestures of interference."⁴⁶ In a further statement released on 23 August, Hull explicitly applied his principles of 16 July to the Pacific, but the Secretary still avoided blaming either China or Japan.⁴⁷ In formulating this policy, Hull relied on his own innate caution which was reinforced by the advice of Grew, Dooman, Wilson and Moffat. Besides consulting Wilson and Moffat, Hull constantly requested Grew's advice on policy questions, deferred to Grew's

⁴¹ Castle, *Diary*, 24 August, 14 September, 9, 31 October, 14 November, 15, 19, 23, 29 December 1937, vol. 34.

⁴² Thomson, "Department of State," 84; and Utley, *Going to War*, 8.

⁴³ Wilson to Grew, 18 October 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers. For Hornbeck's views during the Manchurian Crisis, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 90-91, 99-100.

⁴⁴ Hull's comment to John Carter Vincent quoted in Thomson, "The Role of the Department of State," 88. Wilson and Moffat also found working with the Political Adviser tiresome because of his anti-Japanese attitudes and his seemingly endless quest for precision in drafting. Moffat, *Diary*, 26 August, 23 September, 2, 3, 4, 13 October 1937, vol. 39.

⁴⁵ Statement by Hull, 16 July 1937, U.S. Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), 370-371.

⁴⁶ Hull to Grew, 29 July 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:297-298.

discretion on how to approach the Japanese, and let the Ambassador know he was pleased with Grew's actions.⁴⁸

By August, Grew expressed great satisfaction with Hull's policy, and the Ambassador took every opportunity to assure the Secretary of the wisdom of this course. Grew's pleasure with Hull's policy, in fact, encouraged the Ambassador to overstep his bounds in late August. Grew had been mulling over the future shape of American policy, and after consulting the entire Embassy staff, Grew wrote a long telegram to the Secretary on 27 August.⁴⁹ Dooman strongly supported Grew's actions because both men saw an opportunity to influence Hull.⁵⁰

Grew and Dooman sought to advance American interests in East Asia through an accommodation with Japanese expansionism. For Grew and Dooman, this adjustment reflected "practical common sense." Both men assumed that, without war, the United States could not alter Japan's actions in China. Since the United States had already registered its disapproval of Japan's aggression, Grew and Dooman argued that the Department should now adopt a "policy of dignified silence."⁵¹ In the hopes of building on Japanese appreciation of recent American policy, Grew called for a "special endeavor" by the United States not to go further in its condemning Japanese actions. This policy, Grew argued, would increase protection of American rights in East Asia as well as offer a future opportunity to help settle the conflict when, as Grew expected, the Japanese became bogged down in China.⁵²

Grew's telegram had an immediate effect on the Department. According to Wilson, the note dissuaded the Secretary from sending "a rather ominous document to the Japanese."⁵³ Moffat noted that Grew's reasoning reassured the Secretary to continue his passive policy toward Japan, but Hull refused any special effort not to offend the Japanese. The Secretary, moreover, asserted that Grew and the Embassy had to be awakened to the depth of American outrage at

⁴⁷ Press Release by Department of State, 23 August 1937, *Peace and War*, 375-377.

⁴⁸ Hull to Grew, 29 July, 5, 6, 7 August 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:297-298, 328-329, 353. See also Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 243.

⁴⁹ Grew, *Diary*, 27 August 1937, vol. 85.

⁵⁰ Grew to Wilson, 30 September 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers.

⁵¹ Grew, *Diary*, 27 August 1937, vol. 85.

⁵² Grew to Hull, 27 August 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:485-488. Grew did not consider his recommendation pro-Japanese. Rather, this extra effort not to irritate Japan would allow the United State "to come out of the whole mess . . . with constructive advantage to our future position and interests in the Far East." Grew, *Diary*, 27 August 1937, vol. 85.

⁵³ Wilson to Grew, 28 August 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers.

