

Japan Leading the World to the Brink of War

DOTS AND DASHES—dashes and dots!

Mysterious signals crackle through the air, girdle the globe east and west.

Radio operators in the broadcasting station of the League of Nations in Geneva are making world history.

For ten hours on February 17 those mysterious signals tell the world that, for the first time in history, one nation is being "morally outlawed by the formal judgment of the whole world," as the *Richmond News Leader* put it.

Translated from the Morse code, those dots and dashes become the 15,000-word report of the Committee of Nineteen condemning Japan's action in Manchuria. They put an end to seventeen months' effort on the part of the League of Nations to influence Japan. And they open, in the opinion of certain authorities, a new world drama. "This most challenging spectacle of the times," the *Wichita Eagle* names it.

Events march swiftly. Climax caps climax, as newspaper readers realize. One crisis surges forward into another even more ominous. Fully conscious of the gravity of its actions, the Assembly of the League of Nations, representing a consortium of fifty-seven civilized nations, adopts the committee's report, with only Japan dissenting.

FROM our point of vantage, we seem like spectators of some great world newsreel, grinding relentlessly and bringing us from all parts of the globe fresh evidence that we are standing on the brink of some great abysmal cleavage dividing the Western World from the Far East. From this "newsreel" let us clip a few striking snapshots:

TOKYO: Feeling grows among the Japanese that events are shaping toward a second World War, with Japan in the position that Germany occupied in 1914. . . . "An economic boycott would be treated in the same manner as a declaration of war and would be answered in terms of war." (By cable to the *New York Herald Tribune*.)

In the event of an economic boycott, "Japan would be compelled to blockade the ports of China, shutting off all Chinese trade with other countries, and securing the markets and products of China exclusively for Japan."

JEHOL: "Whole trainloads of American motor-trucks, motorcycles and other equipment have been seen at railroad stations near the border." This press dispatch suggests to the *Baltimore Sun* that "Mr. Stimson's efforts to prevent a conflict have not been uniformly supported at home. . . . Despite the valuable aid supplied to Japan by American, British, and French manufacturers of motor-trucks, guns, ammunition, and airplanes, Japan is arousing the opposition of the whole world."

WASHINGTON: "Japan during all of 1932 brought 28 per cent. more American raw cotton than in the previous year, and trebled its purchases here of kerosene oil. Additional purchases included 33 per cent. more crude petroleum and 16 per cent. more lead. . . ." (Special to the *New York Times*.)

LONDON: British Cabinet decides that Great Britain can not act independently for an effective arms embargo on the Far East. Cooperation by other arms-exporting countries, cables the *Associated Press*, is essential for any such plan, Britain's Cabinet Ministers hold.

Opposition press in London clamors for withholding war supplies from Japan. *The Star* suggests that the United States would be only too glad to bar munitions shipments if requested to do so by Great Britain.

The *London Times* sees no reason "why these nations should facilitate hostilities by allowing fresh supplies of arms to reach the belligerents."

A Canadian Press dispatch from London, in the *New York Times*, estimates war supplies sent from England to China and Japan. According to statistics of the British Government for 1932, the largest individual items were 7,735,000 small-arms cartridges for China and 5,361,450 for Japan. China bought 312,256 pounds of high explosives, and Japan purchased nearly twice that amount. Japan also purchased 740 machine-guns.

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Such rapid glances indicate how all the world is involved in this Far Eastern conflict. Questions crop up in the American press concerning Japan's mandated islands, the Open Door, the Four-Power Treaty.

THE Japanese Navy is prepared for any emergency, according to a cable sent from Tokyo to the *New York Herald Tribune*—it is ready to seize the much-disputed mandated islands. According to the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi*, Nippon's naval authorities believe "the final theater for the solution of the Chinese-Japanese conflict will be in the Pacific." This point of view is summed up by this influential Tokyo daily:

"First, the time has come when the settlement of the Manchurian problem will be sought in the Pacific. The Navy, therefore, realizes that it is called to stand in the front line.

"Second, altho the Navy believes that the Japanese mandate over the South Sea Islands will remain intact despite Japan's withdrawal from the League, the Navy considers it indispensable that it make preparations to retain the islands in case the League or any combination of Powers attempts to dispossess Japan by force.

