"Missed Opportunities for Compromise? The Diplomatic Crisis in 1941 Japan from the Perspective of U.S. Ambassador Joseph C. Grew and British Ambassador Sir Robert Craigie"

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Abstract

The British and U.S. ambassadors to Japan in 1941 both believed that war could have been averted, or at least delayed, if their respective home offices had made different diplomatic choices more in accord with their advice. Sir Robert Craigie and Joseph Grew saw missed opportunities for compromise, while the British Foreign Office and the U.S. Department of State gave more credence to the theory that Japan's military extremists would prevail over the voices of moderation, and that Japan was ultimately unwilling to retreat from China; therefore, war was inevitable.

Was the attention shown to the ambassadors' warnings adequate and justified? Previous academic research has analyzed the reporting of Ambassadors Craigie and Grew leading up to the outbreak of war in the Pacific. This reporting was based primarily on their interactions with government officials and other members of the Japanese elite. Any conclusions as to the accuracy of the ambassadors' predictions, quality of advice, and overall success of the embassies they led, can be enhanced by a comparison of their observations, a better understanding of their personal and professional relationship, and their reliance upon collaboration.

Professional and personal correspondence reveals that Grew and Craigie maintained an effective, collegial, professional association, notwithstanding an awkward social relationship. Together, they labored under restrictions on the amount of sensitive information disseminated by the Foreign Office and the State Department. Their countries did not always share the same agenda or national interest. Grew and Craigie bore the stigma of "appeasers," due to their belief that U.S. and British diplomacy could have

done more to support the cause of the Japanese moderates. Yet, they both were “on the record” as accurately warning about the risk of underestimating Japan’s response to economic strangulation from sanctions and the likelihood of heightened Japanese aggression should the 1941 peace talks falter. However, the two ambassadors, particularly Grew, also missed an opportunity to further delay or avert war by not being even more ardent in their 1941 entreaties. Consequently, they overestimated the extent to which their recommendations were likely to be adopted by the decision makers in London and Washington.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my lovely wife, Dr. Ellen Christine Wallace, editor extraordinaire, for her remarkable patience and constant reassurance that this project would —indeed must—be completed.

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The Harvard librarian network is second to none. Kathleen Sheehan could steer me in the right direction. Ann Robinson helped me locate Dr Best. I would particularly like to recognize Sarah Hoke for her assistance in obtaining the digital archives for the "Foreign Office Files for Japan, 1931-1945."

Finally, many thanks to my two supportive children, Kate and Andrew, who didn't think this was a weird idea, and maybe even a cool thing to do at my age.

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Chapter I

Introduction to Ambassadors Craigie and Grew

During the second half of 1941, the Western powers, Britain and the U.S., and Japan, were careening towards a confrontation. U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, and British Ambassador to Japan, Sir Robert Craigie, resolutely held out hope for diplomacy as the solution and doubted the inevitability of war. Yet, some within their respective departments branded them as appeasers. The ambassadors collaborated cordially, overcoming social differences, reservations about the policy tactics of the other's department, and the restricted flow of information from London and Washington to Tokyo, as well as from Washington to London. After the treacherous attacks on Pearl Harbor, Malaya and Hong Kong, Joseph Grew and Robert Craigie concluded that their respective governments had missed significant opportunities to compromise, which could have delayed or even averted war.

Grew and Craigie arrived in Tokyo for their assignments as Ambassadors to Japan in June 1932 and September 1937 respectively. Craigie has been described as "a meticulous and conscientious worker,"[1] while Grew kept an exhaustive diary of daily events.

[1] Antony M. Best, "Avoiding War: The Diplomacy of Sir Robert Craigie and Shigemitsu Mamoru 1937-1941," (Ph.D. Dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science, September 1992), 9; Peter Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador: Sir Robert Craigie in Tokyo, 1937-1941," *Proceedings of the British Association for Japanese Studies* 2 (1977): 35.

However, their temperaments were noticeably dissimilar. Craigie was taciturn and socially awkward compared to the polished Grew. Craigie married the daughter of a newspaper proprietor, and one-time Minister to Switzerland, from Virginia. Ironically named Pleasant, Lady Craigie had a reputation for offending people. Grew, on the other hand, was a cousin of J.P. Morgan, and his education overlapped with that of Franklin D. Roosevelt at Groton and Harvard. Mrs. Grew's ancestors included Commodores Oliver and Matthew Perry, and Benjamin Franklin.

Born in 1880, and three years older than Craigie, Joseph Grew had accumulated more ambassadorial experience by the time of Craigie's arrival in Tokyo in 1937. He served as First Secretary of Embassy in Berlin prior to the start of WW1, once filling in as Acting Ambassador. At the conclusion of the War, Grew was selected to be "Secretary of the American delegation at the pre-Armistice negotiations and remained in Paris as Secretary-General of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace."[2] During the 1920s, Grew functioned as Minister to both Denmark (1920-1921) and Switzerland (1921-1924), before becoming Ambassador to Turkey (1927-1932).