Japan's behavior and to the need for an "American policy over a long term with respect to condoning treaty breaking and aggression."⁵⁴

After a long drafting process, Hull responded on 2 September.⁵⁵ In this terse note, Hull stressed American disapproval of Japanese actions and the Secretary's fervent commitment to the principles he had outlined on 16 July and 23 August. Although the Secretary would continue his policy not "to call names or to make threats," he strongly notified Grew that "we should not allow ourselves to be hampered . . . by being especially solicitous that what we do shall not be displeasing" to either Japan or China.⁵⁶

Stung by the Secretary's rebuke, Grew immediately altered his course.⁵⁷ As directed by Hull, Grew made stronger protests to the Japanese Foreign Office, especially over Japanese bombing in Nanjing.⁵⁸ On 15 September, Grew also wrote Hull an even longer letter to demonstrate that the Embassy did not diverge from the Department's stance. In this deferential note, the Ambassador stressed that his "main purpose" in the earlier telegram had been to advise the continuation of the current American policy.⁵⁹ Grew did not, however, discard his pro-Japanese views in his note of 15 September. In a delicate balance, the Ambassador still maintained that American interests would be served best by avoiding any unnecessary irritation of Japan.⁶⁰

The exchange of letters between Grew and Hull demonstrated the limits of influence by the Japan Connection under the Roosevelt Administration. While Grew and the others could encourage a passive policy not to confront Japan, these diplomats could not persuade Hull to accommodate Japan's expansionism. For the Japan Connection, an adjustment to Japan's new

⁵⁴ Moffat, *Diary*, 27, 28, 29, 30 August, vol. 39.

⁵⁵ According to Moffat, the Secretary intended the note to show the Ambassador how the Department "viewed the Asiatic conflict in a different light from himself." *Ibid.*, 2 September 1937, vol. 39.

⁵⁶ Hull to Grew, 2 September 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:505-508. Hull concluded that, if Japan wanted American good will, then the island nation should listen to American calls for restraint "now."

⁵⁷ Grew, *Diary*, 3 September 1937, vol. 85.

⁵⁸ For examples, see Grew, *Ten Years*, 217-219; and Grew to Hull, 10, 20, 27 September 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:521-522, 535-536, 553-554.

⁵⁹ Grew to Hull, 15 September 1937, *FRUS, 1937* 3:525-530. Grew also stated that he fully shared the American "outrage" against Japanese aggression, and he assured the Secretary that, "I do not advocate and have not advocated our tying our hands in order not to displease Japan."

position would increase protection of American interests in East Asia. Hull, however, refused any acceptance of Japanese aggression. As Wilson explained to Grew in the fall of 1937, Hull was motivated "by a righteous indignation to adopt what some term a 'vigorous stand' and is deterred therefrom by the type of argument that we have launched."⁶¹

In this atmosphere, the members of the Japan Connection during the rest of 1937 worked with Hull to keep the United States committed to a cautious policy toward East Asia. In October, Wilson and Moffat helped defeat the first consideration of economic sanctions against Japan since the start of the Sino-Japanese War. Wilson and Moffat then played key roles in Hull's successful efforts to scuttle the November Brussels Conference, a meeting convened in response to Roosevelt's quarantine speech of 5 October. (This speech reflected Roosevelt's more globally inclined views on foreign policy. Because the "epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading," the President proposed that the law-abiding nations "quarantine" the aggressor states "to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease."⁶²) To sustain Hull's acceptance of a passive policy, Moffat and Wilson repeatedly stressed that economic sanctions would inevitably lead to war, that the United States could not depend on British naval support in the case of hostilities with Japan, and that a fully defeated Japan risked Soviet expansion in China.⁶³ Meanwhile, Castle encouraged popular opposition to Roosevelt's quarantine speech.⁶⁴ To defeat Roosevelt's initiative, Castle began a series of speeches warning that any form of sanctions against Japan would inevitably escalate into war.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Grew later confided to Moffat that he had not changed his goal after Hull's letter of 2 September. The Ambassador still intended to work "as long as possible to keep American factual relations with Japan on equilibrium for the future welfare of American interests." Grew to Moffat, 21 September 1937, vol. 84, Grew Papers.

⁶¹ Wilson to Grew, 18 October 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers. In the words of one historian, Hull remained committed during 1937 to a policy of "no confrontation, no withdrawal, and no assent" toward Japan. Utley, *Going to War*, 10.

⁶² Address by Roosevelt, 5 October 1937, *Peace and War*, 383-387.

⁶³ Nancy Harvison Hooker, ed., *The Moffat Papers: Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 152-156; and Wilson to Grew, 18 October 1937, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers. For more detail on these actions, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 153-158.

⁶⁴ Castle, Diary, 8, 13 October 1937, vol. 34.

⁶⁵ Although audiences disliked his criticisms of China, Castle recorded that most people seemed to agree with him that American interests in East Asia did not warrant the inherent dangers of a coercive stance. *Ibid.*, 25 October, 2, 16 November 1937, vol. 34.

