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# Japan, the United States, and the Road to World War II in the Pacific

**Richard J. Smethurst**

Why did Japan begin World War II by invading China in 1937 and then widen it by attacking the British and Americans in 1941? Were these attacks the outgrowth of a Japanese state with a uniquely intense nationalism, or of a particularly coercive social order, or of economic and social inequalities, or had Japan by the late 1930s entered a stage of late capitalist development that naturally segued into fascism? Was there a direct causal connection between the West's forced intrusion into Japan in the 1850s and subsequent Western pressure on Japan and its neighbors and the launching of Japan's World War II in Asia in 1937? Various wartime and postwar Western and Japanese writers have advanced all of these views in discussing Japan's involvement in World War II.

One cannot analyze Japan's entry into World War II without discussing the broader question of why any country goes to war. Do leaders think through their reasons for beginning wars? What are their goals in doing so, their prospects of achieving those goals, the anticipated costs--in lives, in money, in destruction, in the war's impact on their society's values, even its very survival? Do decision makers have a reasonably clear view of how to end the war and how the postwar peace will be better than the prewar peace?

In the road to World War II, did Japanese military leaders ask themselves these questions before they invaded China in 1937 and before they attacked the British and Americans in 1941? And if Japan's decision-makers did not ask these questions, or asked them but answered them incorrectly, why was this so? What was the impact of nationalism on their decision to go to war? To what extent did the political and military leaders who initiated Japan's aggression in China and its attack on the United States and its allies let their assessments of their nation's and soldiers' superiority to potential enemies influence the decision-making process? To what extent did their interpretations, probably mistaken, of why Japan won earlier wars against China and Russia enter into the calculus?

Before describing Japan's road to World War II, it might be best to lay out the five premises of this essay. First, before the Manchurian takeover in 1931-2, and perhaps even up until the mid-1930s, Japan's foreign policy was not significantly different from that of the US or Britain or other powers. Japan was an imperialist state that operated within the constraints of what was acceptable imperialist behavior. Only after 1931, and especially after its aggression in China in 1937, did Japan leave that framework.

**Elements of Japan's Kwantung Army blow up a railroad in the Manchurian Incident of September 18, 1931, leading to the creation of Manchukuo**

Second, Japan had legitimate grievances toward Britain and particularly America: these included Western refusal to accept Asians as equal to Europeans and North Americans, restraints on Japanese trade, unwillingness to allow the Japanese the same kind of freedom in Manchuria that Americans and British regularly took for themselves in Latin America and throughout the British empire, and the United States' insulting polices toward Japanese immigration. Third, these grievances, aggravating as they were, did not make war with China, still less with the United States, a realistic choice for Japan. China had a population in 1937 seven times larger than Japan's, and in 1937-41, the US GNP was five times greater, and its manufacturing output nine times greater, than Japan's. The United States also had more highly developed levels of technology and greater access to raw materials. Japan undertook wars in China and against the United States that it could not win. Fourth, Japanese leaders like General Araki Sadao, who stated in an interview in 1934 that "three million Japanese armed with bamboo spears can defend Japan against any enemy," let their chauvinistic views influence their decision-making. This was especially true in the case of the invasion of China—Japan's leaders in the summer of 1937 were so sure of the overwhelming superiority of Imperial Army soldiers to Chinese ones that they thought the war would be ended by the new year. Fifth and most tragically for Japan, there was an alternative before 1936 that was not considered again until after Japan's defeat in 1945: because Britain and America were more advanced economically and industrially, Japan benefited more from cooperation than confrontation with the two English-speaking powers. In fact, as one Japanese critic of militarism, Finance Minister Takahashi Korekiyo, pointed out shortly before his assassination by young officers in 1936, Japan's army and navy themselves depended on American raw materials and technology—by going to war with the United States, the Japanese military not only would take on a far stronger country, but also would cut itself off from the economic benefits of resources Japan needed.