Upon his assignment in Japan, Grew was particularly drawn to the country's political moderates, who shared a similar well-educated, cosmopolitan background. During the majority of his mission in Japan, his foreign policy goal was to shelter the U.S. from entanglement in the power politics of the Far East. Between 1935 and 1939, the U.S. Congress had approved several Neutrality Acts, which were not fully annulled until No-

[2] Richard D. Challener, "Career Diplomat: The Record of Joseph C. Grew," *World Politics* 5, no. 2 (January 1953): 263.

vember 1941. In the 1940 U.S. presidential election, both parties ran on a platform supporting national defense and aid to Britain, but no direct involvement in war. On occasion, Grew's affinity with the moderates and resistance to confrontation lulled him into misplaced patience with Japanese assurances that they would cease attack on U.S. possessions in China and temper an inflammatory local press. Grew empathetically interpreted Japan's expansionary desires "as a normal striving for a higher standard of living."[3] He acknowledged that Japan's need to accommodate a growing population might result in continued attempts at geographic expansion and the acquisition of natural resources. Early on, Grew recognized the volatility of the Japanese military. Writing to Secretary of State, Henry Stimson, in August 1932, he observed, "The Japanese military is not dissimilar" to that of Germany. "It has been built for war, feels prepared for war, and would welcome war."[4] Yet, Grew underestimated the will of the militarists to push Japan to secede from the League of Nations in February 1933, for which he was deservedly criticized.

Members of the State Department and the military appreciated Grew for his voluminous cataloguing of events on the ground. For example, on August 4, 1937, he received a note from Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, who had succeeded Stimson, recog-

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[3] Edward M. Bennett, "Joseph C. Grew: The Diplomacy of Pacification." In *Diplomats in Crisis: United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941.* Edited by Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett (Santa Barbara, CA:ABC-CLIO, 1974), 71.

[4] 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 1932-1942* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944: paperback edition), 66.

nizing "his splendid reporting and commentary" on the July 7 outbreak of conflict between Japan and China at the Marco Polo bridge.[5] On the other hand, Grew would often attempt to draw distinctions or introduce nuances, where others could see none. For example, he defines his posture towards Japan prior to July 1940, following Japan's advance into French Indochina, as "advocating not "appeasement" but constructive statesmanship through conciliatory methods and the avoidance of coercive measures."[6] In describing Grew's relations with Congress and the State Department during the 1920s-1930s, Edward M. Bennett concludes that Grew was inclined "to hedge his recommendations to the Department with contingencies and to avoid situations where he might be blamed for taking too bold a stand."[7] Compared to his colleague, Craigie, Grew was overly concerned about protecting his image, reputation and legacy.

Sir Robert Craigie's father was an admiral in the British Navy, resulting in his first visit to Japan at the age of seven. Craigie's initial impression of the country was favorable: "I had a memory of courteous, considerate people bent on making us comfortable."[8] He first entered the Foreign Service in 1907 and served as First Secretary at the embassy in Washington from 1920 to 1923. He did not have as much experience with East Asia as the Foreign Office's expert, Sir George Sansom. Nevertheless, over the next

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[5] Bennett, "The Diplomacy of Pacification," 74.

[6] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 289.

[7] Bennett, "The Diplomacy of Pacification," 69.

[8] Robert Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask: A British Ambassador in Japan, 1937-1942* (London: Kegan Paul, 2004), 9; first published 1946 (London: Hutchinson).

ten years, Craigie would gain considerable negotiating experience, before he was appointed as Ambassador to Japan for her majesty's government (HMG) in 1937.

In 1928, Craigie participated in the discussions to determine the relative naval power balance among major nations, based on a system of ratios. Relations had already become strained between the U.S. and Britain over the caps on cruiser ships. Craigie disagreed with Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time, who saw less of a need than did Craigie for reconciliation with the U.S. It was Craigie's argument that resonated with the British cabinet, to Churchill's chagrin. In reference to Churchill's reaction, British historian Antony Best suggests, "it is difficult to believe that this did not contribute to his eventual intolerance of Craigie's cautious line in 1940 and 1941."[9]

Craigie took part in the London Naval Conferences of 1930 and 1935; during 1935, he was also named Assistant Under-Secretary of State. Both Britain and the U.S. had important trading interests with China to protect, under the "Open Door" policy and "Nine Power Treaty." During the 1935 conference, while in charge of the American Department of the Foreign Office, Craigie would again recommend a cooperative stance towards the U.S., as well as the Japanese moderates, in an effort to reconcile U.S. and Japanese differences on the relative balance of naval power. Craigie set a precedent for his subsequent tactics as Ambassador to Japan: "Our task … is to help the more moderate elements in Japan to 'save face' in this matter and so overcome the extremist elements who want no naval treaty at all."[10] Perhaps it was a compliment to his negotiating skills to be

[9] Best, "Avoiding War," 49.