III. The Japan Connection's Influence Declines

From 1938 to 1940, changes in the national and international contexts of power diluted the influence of the Japan Connection. Nationally, the Japan Connection lost its strong power base within the State Department. Wilson left Washington in January 1938 to become the American Ambassador to Germany.⁶⁶ Moffat immediately noted the loss of his ally.⁶⁷ Besides holding a lower rank than Hornbeck, Moffat suffered an ever-increasing workload as European tensions escalated.⁶⁸ From January 1938 to May 1940, when he was transferred to Canada, Moffat had little time for East Asian issues because he had to formulate an American response to Adolf Hitler's aggression in Europe. By 1941, neither Wilson nor Moffat held positions permitting them to shape American policy toward Japan.⁶⁹

The weakened position of the Japan Connection in the Department occurred just as Hull began to adopt a harsher stance toward Japan.⁷⁰ Hull did not abandon caution after 1937, but the Secretary became less willing to maintain a strictly passive policy toward Japanese expansion. For example, although Hull strongly opposed formal economic sanctions, the Secretary in 1939 officially discouraged private American loans to Japan.⁷¹ From 1938 to 1940, Hull followed a policy of harsh rhetoric mixed with softer actions that avoided confrontation while slightly harassing Japan.⁷²

⁶⁶ For examples of Hull's reliance on Wilson, see Castle, *Diary*, 29 January, 2 March 1938, vol. 35.

⁶⁷ Depicting Hornbeck as leader of the "messianic school of thought" within the Department, Moffat lamented that, without Wilson, he had less success in countering Hornbeck's call for an active policy toward Japan. Moffat, *Diary*, 31 January 1938, vol. 40.

⁶⁸ For examples of Moffat's heavy workload, see *ibid.*, 10 February, 15 April 1938, vol. 40.

⁶⁹ In late 1938, Roosevelt recalled Wilson to signal American disapproval of the Nazi regime, but Wilson's return did not reestablish the Japan Connection's position within the Department. During 1939 and 1940, Wilson progressively alienated himself from Hull. Constantly protesting the hardening American stance toward Hitler, Wilson appeared pro-German. Exasperated by his declining influence, in December 1940 Wilson retired. Wilson's alienation from the Department can be followed through his conversations with Castle, in Castle, *Diary*, 22 November 1938, vol. 36; 11 January, 1, 13, 18, 28 February, 5 April 1939, vol. 37; 28 July, 16 November, 4, 19, December 1939, vol. 38; 12 January, 23 February 1940, vol. 39, and 20, 21 November 1940, vol. 40.

⁷⁰ Repeatedly in the early months of 1938, Moffat noticed that the Secretary was "growing so increasingly perturbed over the plight of the Democratic powers and the increasing gains of the Dictatorships that he is swinging ... to the left of the middle of the road which he has heretofore pursued." Moffat, *Diary*, 1, 2 January 1938, vol. 40. For further examples of Hull's harsher stance, see *ibid.*, 29, 30, 31 January, 10 February, 1938, vol. 40.

Other members of the Japan Connection also noted the Secretary's shift. See Castle, *Diary*, 1 December 1937, vol. 34, and 18 February 1938, vol. 35.

⁷¹ Moffat, *Diary*, 29 March, 1 April 1938, vol. 40; and Utley, *Going to War*, 44-57.

⁷² Utley, *Going to War*, 78.

Continued Japanese aggression further undermined the Japan Connection's case. From 1938 to 1940, despite hesitancy and occasional indecision, Japan continued to spread its influence in Asia. During early 1938, the Japanese military escalated the war with China.⁷³ Bugged down on the continent, the government of Prince Konoye Fumimaro then decided in November 1938 to abandon fully the Washington Treaty system.⁷⁴ In September 1940, viewing Germany's summer victory over France as an opportunity for further expansion, Japan joined with Germany and Italy in the Tripartite Pact. That month Japanese forces also occupied northern Indochina.⁷⁵

Top American officials grew increasingly alarmed by Japan's unrelenting movement in Asia. During the late 1930s, decision-makers in Washington viewed Japanese aggression as part of a global movement by totalitarian states to impose restrictive political and economic practices on the world. In an international system of seemingly interlocked threats from Germany, Italy, and Japan, American foreign policy assumed a more global nature as policymakers argued that the security of the United States required the survival of Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ In this changing national and international context, many of the arguments of the Japan Connection lost relevancy. If the United States needed Britain to resist Hitler and if England depended on raw materials from her southeast-Asian colonies, then the United States, according to Roosevelt and others, must protect those areas from Japanese expansion.⁷⁷

Despite strenuous efforts, the Japan Connection failed to counteract the increasing globalism of American foreign policy. From 1938 to 1941, Grew and Castle emerged as the two most influential members of the Japan Connection while Dooman supported Grew's efforts to

⁷³ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 259-260; and Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 59-64.