Japan entered the modern world when the Americans, and the then much more powerful British, forced open its gates in the 1850s. When the Western countries visited Japan in the mid-19th century, they came not asking for trade, but demanding it. In the 100 years before Commodore Matthew Perry's incursion in 1853, an earthshaking revolution had occurred in Britain, and then in continental Europe and North America—the industrial revolution. The West returned to Asia with new steamships, improved weapons, and a new attitude—an attitude that demanded Japan open itself to trade. The Western powers also worked together to impose the infamous "unequal treaties" on Japan: treaty ports (little Englands or Americas, serviced by Japanese servants of all sorts, many of whom were women who worked at night), extraterritoriality, tariff restrictions, and the most-favored nation clause. (Whatever Japan gave one power they had to give to all of the others.)

Japan's responses presaged the cooperation-autarky dichotomy in later foreign policy debates, discussed below. One group of samurai advocated cooperation with the West—open the country to learn how to make Western weapons in order to defend Japan from the West. The other group advocated resisting the West no matter what the costs—forerunners of General Araki's "bamboo spear" theory. In 1868, the former group came to power and Japan began to remake itself on the Western model—but keep in mind that the reform group's goal in remaking Japan using Western models was to defend Japan from the West. Members of both groups

were nationalists reacting to what they saw as excessive and unwanted Western interference in their country's affairs.

The primary foreign policy goal of Japan's leadership in the 1870-1900 period was to rid Japan of the unequal treaties; both the government and public opinion objected to the treaties' limitations on import duties and to the despised extraterritoriality. Thus, the newly nationalistic Meiji leadership undertook a host of reforms aimed at creating a Japanese state—to them Japan needed to be unified and strong in the face of the outside threat. The government pursued a "rich country, strong army" policy: a modern, Western-style army, a new taxation system, conscription, a centralized local government structure, universal education, national universities, a European-style legal system, a Prussian-style constitution, built model factories to import up-to-date Western industrial technology, and encouraged entrepreneurship among rural landlords and the urban merchant class. Two reforms in this process of state building stand out: the creation of an orthodox nationalist ideology centered on the emperor—reinvented tradition--and the creation of a Japanese language.

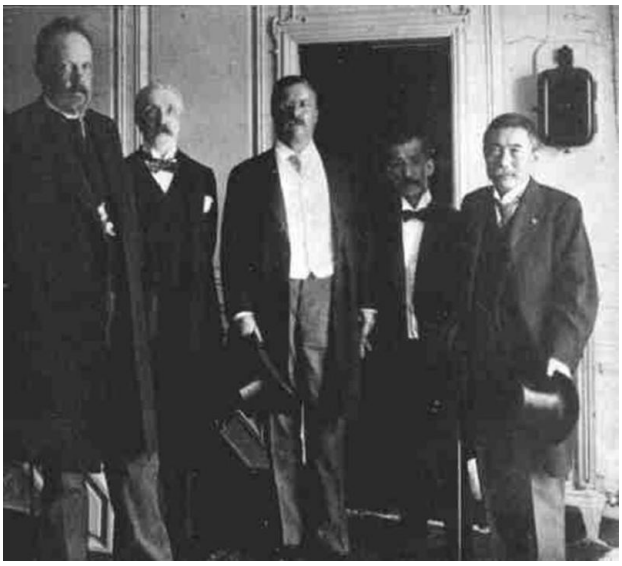
The ideology focused on the emperor as descended from the founding deities, as national father figure, and as the focus of the citizens' loyalty. He became the symbol of Japanese nationalism.