[10] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 55.

described as both "too pro-American" by members of his own British team, and "unhelpful" by the U.S. State Department, according to Britain's U.S. Ambassador at the time.[11] This bias would be communicated to Grew in advance of Craigie's arrival in Japan. Between these two naval conferences, Craigie was lauded by his Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, as "the cement which keeps the bricks together."[12] Yet, the Japanese Imperial Navy remained dissatisfied with the results of the conferences, which had only moderately raised its cruiser ratio to 10-10-6.9 in 1935, in favor of Britain and the U.S., from 5-5-3. The Japanese Imperial Navy especially wanted to terminate the establishment of ratios, while the Western powers refused any system approaching equivalence. Despite his efforts, Craigie was unable to satisfy all parties in 1935, and the Japanese withdrew from the conference.

During his period as Ambassador to Japan, Craigie's focus was to keep Japan out of the war, which had broken out in Europe in September 1939, by countering the influence of Germany and calming potential confrontation with Japan. Craigie was praised by Prime Minister Chamberlain for negotiating a July 1939 agreement with Japan over a number of issues covering the operation of the British concession in Tientsin, China, "Craigie has with great skill got an agreement with the Japs…."[13] However, he was criticized for his selection of Major-General Piggott, a reputed Japanese sympathizer with ex-

[11] Quoted in Best, Avoiding War," 61.

[12] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 59.

[13] Quoted in Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 41.

tensive experience in the country, as military attaché. Craigie became more favorably disposed to the imposition of economic sanctions against Japan in late 1938, before his colleague Grew came around to this position.[14] He advocated for Britain to take a more active role in the 1941 discussions between the U.S. and Japan, and at a minimum, for his department to receive a more thorough and frequent appraisal of the details of the negotiations. This request would on occasion clash with his department's priority of placating the U.S. in order to tacitly encourage their economic and military assistance in Europe and—if necessary—Asia.

By the middle of 1931, the ruling pendulum in Japan had swung back towards the extremists or militarists, as the outcome of the naval discussions of the previous year (the first London Naval Conference) was deemed "unfair" by Japanese public sentiment and the Navy itself. Japanese resentment towards the West had been further inflamed by the anti-Japanese immigration policies of the U.S., marked by the 1924 Oriental Expulsion Act.[15] Furthermore, political corruption by the major Japanese parties and their large business backers, such as Mitsui and Mitsubishi, coupled with the global economic depression, strengthened the case of the militarists. Beginning in 1932, Japan's political parties lost their influence in appointing cabinet members.

Over the course of the 1930s, Japan's policy oscillated between the moderate and extremist camps with Prince Konoye's first of three appointments as Prime Minister in

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[14] See Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 36-37.

[15] See James Leutze, "Continuity and Change in America's Second Oldest Foreign Policy Commitment." In *War and Diplomacy across the Pacific, 1919-1952*, ed. A. Hamish Ion and Barry D. Hunt (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 25.

June 1936. In November 1936, Japan signed the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany, later joined by Italy. This pact was designed to combat the spread of communism and prohibited direct treaties with the Soviet Union. Despite signing the pact, Konoye had earned the wrath of the army for his affinity for parliamentary procedures. Led by younger officers, the Japanese army in July 1937 would skirmish with the Chinese at the Marco Polo bridge, west of Peking. Fighting in Shanghai followed days later, ushering in a concerted movement toward a larger war. Craigie joined his colleague Grew in Tokyo shortly thereafter, in September 1937.

During the time their missions overlapped, 1937-1941, the dependence of the two ambassadors on each other for information would strengthen their professional relationship as they sought to defend the use of diplomacy against several challenges. These included: 1) an expanding war between China and Japan which threatened American and British economic and political interests in Asia; 2) an erosion in the political clout of the moderate contingent in Japan: 3) the outbreak of war in Europe and Japan's official attachment to the Axis powers through participation in the Tripartite Pact of September 1940; 4) less than perfect alignment in the national interests of the U.S. and Britain; and 5) a State Department and Foreign Office which held a different view from that of the ambassadors regarding Japan's sincerity to pursue peace through diplomacy. The relationship between Grew and Craigie was further stressed by misgivings about the diplomatic approach of their colleague's department, the selective dissemination of information by their departments, and an awkward social relationship between the Grews and Craigies. Moreover, by 1941, the ability of designated U.S. and British officials to decode

Japan's diplomatic correspondence had displaced some of the reliance upon embassy intelligence. Through all this, the ambassadors remained doubtful about the inevitability of war with Japan.