⁷⁴ On 3 November, Prime Minister Konoye called for a "new order" in East Asia that would exclude western influence. Later in the month, the Japanese Foreign Office summarily informed the United States that Japan no longer recognized American treaty rights in China. In early 1939, Japan began to move southward by occupying the Hainan and Spratly Islands. Japan then humiliated the British by blockading Tianjin.

⁷⁵ Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 67-68, 75-76, 113-118. For more on Japanese goals in the Pact, see LaFeber, *The Clash*, 191-195, especially p. 191 where LaFeber states that the new Foreign Minister "Matsuoka [Yosuke] was a loud voice urging that Japan fully support the Axis powers, in part so that Japanese could more effectively exploit the crumbling colonial empires in Southeast Asia."

⁷⁶ For the increasing globalism of Roosevelt's foreign policy, see Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 69-70, 74-75, 87-89, 96; Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 142; and Utley, *Going to War*, 32-33, 57-58, 92, 178, 180.

⁷⁷ For an example of this globalist thinking, see Roosevelt to Grew, 21 January 1941, in Grew, *Ten Years*, 361-363.

avoid a Japanese-American conflict. Preoccupied with European questions, Moffat and Wilson devoted only marginal attention to East Asia.⁷⁸

From January 1938 to December 1941, Grew and Dooman fought a defensive battle to preserve a passive policy toward Japan. Realizing the growing pressure within the Department for an active stance, Grew, with Dooman's support, usually argued strongly that the United States must not use economic sanctions against Japan. Grew and Dooman were convinced that the Japanese viewed control of north China's raw materials as vital to the empire's existence. Given this commitment, the Japanese would not, they argued, be cowed by American economic pressure. The Ambassador and his Counselor stressed, moreover, that sanctions risked war in an area of limited American economic and strategic interests.⁷⁹

While Grew and Dooman worked officially from 1938 to 1941 to avert a Japanese-American clash, Castle increased his unofficial activities to the same end. During 1937, Castle supplemented the efforts of Grew, Dooman, Wilson, and Moffat. Castle refrained from greater activity during that crucial year because he was distracted by his position on the Republican National Committee. Despite his duties with the Republican party, in the years leading up to Pearl Harbor Castle increased his public criticism of the Roosevelt Administration. Through his articles and speeches, Castle tried to mobilize opposition to what he perceived as a dangerous activism by the President.⁸⁰ In late 1940, Castle also helped organize the America First Committee in the hope that this new group could block Roosevelt's foreign policy.⁸¹

Yet, the efforts by Grew, Dooman, and Castle failed to halt the progressive deterioration in Japanese-American relations. On 24 July 1941, Japan occupied southern Indo-China, and in response Roosevelt immediately froze Japanese assets in the United States. The President's order soon escalated into a complete embargo of American trade with Japan including oil, a

⁷⁸ For Wilson's opposition to an American confrontation with Japan, see Castle, *Diary*, 23 February 1940. vol. 39; Utley, *Going to War*, 88-93; and Wilson to Grew, 9 March 1940, "Grew, Joseph C.," Box 2, Wilson Papers.

⁷⁹ Grew, *Diary*, 1 August 1938, vol. 93; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 264-273. For more detail on the efforts by Grew and Dooman to influence American foreign policy from 1938 to 1941, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 171-186. In the fall of 1940, Grew temporarily weakened his opposition to a forceful stance against Japan because of his dismay over the sudden fall of France. By early 1941, however, Grew had returned to his former position.