**The Meiji Emperor**

The newly created elementary school system was used as the primary disseminator of this patriotism. But in 1873, Japan did not have a unified language to spread nationalism. People spoke local dialects that were often mutually unintelligible, and the literate few wrote in a variety of difficult writing systems that were totally unlike the spoken language. Debates over how to reform the language raged throughout the late nineteenth century. Finally around 1900, the Education Ministry decided on a new language: elite Tokyo Japanese became kokugo, that is, "national language," not "Japanese," and the writing system was based on this new language. These two reforms, the creation of a new nationalist ideology and of a new national language allowed the government to turn "peasants into Japanese," to borrow Eugen Weber's title of his book on the same process in France in exactly the same time period.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, these reforms were well underway. Japan had remade itself to the point that it was able to negotiate an end to the unequal treaties: Westerners in Japan came under Japanese law by the end of the century, and Japan finally regained tariff autonomy in 1913, over half a century after the limitations were imposed. But this did not end the Japanese quest for equality with the West. Even as Japan escaped its status as victim of imperialism, it joined in the European and American game—that is, Japan began to build its own empire, to be one of the perpetrators. The drive for empire can be better explained in nationalistic than economic terms: great nations have empires; if we are to be a great nation, we need an empire. In 1879 Japan annexed Okinawa. In 1894-5, Japan won a war with China and gained another colony, Taiwan; it also gained a huge indemnity from China and thus was able to take its monetary system onto the gold standard, a point of great national pride. Membership in these two clubs: the imperialist club and the gold standard club, reinforced Japan's view of itself as a rising power.

In 1902, Japan also made an alliance with Great Britain, another sign of its success—another Asian first: an alliance with the world's primary power of the time. In 1904-5, Japan fought a war with Russia, and won once again. This brought Korea into Japan's empire, and Manchuria into its economic sphere of influence. These annexations of territory, when viewed from today's perspective, look like blatant aggression; however, they were well within the acceptable framework of Western imperialism. Britain, by signing its treaty with Japan in 1902, and then re-signing the pact after the war, endorsed the Japanese annexation of Korea. Theodore Roosevelt, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, mediated the treaty that ended the war; the Treaty of Portsmouth signed in 1905 recognized Japan's supremacy in Korea and thus the United States pre-approved Japan's annexation of Korea (this was only seven years after the US had taken the Philippines from Spain and Hawaii from its ruling family, and three years after the United States military had brutally suppressed a Filipino independence movement.)



**Theodore Roosevelt (center) with Russian and Japanese diplomats at Portsmouth**

In 1905-6, the conflict between the cooperative and the autarkic schools appeared again. Japan's military leaders, flushed with victory, pushed for larger military appropriations to build an even stronger army, nationalization of the railroad system for easier wartime mobilization, and greater funding for organizing the empire. Takahashi Korekiyo was one of the leaders of the opposition, that is, of the anti-militarist approach, because he believed that excessive military spending not only endangered Japan's national defense, but also slowed its economic development. As early as 1884, the young Takahashi, in a memorandum to the finance ministry then in the process of inducing the Matsukata deflation, wrote that the duty of the Japanese government was to build a "rich country, prosperous people" rather than a "rich country, strong army." In this memorandum he called for lower taxes even on luxury goods since high taxes cut consumption and thus demand, the provision of inexpensive capital to rural entrepreneurs such as raw silk producers, and the decentralization of economic decision-making because "not listening to markets leads directly to economic failure."

In 1904, the government had sent Takahashi, who had begun his study of English at age ten in 1864, to London to sell Japanese war bonds, at which he was eminently successful. Foreigners provided 130 million pounds, 5 times Japan's total 1903 governmental budget, by buying Japanese treasury bonds. (The list of purchasers is a who's who of London, New York, and later Hamburg and Paris finance: Jacob Schiff, John Baring, Ernest Cassel, Otto Kahn, the Hamburg Warburgs, the London and Paris Rothschilds, Lord Spencer, and even Britain's crown prince, later George V.) Takahashi learned three lessons in London and New York. Japan's victory depended on British and American money and weapons (thus, his

adherence to the cooperative approach). The costs of paying the interest and repaying the principal of these loans required fiscal prudence in Tokyo (thus, his opposition to new military spending and to the nationalization of Japan's railroad system). Japan needed foreign capital for economic development (thus his support of E.H. Harriman's plan to use American capital and equipment to develop Manchuria's railroads). The two schools more or less fought to a draw between 1905 and 1914. On the one hand, Japan's railroads were nationalized and the Harriman plan was rejected; on the other hand, the government did not give in to the army's strenuous demands to add two divisions for deployment on the mainland of Asia.