Subsequent to 1941, in their professional reports and personal writings, Sir Robert Craigie and Joseph Grew independently arrived at the conclusion that their leaders missed important opportunities to compromise with Japan, which could have averted or—at a minimum—delayed war in the Pacific. Though recognizing their hard work and dedication to a peaceful solution, the bulk of scholarly opinion does not side with the ambassadors on their claims. This thesis, analyzing the scope of their interactions, argues that Ambassadors Grew and Craigie overcame the many challenges to their assignment, to maintain an effective, professional relationship. Notwithstanding their collegiality, Grew—more than Craigie—missed an opportunity to more clearly and emphatically represent his opinion and demonstrate the courage of his convictions in 1941.

Chapter II

Whose Missed Opportunities in 1941?

Did the British and American governments miss opportunities to avert or further delay the advent of war in the Pacific in 1941? Between them, ambassadors Grew and Craigie identified two specific diplomatic opportunities for initiating a more peaceful path with Japan, which their departments failed to exploit: 1) An August 1941 request from Japanese Ambassador Nomura for a personal meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Konoye and U.S. President Roosevelt, and 2) A November 20, 1941 "compromise proposal" (otherwise known as Plan B) from Japan for a resolution to its differences with the U.S. over Southeast Asia and China. In order to answer this question, we will need to look at the motives and behavior of the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office as it relates to these perceived opportunities, as well as the extent to which the ambassadors may have contributed to the problem by not expressing their recommendations with enough verve to be persuasive.

Ambassadors Joseph Grew and Sir Robert Craigie subscribed to the school of thought that war with Japan could have been "avoided," or "delayed" to allow more time for negotiation, through diplomatic channels. While warning of Japan's determination to act as the protector of a "New Order" in Asia and consolidate its territorial gains in China, the ambassadors also perceived opportunities for compromise by connecting with the more moderate elements in the Japanese government. S. Olu Agbi, in his article, "The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie versus The Foreign Office," reviews the historical context of the avoidance argument as manifested in Craigie's "final

report" on his assignment in Japan, initially drafted in 1942. Agbi also identifies the second or opposing school of thought, as articulated by those in the British Foreign Office and U.S. State Department, who concluded that war was "inevitable" unless Britain and the U.S. or Japan were willing to forfeit their substantial interests in Asia, particularly in China—an unlikely event.[16] According to the second school, the extremists and moderates were attached to a common goal of Japanese hegemony in East Asia, though employing different methods to advance their interest, a distinction unappreciated by the avoidance camp. In explaining this shared psychology of "ultranationalism" among the moderates and extremists, Nobuya Bamba postulates that it emanates from the Meiji Constitution and other proclamations which launched Japan on a "divine mission" as a "chosen race."[17] The two schools of thought disagreed on the opportunity for lasting peace through diplomacy.[18]

In his final report to Churchill and the Foreign Office, ultimately released in February 1943, Sir Robert Craigie criticizes the inflexibility of U.S. and British policy. After

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[16] S. Olu Agbi, "The Pacific War Controversy in Britain: Sir Robert Craigie versus The Foreign Office," *Modern Asian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1983): 490.

[17] Nobuya Bamba, and quoted in Bamba, "Japan's Search for Its National Identity: Towards Pearl Harbor," in *War and Diplomacy across the Pacific, 1919-1952*, ed. A. Hamish Ion and Barry D. Hunt (Waterloo Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 140-141.

[18] D. Cameron Watt has identified a third school of thought, from the British perspective, which could be viewed as a variant of the "inevitability school." He postulates that war with Japan was an acceptable consequence of enlisting the U.S. in the war against Germany, and ultimately against Japan. See Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been prevented in November 1941?: Sir Robert Craigie's Final Report on his Embassy in Japan and the Reactions of the British Foreign Policy-Making Elite," Unpublished Manuscript (1983), 3-4.

a discussion with Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Craigie amended the initial draft of his report. He "eliminated some of the more extreme expressions of disagreement with the policy of H.M.G. [Her or His Majesty's Government, depending who is monarch]," making his report "less open to objection than when first considered."[19] Craigie's report was delayed not only to accommodate these revisions, but so the Far Eastern Department of the Foreign Office could simultaneously issue its own memorandum of events, "From the Burma Road Crisis to Pearl Harbour."

