

JAPAN'S GREAT ADVENTURE

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History does not know a bolder venture for great empire than that substantially undertaken by Japan. To her own islands she has added the rich prizes of Formosa and half of Saghalin, the considerable country of Korea, and more recently the vast domain of Manchoukuo. The latter two are equal to three Germanies and more, in area; and they contain more non-Japanese people than Great Britain or France. They serve well in resources, agricultural, mineral, and sylvan. The militant plea of cramped islanders for more of space and materials sounds shrilly thin to men of fifty nations -- indeed, to all the world save the select few who are better provided.

But this is only the initial step to real expansion. At the moment, our cables from the East are filled with news of Japan's swift gains in her conquest of China. Her statesmen have frankly disclosed their purpose to govern the five provinces of North China by means that differ only in words from incorporation in the Japanese Empire; and to subject the remainder of the country to the comprehensive requirements of Japanese policy.

If we consider merely the five provinces of Hopei, Chahar, Suiyuan, Shantung, Shansi, they comprise a domain of much more than two Germanies, and full 80,000,000 of people, a greater population than has any country of Europe save Russia. The world has never seen so vast a block of men brought at one stroke under alien government. In its centuries of agglomeration, Rome ruled at most 50,000,000. British India has more numerous subjects but it was built through many a toilsome generation, and without a purpose till the conquest was easing to its close.

The project of the five provinces was directly and insistently pressed upon the Chinese authorities in 1935 and 1936. Victorious generals in full sway will not be so modest. Indeed, there have been published in Japan official expressions including in "North China" two more provinces, Honan and Shensi; and there are other official indications, alternatively, of continuing the direct Japanese advance to include the Lung-Hai Railway from Sian through Loyang, Chengchow, Kaifeng, and Hsuchow to Haichow, which would indeed comprise Shensi and Honan, slicing into Kiangsu as well. Such a program would make the immediate and virtual incorporation in the Empire equivalent to an ample three times the area of Germany.

But could an expanding military empire hold the Lung-Hai line in security of mind and policy, and leave in other hands its all-important connections with Hankow and with Nanking?

So ask the experts in Chinese affairs, to answer: Only if those other hands were closely clasped in "cooperation" and "friendship", to use the Japanese terminology with which we are familiar. Already Japanese diplomats and generals have made it clear that whatever is left of "China" must follow the economic and foreign policy mapped out for her by Japan, that any independent development is to be crushed as "anti-Japanese", that its government must profess to welcome Japanese orders and must be kept too weak to do otherwise.

Present preoccupation with the day's news must not keep us myopically intent upon Japanese operations in China. Japanese aims in the direction of Russia have not been so clearly unfolded, but several elements unite to indicate the direction and possible extent of desired expansion on the Russian account: the abortive but strenuous occupation of Eastern Siberia in 1918-1920, which was withdrawn under the firm Anglo-American front at the Washington Conference; strategical but impolitic articles contributed by staff officers to military reviews; envious surveys of the resources as far as Lake Baikal; the frank desire to have a hand in Outer Mongolia as part of the Grand Design for a campaign that would include a blow at the Trans-Siberian line well west of Manchoukuo; and now the ambitious gossip of officers anticipating the capture of points all along the vast sweep from Irkutsk or Chita to the sea.

As seen from Japan, the Maritime Province is placed by nature herself within the Japanese system. All threats to the security of Manchoukuo must be removed; and a glance at your atlas shows that's a large order, for big empires have long frontiers, and Manchoukuo is of a protruding form that arouses considerable resentment in Russian military circles. Expansion in North China carries with it the corollary of increased activity on the borders of Outer Mongolia, which is already feeling the weight of Manchoukuo. These considerations add up to a probable attack on Siberia along several lines deriving from bases all the way from Chinese Mongolia to Saghalin, with no desirable or logical limitation east of Baikal. Some Japanese have dreamed and trained and planned for the revival of a Mongol-Turcoman Empire in Central Asia, imagining a motorized Genghiz Khan in a Japanese staff uniform. But that can wait for a few years.