The conflict continued during World War I—this time over Japanese policy toward China. One group advocated a more autonomous Japanese policy from Great Britain and the United States on the Asian mainland. Japan should use loans to competing Chinese warlords and military intervention to gain what it saw as its deserved imperialist position in China. The Twenty-One Demands of 1915, the Japanese government's attempt, in the absence of an Anglo-American presence during World War I, to become the primary imperialist power in China, and the Nishihara Loans of 1917-18, represented this view. Takahashi and others opposed this approach on three grounds: it alienated the Chinese government, with whom Japan should cooperate economically; it aroused Chinese nationalism, which he feared would rebound against Japan in the future; and it endangered Japan's relations with Britain and America. In 1920, Takahashi, while serving as finance minister, not only criticized his government's China policy, but even advocated the abolition of the army's and navy's general staffs because they undermined the democratizing government's control over foreign policy. In 1923, he called for the appointment of civilian army and navy ministers. As the dean of historians of Taisho democracy, Shinobu Seizaburo wrote, "Takahashi was the leading representative of the bourgeois politicians who advocated civilian control of the military." His China policy views won out temporarily, but efforts to control the military did not. Moreover, in the process he made powerful enemies; his inflammatory memorandum was leaked to the army, which produced over 500 pages of critical responses.

Prime Minister Hara Kei was assassinated in 1921, and Takahashi replaced him as Prime Minister to oversee Japan's enrollment in the Washington Treaty System, the symbol of international cooperation in the post-World War I decade. This system, which went into effect with the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1922, limited Japan's navy (capital ships) to 3/5ths of the US and UK navies, required Japan to give up its leasehold of the naval base at Tsingtao in China that it had won from the Germans during World War I, limited American, British and Japanese bases in the Pacific, and required all signatories to "respect the territorial integrity of China," a euphemistic expression which meant *no further* aggressive military intervention in China. Takahashi, with the support of most of his party and all of the opposition party, thus bought into a policy of cooperation with the United States and Great Britain over China. (Takahashi was not anti-imperialist, but realistically opposed Japanese empire building outside the Anglo-American framework.) Not all Japan's leaders, and particularly not most of the army's and navy's leadership, agreed with this policy—that is, they still advocated a strong military and autonomy. But given the antiwar public mood of the 1920s, they acquiesced for the time.

**Takahashi Korekiyo. Photo taken during the 1936 election campaign, approximately one week before his assassination**

Under the façade of cooperation, several ominous portents appeared for Japanese who advocated internationalism. First was the spread of nationalism through the centralized school system. One can safely say that by the 1920s, Japan existed as a nation of Japanese. (Here again Takahashi bucked the tide. In his 1920 memorandum he also called for the abolition of the education ministry and of national universities, that is, he believed control over educational policy should be divested to regional government and in the case of universities, to private hands. He believed that local governments should run local schools and collect the land tax locally to pay for them). Second was the success of rising standards of living and literacy in creating a mass society. This, at one level, was a positive trend: Japan in the 1920s was more nearly democratic than at any time in its history before the allied occupation of Japan after World War II. But the creation of a mass society does not lead necessarily to peace—even democracies start wars. Third was Western, and particularly American immigration policy, toward Japan. The United States government practiced blatantly anti-Japanese immigration policies. Anti-Asian sentiment on the West Coast was particularly strong in the early twentieth century, and this had stimulated the Theodore Roosevelt administration to negotiate a "Gentlemen's Agreement" with Japan in 1907-8 to limit Japanese emigration to the United States. It also played a role in the passage of the Immigration Exclusion Act during the Coolidge presidency in 1924, which barred all Japanese immigration into the United States—even from Canada. Added to this, Japanese immigrants to the US were prohibited from naturalizing as American citizens. And by this time, anti-Asian sentiments were not limited to the West Coast. Co-sponsor of the 1924 immigration act was Senator James Aiken Reed, a prominent Pittsburgh attorney. The powers, when they negotiated the Treaty of Versailles in 1918-9, which established the League of Nations, rejected a Japanese/Chinese proposal to add a racial equality clause to the treaty. Fourth, was Western foreign policy toward Japan. The United States, which had encouraged Japan's activities up until and through the Russo-Japanese War, began to see Japan as a potential threat. The Philippines, part of America's empire from 1898, was much closer to Japan than to the United States; Hawaii, another American colony, was also vulnerable to a strong Japanese naval presence in the Pacific.