Craigie argues that an opportunity was missed in that the Japanese government would have accepted British amendments to Japan's November 20, 1941 "compromise proposal." For example, point number five in the Japanese proposal stipulates that "The Government of the United States undertakes to refrain from such measures and actions as will be prejudicial to the endeavors for the restoration of general peace between Japan and China." From the perspective of the U.S., this could be construed loosely as eliminating all aid to China, an unacceptable interpretation due to the U.S. commitment to support Chinese sovereignty under Article 1 of the Nine-Powers Treaty; the British Foreign Office shared this view on China. Writing in his memoir, "Behind the Japanese Mask," Craigie notes, "Whether the Japanese Government would have insisted on point 5 if agreement had been reached on the other four points was, according to my information at the time, doubtful."[20] The other four points essentially involved the resumption of trade relations, including the sale of oil to Japan, in exchange for the relocation of Japanese troops from southern to northern Indochina. Craigie postulates that a restriction on the

[19] Public Records Office (PRO) FO 371/35957 Code 23 File 751, minute from Sir Henry Ashley Clarke, February 7, 1943.

[20] Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 130.

number of Japanese troops in Northern Indochina would have been enough to hamper efforts by Japan to mobilize, obviating the need to demand complete withdrawal of Japanese troops from China; a truce, or "modus vivendi," could have been reached on those terms.

Following the start of the Pacific War, Craigie learned from "entirely reliable" sources that the Japanese Cabinet had an "absolute assurance" from its army and navy to discontinue "all preparations for an attack" upon conclusion of a satisfactory agreement with the U.S. on China.[21] U.S. Secretary Hull eventually issued a formal "ten-point" counter proposal to Japan on November 26, after turning down the option of a three-month modus vivendi. Hull's ten-point proposal offered no new, substantial concessions and included a provision that Japan would "withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indochina,"[22] essentially forfeiting all of its gains of the prior ten years. Hull was moved by a lukewarm response from the Foreign Office towards a modus vivendi and by objections to Japan's November 20 offer from Churchill and Chiang kai-Shek. Echoing Chiang's concern about the appearance of appeasement towards Japan, Churchill cabled Roosevelt on the 26th, "There is only one point that disquiets us. What about Chiang kai-Shek? Is he not having a very thin diet?"[23]

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[21] James Rusbridger and Eric Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor: How Churchill Lured Roosevelt into World War II* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), Appendix 9: "Final Report by Sir R. Craigie on conclusion of his Mission to Japan," 7.

[22] Akira Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 76.

[23] PRO, FO 371/27913, Code 23 File 751, Churchill to Roosevelt ("Former Naval Person to President"), November 26, 1941; quoted in Best, *Britain, Japan and Pearl Harbor: Avoiding War in East Asia, 1936-1941* (London: Routledge, 1995), 182.

Grew initially embraced Hull's ten-point proposal, praising "it as a broad-gauge objective proposal of the highest statesmanship, … and a reasonable and peaceful way of achieving her constantly publicized needs."[24] Less than a year later, following the commencement of hostilities, and in contradiction to this initial reaction, Grew would observe that Hull's response displayed an "egregious error in timing."[25] In retrospect, it was too late to ask Japan to retrace its steps. Japan promptly rejected Hull's response as an unworkable ultimatum. In his final report, Craigie acknowledges the justification of Hull's demands, but is irritated by his insensitivity to Japan's psyche, "it is difficult to understand how anyone with any knowledge of contemporary Japan—powerful, arrogant, proud, self-seeking—could have believed that it had even the slightest chance of acceptance in the circumstances obtaining in November 1941."[26] Craigie was attentive to Japan's possible overreaction to the "form and tempo" of Hull's approach, which demanded too swift a change in Japanese policy; "This might take the unpleasant form of a direct attack on British territory…. Or it might lead to a United States - Japanese war…."[27] Only the surrender of its ally Germany could have sapped Japan's negotiating position enough to have persuaded them to accept Hull's conditions, reasoned Craigie. In

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[24] Quoted in Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 357.

[25] Joseph Clark Grew papers, Unsent letter to Roosevelt from Grew, August 14, 1942, Houghton Library-Harvard University, 11.

[26] Rusbridger and Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, Appendix 9, 7.

[27] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, No. 2186, "Suggested British participation in the Washington Conversations;" Appendix 4 to the Memorandum by Far Eastern Department, Sir Robert Craigie to Mr. Eden, November 1, 1941.

1946, Craigie issued his memoir, Behind the Japanese Mask. Even though the book was meant for public consumption, his tone was surprisingly benign on the subject of the Hull note. He labeled it, "a clear-cut plan for a broad but simple settlement."[28] Churchill had already lambasted Craigie's final report for its disparaging comments on U.S. and British policy, calling it "a very strange document and one which should be most scrupulously kept secret."[29]

During the second half of 1941, Joseph Grew's attention was focused on a related peace keeping opportunity. Grew envisioned an opening for a peace compromise in the proposition of a personal meeting between President Roosevelt and Japanese Prime Minister Konoye, requested by Admiral Nomura, Japan's Ambassador to the U.S., on August 17, 1941.[30] (Such a meeting was originally suggested in late 1940 by Father James M. Drought, who later worked with two Japanese associated with Ambassador Nomura and Prime Minister Konoye; these three came to be known as the John Doe Associates.) Grew was impressed by Konoye's "courage," and termed the offer to meet "an act of the highest statesmanship," as opposed to a "despairing play of the last card." The Prime Minister was taking a large political risk should the meeting flounder, even jeopardizing

[28] Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 131.