If present efforts in China and anticipated ones in Asiatic Russia have perforce taken the stage in 1937, they should be thought of in the perspective of a general program for mastering Eastern Asia and its islands. The energies and ambitions of Japanese economic and naval entrepreneurs along the coasts of Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula, and among the Dutch, American, and British archipelagoes, are not always covered with discretion. The "silent

navy" may plan far and deep, but its officers have on occasion written and talked profusely enough to bring a worried suppression of their most offensive statements. Maps have been printed to demonstrate graphically what is meant by "the pacification of the Far East", with the South China coast and the various colonial possessions absorbed into the Island Empire. Yet others include as protectorates or client states such plums as India, South Africa, Australia, and the Pacific seaboard of the two Americas. Fortunately, some Japanese can still laugh at such phantasies, but on occasion the laugh is embarrassed.

Supremacy in East Asia, leadership of the peoples of Asia, transmission to the world (by means not alone cultural) of the final flower of oriental culture: These are concepts grown large in many a Japanese mind. They are closely associated with honor to the army and navy as supreme servants of the Divine Emperor, ruling a land sprung directly from the gods. In Japan we pass imperceptibly from diplomacy and trade expansion to programs of dominance and on beyond to religious sanction for imperial advance; then back through politico-military means of consolidating national strength to seaplanes and artillery. It was once said that Cromwell was the most terrible force in history, a practical mystic. The Japanese Empire is par excellence the collective mystic, expressing itself through battle-fleets and fighting tanks. Ask Mr. Mussolini, who had to manufacture his mystic Leviathan, while the Japanese had only to provide modern equipment for theirs.

Indeed, we cannot separate even the most "realistic" program of Japan from elements that belong more to the emotions than to reason or the stomach. These aims of general expansion which we have just mentioned, rise from hearts embittered with hostility against powerful, wealthy, race-proud Britain and America. Great Britain holds a fifth of the world in fee, and to Japanese eyes that fifth is greatly swollen. They think of England's control of India as fabulously profitable and narrowly monopolized, and of her rule in Africa as all-inclusive; while a handful of Englishmen wield for their own luxury and power the vast resources of Canada and Australia (political maps and statistics of the density of population do not show forth the Arctic wastes and the arid bush). The United States have all the means of full life within their boundaries, to which they have welcomed tens of millions from any and every nation save the Japanese -- or some who look like Japanese. With its accumulated power and wealth, the Great Republic has made South America a leased area, kept as a preserve for American corporations and for self-righteous diplomacy.

Against such insolence Japan must fight her divine way. Every insult is treasured up unto vengeance, every misunderstanding is cherished as an insult. As Japan gains her rightful place, she is throwing terror into those who have oppressed her. The day

of reckoning is within view. At the least, the United States and England will be driven out of Eastern Asia and the islands, and there will be three great regional systems in the world, American, British, Japanese. Now there arises the chance to set one barbarian against another, using the German and Italian antipathies as forces to hasten the decline of the British Empire and of its dubious Russian ally, and as tonics to embolden Japan against the American democracy, that other "stupid cow that is being led to the slaughter", as Goebbels has described the whole western herd.

Recently the anti-British turn in Japan is intensified by trade friction with the Dominions and India and by the colonial quotas, plus the view that Britain is trying to develop China in the teeth of Japanese policy, to become a market favorable to British interests. The United States momentarily gains by contrast, so long as the neutrality policy is applied in a manner to promise no interference with Japanese attacks on China or Russia, and to continue the necessary supplies of oil, cotton, and iron for the military-industrial machine. But temporary factors aside, Japan's moves in Asia are sharpened by resentful, near-triumphant rivalry with the once-arrogant leaders of the western whites. Chinese, Russians, and the smaller racial groups of the Orient, are "lesser breeds without the law", which should with more sincerity be called "lesser breeds without a navy". Their lands are destined for Japan. Therefore development among them on lines of independence is "anti-Japanese"; and American or British connections with them, harmless and natural in western opinion, are evil usurpations which contribute to non-Japanese progress and therefore are inimical to "the pacification of the Far East". Both to Japanese and to others it seems important that Britain and America should understand these aims.