⁸⁰ Alfred L. Castle, "William R. Castle and Opposition to U.S. Involvement in an Asian War, 1939-1941," *Pacific Historical Review*, 54 (August 1985): 337-351.

commodity vital to Japan.⁸² The sudden increase in Japanese-American friction dismayed Grew as well as Japanese Prime Minister Konoye. Because Japan depended upon American oil, Japanese leaders had to make a decision: either Japan must reach an agreement with the United States or attack the European colonies in Southeast Asia to ensure a supply of oil. Negotiation or war presented the only two possibilities. In this atmosphere of crisis, Konoye asked for a private meeting with Roosevelt to discuss Japanese-American differences. Once informed of Konoye's initiative, Grew immediately urged the Administration to accept.⁸³

Grew's strenuous efforts to encourage a Roosevelt-Konoye meeting illustrated his lack of influence in the State Department in 1941. From August to October, the Ambassador argued repeatedly that the United States should accept Konoye's offer. Japan now realized, Grew maintained, that the United States would oppose Japanese aggression in the Pacific. Having awakened Japan to the depth of the American commitment in East Asia, the United States must now encourage those members of the Japanese government who wished to avoid war. Although Grew praised the earlier forceful posture of his government, the Ambassador stressed that further pressure would not force the Japanese to submit. Rather, Grew feared that only a positive response to Konoye's initiative would check the descent to war.⁸⁴

The Department flatly rejected his recommendations. In particular, Hull and his advisers, reflecting the distrust of Japan that pervaded Washington by 1941, rebutted Grew's position that a meeting could occur without prior agreement on points of dispute.⁸⁵ The Department demanded explicit assurances of change in Japanese policy, especially on China, before any

⁸¹ Castle, *Diary*, 4, 22 October, 30 November, 6, 15, 26 December 1940, vol. 40. On the America First Committee, see Justus D. Doenecke, ed., *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940-1941 as Revealed in the Papers of the America First Committee* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990).

⁸² Historians differ over whether Roosevelt meant to cut off Japan's supply of oil in July or whether lower-level bureaucrats imposed an embargo without the President's knowledge. For the former interpretation, see Heinrichs, *Threshold of War*, 246-247; and for the latter, see Utley, *Going to War*, 151-156.

⁸³ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 337-340.

⁸⁴ The Ambassador admitted that Japan might not fulfill agreements reached at such a meeting, and Grew varied in his estimation of how far Konoye could go in meeting American demands, but Grew clung to his conviction that only by talking could the two nations prevent a clash. *Ibid.*, 340-345, 351.

⁸⁵ For the distrust of Japan in Washington, see Utley, *Going to War*, 159-160.

meeting between Roosevelt and Konoye. By the beginning of October, the possibility for a Roosevelt-Konoye meeting had died.⁸⁶

The failure of the proposed conference starkly revealed the Embassy's lack of influence in the year preceding Pearl Harbor.⁸⁷ By the fall of 1941, Grew lamented his isolation from the Department.⁸⁸ In this vacuum, the Ambassador busied himself with repeated warnings to the Department that Japan would rather attack than submit to American coercion. Grew relied heavily on Dooman for these telegrams, but in the end, the Embassy's telegrams did little good.⁸⁹

While Grew and Dooman tried to combat their isolation in Tokyo, Castle was forced to stop his public opposition to Roosevelt's foreign policy. Castle began 1941 with numerous speeches, but on 29 April, the former Under Secretary suddenly collapsed. This collapse and the resulting operations to extract his colon removed Castle from the public debate for the rest of 1941.⁹⁰

IV. Conclusions

Could the Japan Connection have averted the Second World War in the Pacific? Certainly Grew, Dooman, Moffat, Wilson, and Castle offered ideas after 1937 to deescalate Japanese-American friction.⁹¹ Yet, Roosevelt and Hull consistently rejected those proposals, and because of diplomatic rigidity on both sides of the Pacific, Japan and the United States moved inexorably toward war from 1939 to 1941. Neither nation wanted war, but because top

⁸⁶ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 344-350. In retrospect, Grew overestimated the possibility that Konoye and Roosevelt could resolve Japanese-American differences. By 1941, the Japanese military was committed to maintaining control of China, while the United States demanded that Japan relinquish its position on the Asian mainland. Yet, considering the lack of American military preparedness in the Pacific, coupled with the escalating German-American confrontation in the Atlantic, Grew correctly perceived that the United States should try to avoid war in the Pacific for as long as possible in order to prevent a two-front war. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares*, 241-254, 263; Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 351-354; Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 166-167; and Utley, *Going to War*, 180.

⁸⁷ Akira Iriye, "The Role of the United States Embassy in Tokyo," in *Pearl Harbor as History*, eds. Borg and Okamoto, 121, 125.

⁸⁸ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 349. For examples of Grew's frustration with the lack of information on policy from the Department, see Grew, *Diary*, 30 April, 10 July 1941, Box 1.