[29] PRO, FO 371/35957, F2602, Code 23 File 751, Churchill to Foreign Secretary, September 19, 1943.

[30] See R. J. C. Butow, "Backdoor Diplomacy in the Pacific: The Proposal for a Konoye-Roosevelt Meeting, 1941," *Journal of American History* 59, no. 1 (June 1972): 48-72.

"his own life as well."[31] Moreover, Konoye had informed Grew "with unquestionable sincerity that he was prepared at that meeting to accept the American terms whatever they might be."[32] Grew was assured on October 1, 1941 by former Prime Minister Hirota, that the "proposal" for such a meeting was "generally approved, even among the military, in view of the absolute necessity of arriving at a settlement with the United States because of the economic situation…."[33] Craigie was in agreement with Grew on Konoye's motivation, and viewed a meeting as an opportunity for "setting in action a steady swing away from the Axis and towards more moderate policies."[34]

Grew was more than perplexed when Roosevelt's appetite for a personal meeting waned from the fall to the winter months of 1941, given that Roosevelt had told Ambassador Nomura on August 28, 1941 that he "looked forward with real interest to the possibility of conferring for several days with the Japanese Prime Minister."[35] There was some doubt within the Roosevelt administration that Konoye could successfully enlist the backing of the military for any agreement, and Secretary Hull had insisted on several preconditions before a meeting could take place. This bought time for the U.S., but frustrated the Japanese, and ultimately doomed the potential for a meeting. Grew was also miffed

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[31] Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1941*, vol. 4: *The Far East* (Washington DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1956), The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, August 19, 1941, 382.

[32] Grew papers, Unsent letter to Roosevelt from Grew, 4.

[33] Joseph C. Grew, *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years 1904-1945,* vol. 2, ed. Walter Johnson and assisted by Nancy Harvison Hooker (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 1359.

[34] Quoted in Peter Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 50.

[35] Quoted in Grew papers, Unsent letter to Roosevelt from Grew, 8.

that his recommendation in an August 30, 1941 telegram, suggesting Roosevelt make a speech communicating the benefits to the Japanese people of an agreement with the U.S., "was ignored or at least not acted upon."[36] His hope was that this would counter the image of American greed spread by the Japanese media.

Craigie, on the other hand, though supportive of a meeting between Roosevelt and Konoye, was also reminding London, throughout 1941, to become more involved in any discussions between the U.S. and Japan. In a November 1, 1941 telegram, Craigie recounts his efforts, "I have for some time felt that it was unfortunate that matters of such vital concern to us should be under discussion between the United States and the Japanese Governments, not only without consultation with His Majesty's Government, but without our being given anything but the barest outline of what was happening."[37] The response of Britain's Foreign Secretary, Antony Eden, was that the U.S. was "engaged not in negotiations but in exploratory conversations" with Japan to assess the benefit of actual negotiations, and would update Britain when there was something material to report; there was no need to press the issue since, "It is a cardinal feature of our Far Eastern policy to keep strictly in step with United States government."[38]

The British Foreign Office and the U. S. State Department were not as enticed as were their ambassadors by these two seeming opportunities for a peaceful resolution to the Asian crisis: the proposed Roosevelt-Konoye meeting, and Japan's November 20,

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[36] Grew papers, Unsent letter to Roosevelt from Grew, 9.

[37] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, No. 2186, "Suggested British participation in the Washington conversations;" Appendix 4 to the Memorandum by Far Eastern Department, Sir R. Craigie to Mr. Eden, November 1, 1941.

[38] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, "Mr. Eden to Sir R. Craigie (Tokyo), No. 1479, November 8, 1941.

1941 compromise proposal. The State Department remained suspicious of Japan's sincerity, and the White House was looking for time to augment U.S. military capability. The Foreign Office was following the lead of the State Department in order to guarantee U.S. backing in the European war. In vindication of his support for the firm stand of the U.S., and the trust he placed in Roosevelt to represent Britain's best interests in negotiations with Japan, Churchill's pen would later bark, "It is however a blessing that Japan attacked the United States and thus brought America wholeheartedly and unitedly into the war."[39] Scholars have generally agreed with this assessment.