The Japanese have also their emotional hostilities toward the Chinese and the Russians. The former are looked upon as a turbulent mob withholding half-mythical natural resources from Japan, who is able and rightfully ready to develop them. This envious enmity is a prime element in the complex rationalization that attributes to China a wilful and perverse "anti-Japanism" as the major purpose of her state. Moreover, the Chinese have toyed with communism in the past, and have given up their incomplete efforts to wipe it from the face of the land. Thus by ideology, that new science of alchemy whose experimental laboratories are in Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo, as well as by geography and common interest, the Chinese may plausibly be denounced and attacked as possible allies of Russia against Japan.

Russians are hated with a multiple hatred, in which fear is an immediate element. Russia's population is roughly double that of the whole Japanese Empire, and her lands and resources dwarf

those of the island people, even with their continental possessions. Alone in all the world she may be ranked with America and Great Britain in potentialities for industry and war, some of which are in active process of development. Russia has the longest land frontier that Japan must face. She occupies a coast that is continually in the Japanese mind in terms of fishery disputes, submarine bases, and bombing-planes heading for Osaka and Tokyo. Russia is the only Great Power that touches Japan. Indeed, except for the special case of half-subdued China, Russia is the only foreign nation in direct contact with the Japanese army, thus to suffer concentrated enmity from imperial militarism.

Russians are white, they are Europeans, far from where they belong. They repeatedly tried to make China their game-park, and to exclude Japan from her proper prey. Once they threatened Japan herself by advance in Manchuria and Korea, and were driven back in a straining war, won by what a few Japanese realize to have been a precarious margin under fortunate circumstances. Now to all these powers and vices the Russians have added communism, the explosive and absolute negation of Japan's massive capitalism, the ridiculing solvent of mystic tradition; and world revolution, anathema and emetic to devotees of the sacred authoritarian empire. It is no wonder that Soviet Russia is a prime demon of the play. Many a Japanese act in China and in Europe can be understood only if an offensive-defensive war against Russia is envisaged as imminent, and already long-prepared in militarized enmities.

The Japanese drives have their inner aspects, which our western writers have frequently analyzed. The military leaders have increased their power and their budgets by making the most of the actual and probable hostilities that we have sketched. The old military traditions, more potent in Japan than in any other country of the world, have been modernized by massive use of education, the marshalled press, the universal Young Men's Associations, the Ex-Servicemen's League, and all the range of disciplinary techniques. The martial drumming must soon provoke action, or stultify itself in a costly and meaningless treadmill. The liberal-constitutional groups and the relatively broad-viewed industrialists concerned with foreign trade, have been dragooned and "coordinated" and mass-persuaded, till there is no visible restraint upon the ambitious wills of professional army officers, competing among themselves and with the navy for honor and the Imperial Supremacy.

The needs of the army-state of Manchoukuo for quick industrialization, quick development of transportation, quick expansion of military means, have provided a powerful lever for appropriations to the army and for economic regimentation in Japan.

Manchoukuo has become practically an independent military base, approximating a second-class power in itself, and entirely removed from civilian government or check while drawing heavily upon the resources of Japan proper.

Japan's economic desires and ambitions are skilfully drawn through military lenses to represent a needy people struggling for food against conspiracies of nature and of man. Her problems are great, though not greater in essence than those of many other peoples; and they are weighted with the terrible burden of disproportionate military charges. Moreover, the imperial possessions already in hand, and the possibilities of proceeding by commerce without conquest, as most of the rest of mankind must do, are airily brushed aside by Japanese apologists. The martial spirit has enslaved statistics to do its bidding. Generals have frankly declared that they would do what they thought they should do for the expansion of the Empire, with contempt for economic considerations. Reputable western publicists may sit in their studies, as some of our friends do here in New York, and figure to their own satisfaction that Japan cannot finance a great imperial venture. But that has no effect upon the campaign in China nor upon the proposed enterprise in Siberia. Some day economics may bring down militarism in a tremendous crash; but for the present it is the generals who torture the economists while they drive the peasants and the millworkers to lower and lower real wages. It requires a magician of social logic to argue economic determinism in Japan just now.