The fifth portent was the newly developed Anglo-American rapprochement during World War I. Britain and America, after a century of estrangement, realized in the course of defeating Germany that they had similar foreign policy interests. The two English-speaking powers engineered the Washington Treaty of 1922, and the London Treaty of 1930, the latter extending the naval armaments ratios for Japan, Britain and the US to other categories of ships, both to set up an overall security system in the Pacific AND to provide cover for Britain to terminate its alliance with Japan. Under the old treaty, Britain had agreed to maintain neutrality if Japan and the US went to war. The Anglo-Americans reasoned that Japan would not need the alliance if it were part of a regional security arrangement.

The cooperative policy worked in the 1920s, largely because key politicians like Takahashi, and Hamaguchi Osachi and Shidehara Kijuro, leaders of the Minseito, the other major political party of the 1920s, were committed to the Washington Treaty System. To finance ministers like Takahashi and the Minseito's Inoue Junnosuke, this policy had the added benefit of allowing Japan to maintain fiscal discipline by avoiding a costly naval arms race; since Japan's economy in the 1920s was one-seventh of America's, even a navy three-fifths the size of the US navy cost Japan four times more per capita.

1929 brought a bombshell to the region, and in fact to the world. In October the New York stock market crashed, and the Great Depression ensued. By 1931, reduced demand and thus reduced investment in new technology and facilities led to unemployment, underemployment and falling incomes everywhere. Worldwide, economies spiraled downward. Given the panoply of policy choices

available in times of economic downturn, one is stunned to find that virtually every country in the world chose the wrong ones in the early 1930s. Rather than increasing spending, governments raised taxes and import tariffs, and balanced budgets, which drove their economies more deeply into deflation and depression.

Japan, with Takahashi as its finance minister, was a rare exception. In the face of the severe economic crisis of the first half of the 1930s, Takahashi undertook unprecedented exchange rate, monetary, and fiscal policies. He carried out a one-time devaluation of the yen to stimulate exports. He lowered interest rates and undertook deficit financing to stimulate domestic investment and demand. Japan came out of the depression by 1935, five years ahead of the United States. Several historians have written in recent years that the key political figure in Japan during the Inukai, Saito, and Okada cabinets, 1931-1936, was Takahashi Korekiyo, not the three prime ministers. Not only did he carry out these countercyclical policies, but he also put together a coalition of finance ministry bureaucrats, party politicians (mostly from the Minseito, that is, not from his own earlier party), small and large businessmen, moderate labor unions such as Nihon Rodo Sodomei, and even some army officers such as Nagata Tetsuzan, to create "the Takahashi Line," a group committed to "the politics of productivity," reliance on the United States and British Empire for capital, raw materials, technology, and markets, and crucially to resisting the rise of militarism and "unproductive" military spending.

Although the Takahashi line maintained an increasingly tenuous hold on power until February 26, 1936, the autarky group, or to use James Crowley's term, the people who led "Japan's quest for autonomy," mostly army officers and so-called "new bureaucrats" and "new zaibatsu," became increasingly powerful in the same half-decade. Military officers plotted and carried out an invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, and their actions met thunderous public applause at home. The mass society that had brought Japan democracy in the 1920s helped bring it something else in the 1930s. The various portents discussed above---latent nationalism, resentment over America's treatment of Japanese immigrants, the increasingly unified British and American resistance to Japanese actions in China, and the suffering of many Japanese during the depression, came together to create a climate of support for the military—the men on horseback, those who had the easy answers—the men who advocated direct action, not weak-kneed (and rational) compromise. From 1931 until 1936, various segments of the military instigated overseas aggression, coup d'état attempts at home, and assassinations that changed the nature of Japan's government and foreign policy. The military killed or silenced the people who advocated cooperation—the threat of assassination was a powerful weapon for keeping opponents in line.