"Third, since disturbance may spread to northern China, the Navy must be prepared to cooperate with the Army for protection of the lives and property of Japanese residents in China.

"Fourth, in case the Chinese resort to an anti-Japanese boycott at Shanghai, Canton, or elsewhere, the Navy must adopt protection measures for Japanese residents.

"Fifth, the Navy does not seriously anticipate that an economic blockade against Japan will be resorted to by the Powers, but the Navy can not leave anything undone in preparation for protection of the national life by maintenance of freedom of navigation."

The problem of the mandated islands may become especially troublesome, predicts the *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, because of the importance attached to the strategic points in the Pacific. This daily points out:

"Altho the fortification of these Pacific outposts and their equipment with naval bases are forbidden both by the terms of the mandate and by the Washington Four-Power Treaty, Japan considers them of decided strategic value to her Navy. They project the Japanese flag a thousand miles or more eastward in the Pacific.

"The question of the future of Japan's mandated islands in the North Pacific will arise immediately upon Japan's withdrawal from the League."

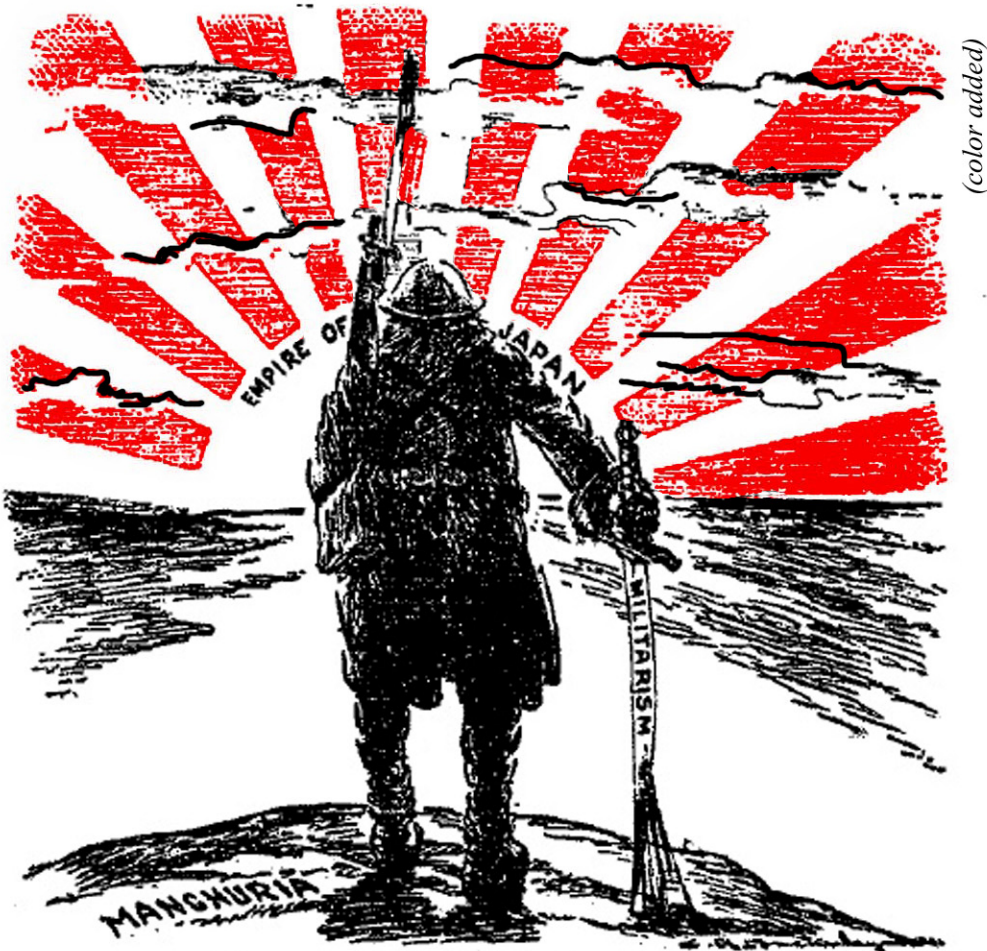
The League's flat condemnation of Japan seems to certain liberal newspapers, including the Scripps-Howard chain to answer its many critics, who have jeered at all former efforts of Geneva. According to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*: "In issuing this rebuke of Japan the League adds to its stature, and signalizes its revitalized return on the international scene as an effective functioning force." One satisfaction to the *Baltimore Sun* is that the United States, by announcing its refusal to recognize the fruits accruing to Japan from a violation of her treaty obligations, had already put herself on record in this matter.