Will Japan's Great Adventure be accomplished, creating a mighty mistress of land and sea, to equal or even to surpass her present rivals? She smashes ahead in China, taking another province during each international census of broken treaties. The Gaimusho may have no voice in Japan's foreign relations, but it is a convenient storehouse for correct protests. Do we recall the report of our correspondents from Peiping a month or two ago, that a Japanese general said in a press conference: "We will push down to the Yangtze, and then the British Government will make a protest"? Chinese military opposition appears to be inadequate for maintaining more than a fragment of independence. It seems probable that Japan has already won the material portion of her immediate aims in China. Before her eyes are financial visions of increased trade opportunities through enforced "cooperation", but still more are there visions for military eyes: cotton and iron in hand for future wars, and the railroads of North China always for their use and never for that of communists.

Yet the cost is already tremendous. An army of half a million, a big fleet, the greatest air force the world has yet seen in action. Supplies for all these from stocks and resources so small that they are a cause of complaint against the "haves". And this is only the beginning. China's will may be battered,

but it is not yet broken. Lines of communication are lengthening, and they must be protected after a draconian peace is stamped upon the hapless Chinese authorities. But this partly for the purpose of getting into condition for a war with Russia! Was there ever a wilder lunacy?

Russia. How much weakened is the Soviet military system, and how much will it suffer from German attack in the critical months ahead, only seers and charlatans may say. Russia is obviously less bold, and Japan less afraid of her, than say two years ago. But Germany seems to prefer delay and to be a little uneasy over Japan's rashness. A well-pedigreed view last year was that if China could keep ten divisions busy, that might swing the balance against Japan in the case of a simultaneous Russian war. Today it is said in Washington that Japan has twenty-five divisions in China. Perhaps that explains the anxious restraint of certain German critics in discussing the Japanese military course in China, likewise the apparent haste of the Japanese High Command to finish off the main Chinese resistance in a hurry, preferring high initial costs to dragging expenses and long-drawn risks.

The outcome of direct warfare between Russia and Japan divides the military experts in their perplexities. Certainly that conflict would fan the flames of Chinese resistance or rebellion, licking at the last chance of this political era. One thing is sure. Russia would strain Japan to the utmost in men, materials, and money. No sane statesman would venture on that war. The preparations are made for it, none the less.

In the long run it seems certain that the Japanese imperialists will break by their own excesses. They will be trying to rule too many unwilling subjects, trying to face too many embittered and anxious enemies. For the moment they feel strong in their comrades of anti-communism. But sanguine moralists of other countries may well ask what confidence Hitler, Mussolini, and Sugiyama can really put in each other's word, even as to the date and plans for a war against somebody else. Each has blazoned aloud that immediate self-interest stands above any agreement, and each knows from his own heart how little he can rely upon cooperation from a man of like principles. But basically Japan plays a lone game, in a world that crushes isolation sooner or later. Moreover, the experience of Korea, Formosa, and Manchoukuo suggests that Japan can do well in material management and in some public services, but that she has not the understanding of subject peoples nor the wealth of high-grade personnel to expand her rule by enormous leaps.

But how much damage will be done before Fate will wreak her will upon the overweening? Must the promising beginnings of New China be smashed in bloody domination? Must Russia be driven into utter militarism, or wild reaction, or renewal of the devastating type of revolution? Must the diligent, courteous, cul-

tured people of ordinary Japan be ground down in poverty beneath the machines of murder? Meanwhile the men of Asia, and indeed of Europe and America, read plainly the lesson. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, agree with the timid diplomats and politicians of Britain and America, that force can take what it likes, that national interest is the rule of the world. The weaker states must militarize themselves to gain a breath of consideration. The world goes straight to bigger wars, unless protection against bandits is organized, and soon. There was once a time when Chicago was neutral toward Al Capone and his victims, doing business on the same basis with either or with neither, as might be convenient.