⁸⁹ Grew, *Diary*, 3 November 1941, Box 2; and Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, 354-357.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of Castle's limited activities during 1941 as well as the ways Castle's elitism restricted his success at mobilizing public opinion, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 196-199.

⁹¹ American acceptance of another Grew initiative for an accommodation with Japan in 1939, for example, might have satisfied the Japanese and thus avoided Pearl Harbor or at least delayed a Pacific war. Surely implementation

American and Japanese officials held "two mutually exclusive views of world order," the leaders of the two powers refused to make the compromises necessary to avert a clash.⁹² Japan's attempt to establish an economically self-sufficient sphere of influence in East Asia conflicted with the American vision of an economically interdependent world linked through free trade.⁹³ War was not inevitable because opportunities arose in which Japan and the United States might have reached a rapprochement.⁹⁴ But each time top policymakers in the two countries decided on courses of action that escalated Japanese-American friction.

The Japan Connection failed to shape a Japanese-American accommodation in the years before Pearl Harbor for several reasons. Individual weaknesses decreased their influence. Grew and Dooman, for example, suffered from excessive optimism that the Japanese would cease to expand. The national and international contexts of power in the late 1930s especially diluted the Japan Connection's influence. Nationally, these American diplomats never convinced Roosevelt and Hull to discard a globalist vision of American foreign policy. Only in 1937, moreover, did the Japan Connection hold a strong position within the Department from which to discourage a confrontation with Japan. By 1941, the Japan Connection lacked a strong voice in Washington. Grew and Dooman were isolated in Tokyo, and Castle fell ill. Even if the members of the Japan Connection had persuaded Roosevelt and Hull to seek a settlement with Japan, Grew, Dooman,

of Castle's call in October 1940 for American acceptance of a Japanese Monroe Doctrine would have preserved peace by acknowledging Japan's dominance in Asia. See Rickman, *The Japan Connection*, 172-189, 196-199.

⁹² Utley, *Going to War*, 178. See also Barnhart, *Japan Prepares*, 272; and Iriye, *Origins of the Second World War*, 179.

⁹³ For works on Japanese foreign policy that stress Japan's commitment to expansion, see Barnhart, *Japan Prepares*; James Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); and Stephen Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor: The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁹⁴ For a discussion of various proposals made by Japan and by the United States in fall 1941 to avert a clash, see Utley, *Going to War*, 165-175. For a detailed discussion of the efforts by Joseph Ballantine, another member of the Japan Connection, to seek a "modus vivendi" between Japan and the United States in November 1941, see Rickman, "The Japan Connection," 189-196. Many of the documents for these various Japanese and American proposals are included in Akira Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999).

Castle, Moffat, and Wilson never confronted the problem of how to persuade the increasingly anti-Japanese American public to accept a probably distasteful compromise.⁹⁵

The international context of the early 1940s also provided an inhospitable climate for the Japan Connection's ideas. In a world of seemingly interlocked aggression by Germany, Italy, and Japan, alliance with Britain, China, and the Soviet Union made sense to most officials in the Roosevelt Administration. In 1937, without a war in Europe, the United States could decide not to resist forcefully Japan's aggression in China. By 1941, however, with Europe dominated by Hitler and with Asia threatened by continued Japanese aggrandizement, many United States policymakers maintained that vital American interests were at stake. Roosevelt and Hull argued by 1941 that American security required the survival of Britain and the Soviet Union, and this assumption committed them to oppose Germany and Japan.⁹⁶ Even with a stronger bureaucratic position and fewer individual shortcomings, the Japan Connection would have had difficulty convincing the President and the Secretary to accept a foreign policy more tolerant of Japanese actions or one of delaying a sharp fissure. Unlike the Hoover years, the national and international contexts of power from 1937 to 1941 undercut the Japan Connection's influence.

⁹⁵ Much of the historiography on the coming of World War II has also failed to address the question of what was politically feasible given the anti-Japanese state of American public opinion. See J. Garry Clifford, "Both Ends of the Telescope: New Perspectives on FDR and American Entry into World War II," *Diplomatic History* 13 (Spring 1989): 228-230.

⁹⁶ For how the start of the Japanese-American war in 1941 reflected critical changes in the global context, see Waldo Heinrichs, *Diplomacy and Force: American's Road to War, 1931-41*, eds. Marc Gallicchio and Jonathan Utley (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1996): 213-217.