Two important historians of the Ambassadors' deeds have cast doubt on the claim that war with Japan was more avoidable than inevitable. Antony Best takes polite exception to Craigie's conclusion that Japan was willing to compromise on terms acceptable to the U.S. and Britain in its talks with Secretary Hull in November 1941. At the time, Craigie assumed that Japan would be more amenable to a settlement because it could see that the advantage in the European theatre was shifting away from Germany, "After two and a quarter years of struggle, Great Britain and her Allies appeared to us in Tokyo to be at length slowing gaining the upper hand over Germany; the Russian armies were pressing steadily forward towards the German frontier.…"[40] Antony Best points out that the view from London and Washington was at odds with Craigie's optimistic reading because "in the last week of November German troops were poised in front of Moscow."[41] Churchill was worried that a defeated Soviet Union would allow Germany to turn its full attention

[39] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, F2602, Churchill to Foreign Secretary, September 19, 1943.

[40] Rusbridger and Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, Appendix 9, 4.

[41] Best, "Avoiding War," 350.

to Britain, and "in November 1941 Britain still had no firm promise of support …" from America against an onslaught by Japan.[42] Because he thought a diplomatic solution to avert war was possible, Craigie didn't place as much emphasis on propping up China and the absolute necessity of bringing the U.S. into the war. Churchill bristled at the criticism levied in Craigie's final report as a most "one-sided and pro-Japanese account.…"[43] Best notes that Craigie failed to deal adequately with the impact on China, and was unaware of decrypted intelligence "documenting the build-up of Japanese forces in south Indochina, and evidence that the South China fleet was being expanded and prepared to move south."[44] A prostrate China could embolden Japan to attack Britain. On November 26, Churchill cabled Roosevelt, "Our anxiety is about China. If they collapse, our joint dangers would enormously increase…. We feel that the Japanese are most unsure of themselves." [45] Hence, with regard to Craigie's claim of a missed opportunity, stemming from the November 20 compromise proposal, Antony Best concludes that the circumstances were more complicated and the risk of a misstep more precarious that Craigie realized.

Waldo Heinrichs, Jr. does not attempt to fully answer Grew's question of whether a timely meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Konoye, as Nomura and Konoye had requested, would have averted war in the Pacific. While not speculating

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[42] Best, "Avoiding War," 350.

[43] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, F2602, Churchill to Foreign Secretary, September 19, 1943; quoted in Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the war against Japan, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 75.

[44] Best, "Avoiding War," 350.

[45] PRO, FO 371/27913, Code 23 File 751, Churchill to Roosevelt ("Former Naval Person To President"), November 26, 1941.

on the outcome had Grew's recommendations been taken, Heinrichs does intimate a tentativeness or timidity in Grew's actions. Upon his return to the United States on August 25, 1942, Grew had a meeting with Secretary Hull. Hull "could not understand the Ambassador's peevishness," because, in Hull's view, "the Department had taken Grew's policy recommendations to heart…."[46] Beginning in September 1940, with his "green light" telegram, Grew had started to recommend a tougher approach towards Japan, which he now "placed among the predatory nations." It was time for "a show of force, coupled with the intention to utilize it if necessary…."[47] In his diary, Grew references his green light telegram as "perhaps the most significant message sent to Washington in all the eight years of my mission to Japan."[48]

Edward M. Bennett defends, as appropriate, Hull's insistence on preconditions before agreeing to a Roosevelt-Konoye meeting "in view of the stall tactics previously used…."[49] With regard to Joseph Grew's claim of a missed opportunity, Waldo Heinrichs concludes that Grew's diplomacy "hesitated to press his policy differences …," and his pursuit of the 1941 meeting "lacked explicitness, avoided controversy, and failed to carry his estimates to their logical conclusions."[50] In a similar vein, Antony Best suggests that—in part—Craigie's 1941 admonishments were not heeded because he didn't back them up with "practical solutions to the problems in Anglo-Japanese relations …; to say

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[46] Bennett, "Joseph C. Grew: The Diplomacy of Pacification," 87.

[47] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 292-293.

[48] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 289.

[49] Bennett, "Joseph C. Grew: The Diplomacy of Pacification," 87.

[50] Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 384.

that a war should be avoided is easy; to say how it should be averted is a different matter altogether."[51] Craigie did not give enough consideration to the necessity of locking in a military commitment from the U.S.

Herbert Feis, in *The Road to Pearl Harbor*, concludes that the available data, including Konoye's memoirs, "do not confirm the opinion that Konoye was prepared, without reserve or trickery, to observe the rules set down by Hull,"[52] as conditions for a meeting with Roosevelt. Historian R. J. C. Butow is more hopeful about the potential outcome of a meeting. Butow suggests that a meeting probably would have done more good than harm, "It is difficult to believe that an abortive tête-à-tête would have resulted in any irreparable damage to the United States or that failure at Honolulu [the proposed site] would have led to a graver international crisis than the one already in existence."[53] Ultimately, Grew's communications did not convince Hull of Butow's logic, and Craigie could not persuade Eden to insist on a bigger seat at the negotiating table. Referring to the November 1941 time period, Christopher Thorne summarizes the general consensus among scholars, "… Japan's momentum towards war was by then almost certainly too great to be checked."[54]

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[51] Best, "Avoiding War," 361.