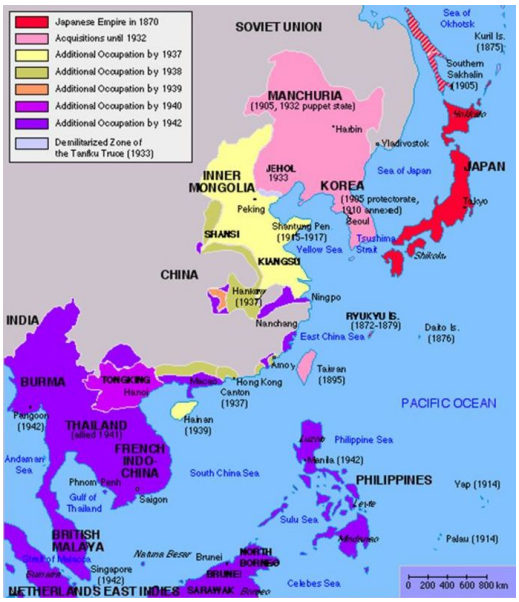
Students of Japan have commented on how few voices spoke out against the rise of militarism, fascism if you want to use that word, in Japan in the 1930s. Many of Japan's leaders (including important members of the mainstream and leftwing political parties) shared their right-wing countrymen's resentments toward the US and the UK and segued from the cooperation to the autonomy camp. Even the socialists in the Diet (e.g., Asanuma Inejiro) came to support Japan's road to war and war preparation. Many who did not move to autonomy/autarky were murdered: Prime Minister Hamaguchi in 1930, his Finance Minister, Inoue Junnosuke, Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi, and the head of the Mitsui Corporation, Baron Dan, in 1932; former Prime Minister Saito Makoto and Finance Minister Takahashi in 1936. It was with this in mind that the *New York Times* correspondent, Hugh Byas, entitled his book on Japan in the 1930s, *Government by Assassination*: right wing or military terrorists murdered three of five prime ministers, and a fourth escaped only when young officers shot his brother-in-law by mistake; two of three finance ministers were killed, and the third died prematurely from ill health, thus avoiding the need for the military to assassinate him. Takahashi in 1931-1936 had fought the military constantly: at budget-making time and in between, because he thought that the military's quest for political autonomy and economic autarky courted disaster. He correctly predicted it would lead to economic stagnation, inflation, and worst of all, war with the United States. The Tokyo and regional press frequently reported his anti-military rhetoric in this period (during one cabinet meeting, for example, he told the army minister not to speak like an idiot, and in another he asked the same general if there were really idiots in the army who thought Japan could defeat the United States in a war.) On another occasion, when told that a young army officer (who happened to be the son-in-law of the emperor's chief military aide-de-camp) had publicly shouted, "Bury Takahashi," he replied, "If all the lieutenants in the army shot me it would be overkill." But such courageous stands against the rise of militarism were few--as one member of parliament, when asked on the floor of the Diet by Takahashi why he did not join the fight against militarism, put it, because "pistols are scary." It was the paucity of people willing to stake their lives against the pistols that inspired the Marxist economist, Ouchi Hyoe, to write that Takahashi's brutal murder in February 1936 destroyed any hope of stopping the military.

This did not mean that war was inevitable in February 1936—but it meant that the chances were much greater than they had been before that month's coup d'état attempt, the last opponents of autarky having been removed by murder or the fear of murder. Takahashi's successor as finance minister doubled the military budget in one year, Japan invaded China in 1937, and Japan started a war it could not win and could not end. The invasion of China was not planned aggression by the military high command—the war broke out over a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese troops in the suburbs of Beijing. (What Japanese troops were doing in the suburbs of Beijing is another story.) Japan's military leaders, caught up in their own nationalistic rhetoric, decided to use the incident to punish the Chinese armies in north China—they believed that the Chinese soldiers could not possibly resist the Japanese, both for their modern weaponry and more importantly, their "Yamato damashii,"their Japanese spirit. But the Japanese generals were wrong—in spite of unspeakable atrocities (or maybe because of them), the Chinese soldiers fought well and over the next eight years, the Japanese military was unable to pacify China. One imagines Takahashi, as he looked down from the Buddhist Western Paradise, shuddering when he saw what his countrymen were doing.