Despite the "moral victory" of the League, in its indictment of Japan, certain dailies are outspokenly opposed to this country's taking sides in the Far Eastern imbroglio. "There is little sentiment at Washington or in the country at large," claims the *Washington Evening Star*, "in favor of American adhesion to any scheme for exercising forcible pressure on Japan." "Keep out of it!" vehemently admonishes the *Philadelphia Record*:

"The less the pressure on Japan, the sooner the Japanese people are likely to oust the present militarist Cabinet and replace it with a conciliatory civilian one.

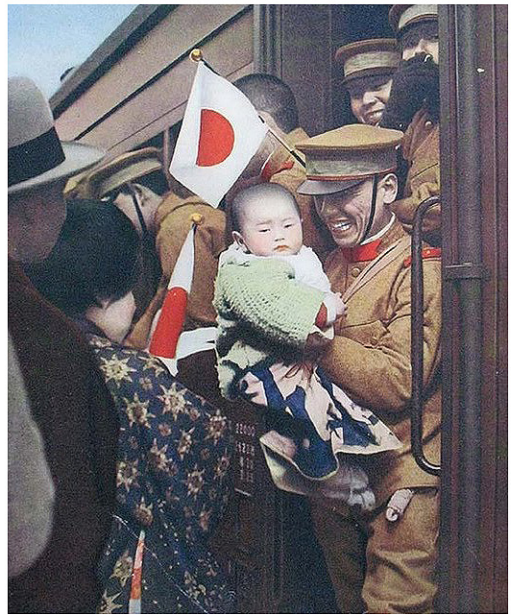
"Let the diplomats worry about 'prestige' and 'treaty obligations' and 'the balance of power' and all the other trouble-brewing shibboleths."

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Rising Sun—Or Setting?

THAT veteran columnist of the Hearst papers, Arthur Brisbane, chimes in with the isolationist warning that, "the good old days of shipping billions of American money and millions of men to take part in somebody else's fight have gone by." Similarly, M. E. Tracy, sage of the Scripps-Howard group, sniffs distrustfully at the League's invitation to Russia and America to cooperate—which means, asserts the wary Mr. Tracy, that, "if things come to a showdown, those two countries can have the glorious privilege of enforcing the League's mandate."



Walter Lippmann observes in the *New York Herald Tribune*: "The Army has placed Japan on a slippery incline which leads down to disaster, and the time may come when only the friendly assistance of the Powers that have delivered this verdict can save Japan."

Writing from Geneva to the *Baltimore Sun*, Robert Dell expresses his firm conviction that Japan can not long hold out against the verdict of the world despite her braggadocio:

"The consequences of giving Japan a free hand in Asia are incalculable, but they may not ultimately be satisfactory to Japan herself, for she is like the frog in the fable trying to expand itself into a bull, and the result is likely to be similar.

"Japan is trying to play the part of a great Power without the necessary resources. With a population of about 65,000,000 and an area two-thirds as large again as that of Great Britain, she has extremely small natural resources and a national revenue about 25 per cent. larger than that of Switzerland, which has a population of 4,000,000 and an area half the size of Ireland.

"How can Japan, with a revenue of about \$270,000,000 at the present rate of exchange and a falling currency, go on indefinitely spending about \$220,000,000 on her Army and Navy?

"How can she hope to imitate successfully the imperialist exploits of wealthy countries like England and France?

"She seems bound to come to grief soon or late, but before that happens she may have done great mischief to the rest of the world which could have been avoided had the Council of the League of Nations taken a firm stand in September, 1931."