The story of the transition from aggression in China in 1937 to the attack on Pearl Harbor is a complex one that includes an alliance with Germany and Italy—the alliance of the nations that believed they were excluded from full membership in the Western imperialist order--and the fall of France. But it is very important to keep in mind that the war in China was central to the Japanese decision to go to war with Britain and America. Since Japan's generals could not accept the fact that the Japanese imperial army could not defeat Chiang Kai-shek's and Mao Zedong's soldiers in an army-versus-army conflict (although they should have understood the problems of pacifying a country with a continental scale), they had to find another explanation for Japan's inability to achieve victory in China. The answer they came up with was Anglo-American support of China. The way to defeat China was to cut off its supply lines from the West—in other words, move into Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. There were other reasons that the Japanese army decided to move into French Indo-China, and then to attack the American, British and Dutch colonies—but one important reason was to outflank China, to cut off its connections with the allied powers.

One should keep in mind that it was in fact Japan, not China, that had benefited from these countries' support. Japan's primary source of raw materials like petroleum and scrap iron for its war in China, and of high-end technology like machine tools was the United States. In 1938 the United States (57.1 per cent), the United Kingdom and its empire (Malaya, Canada, India, Australia, 20.7 per cent), and the Dutch and Dutch East Indies (8.6 per cent) supplied 86.4 per cent of Japan's imported war materials. The United States produced 60% of the world's oil; the Dutch East Indies less than 10%; 55% of Japan's oil came from the United States, 14% from the Soviet Union, and 10% from the Dutch Indies. I have a photograph of a dinner party held on December 7, 1939, at the Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh, at which George T. Ladd, Chairman of United Engineering Foundry Company, entertained Colonel S. Atsumi of the Imperial Japanese Army and his entourage. UEF had built a factory to produce rolling mill machinery in Japan in 1938.

When Japan moved into the French colony in Indo-China in the summer of 1941, the United States responded by freezing Japanese assets in US banks, cutting Japan off from American scrap iron, petroleum, and technology—illustrating Takahashi's warning about Japan's dependence on the West. Denied access to US petroleum and iron, Japan had to look elsewhere: British Malaya for iron ore and the Dutch East Indies for oil. This led to the decision to attack Southeast Asia, and the United States bases in the Philippines



**The Japanese Empire, 1870-1942**

and Hawaii to protect the Japanese navy's flank. One mistaken step led inexorably to another, and the Japanese in 1941, while still bogged down in China, went to war with a country that had an industrial capacity **nine** times theirs—in fact, one American city, Pittsburgh, produced three times more steel than all of Japan did during World War II. Manchuria, envisaged as Japan's industrial base for war, at the peak of its steel production in 1943, was out-produced by Pittsburgh, by forty times.

Which brings us back to the beginning. The Western imperialist impact on Japan set in motion a series of events: the rise of Japanese nationalism, of Japanese economic and military power, of Japan's quest for empire, of Japanese emigration to America and elsewhere, and of the Western reaction to all of these things, that led almost a century later to Pearl Harbor. One cannot say that Pearl Harbor was the "inevitable delayed rejoinder" to Perry's visit of 1853—far from it. In fact, as we have seen, Japan took two basic approaches Japan in its relations with the British and Americans. We have described them as the cooperative and the autarkic approaches. Unfortunately for Japan and the Asia-Pacific, those who advocated an autonomous, independent, militarized approach to dealing with the world won out after 1936, leading Japan into a cataclysmic and vastly destructive war that it was not economically, materially, or technologically equipped to fight. Only after Japan's defeat in 1945, did its postwar leaders return to the cooperative policies of men like Takahashi.

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