[52] Herbert Feis, *The Road to Pearl Harbor: The Coming of the War Between the United States and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 275.

[53] Butow, "Backdoor Diplomacy in the Pacific," 72.

[54] Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 75.

To what degree were the ambassadors themselves responsible for missing an opportunity to be more emphatic and "explicit" in representing their opinions to their Departments? In answering this and other questions, we need to look at the impact of several critical factors, including: 1) the social relationships between the two ambassadors and between the ambassadors and the Japanese elite; both the Japanese elite and their counterpart colleague were important sources of information for each ambassador; 2) the relationship between the ambassadors and their respective departments, as well as that of the Foreign Office to the State Department; and, 3) the resulting professional association between Grew and Craigie. As acknowledged by both ambassadors, their ability to see the larger picture, including the extent to which Japan was surreptitiously mobilizing for war while negotiating for peace on its terms, was obscured by the unwillingness of their respective departments to share confidential information. Furthermore, the State Department and Foreign Office did not always agree on tactics. These impediments stymied the Ambassadors' confidence to more vociferously argue their points.

Chapter III

The Conduct of the State Department and the Foreign Office

Tension had been building in 1941, as the interests in the Pacific between Japan and the U.S.-British alliance were colliding. Japan's plan was to develop a new order in Asia, where—in their telling—it would lead and solidify a co-prosperity sphere of countries and preside over a more peaceful China. Craigie attributed this ambition—in part—to Japan's desire to reduce its dependence on trade with the U.S. and the British empire, which still included Singapore, Hong Kong and India. According to the British Chiefs of Staff in 1940, "Japan's ultimate aims … are the exclusion of Western influence from the Far East and the control of Far Eastern resources of raw materials."[55] By signing the Tripartite Pact in September 1940, the Axis powers of Japan, Germany and Italy recognized the right of each other to create a new order in their respective geographic dominions in Europe and East Asia, and pledged "to assist one another with all political, economic and military means" if any of the signatories were "attacked" by a country not already a combatant in the war in Europe or China, principally meaning the U.S..[56] The U.S. and Britain both had extensive trading interests in Asia beyond Japan, particularly China, and

[55] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 67.

[56] Yale Law School, The Avalon Project, "Three-Power Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan, Signed at Berlin, September 27, 1940." http://avalon.law.yale.edu./wwii/triparti.asp.

were adherents to the Open Door policy. While both shared an economic interest in Asia, Britain and the U.S. had different political priorities.

What differentiated the U.S. and British perspectives on their Asian foreign policy was that Britain had been immersed in war with Germany in the West since September 1939, and was seeking to avoid a similar problem in the Pacific. The declaration of war by Italy and the defeat of France in June 1940, exacerbated Britain's dilemma. It was an advantage for Britain to have the Japanese bogged down in China. As Churchill put it to his U.S. Ambassador, Lord Halifax, in July 1940, "I am sure that it is not in our interest that the Japanese should be relieved of their preoccupation."[57] Increasingly, Britain's main objective regarding the U.S. was not to antagonize by contradicting U.S. foreign policy, thereby jeopardizing the likelihood of the U.S. entering the European war on the side of Britain. According to Antony Best, by the second half of 1941, British "perception of the necessity to assure American support grew ever greater as the threat to Britain grew ever closer."[58] Victory over Germany was more likely if the U.S. entered the fray, especially if Japan could be kept at bay as an uncommitted party.

In contrast to Britain, U.S. foreign policy priorities for Asia were conflicted. In the beginning of 1941, the U.S. was not militarily prepared for another war. Complicating the matter, U.S. public opinion favored neutrality in foreign affairs. Christopher Thorne has reported that a Gallup Poll taken in May 1941 showed that 79% of Americans were "heavily against" the U.S. entering the European conflict voluntarily, and in August of that year, the House of Representatives passed a renewal of the Selective Service Act by

[57] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 66.

[58] Best, "Avoiding War," 367.

the slimmest margin of one vote.[59] Whatever sympathy that had existed towards China did not push Congress to soften immigration laws. However, the State Department was resistant to the Japanese foreign policy of adopting something akin to a "Monroe Doctrine" for Asia, with Japan the controlling power in the region.

Consequently, until the close of 1941, U.S. foreign policy towards Japan was ambivalent, leading the U.S. to misjudge Japan's desperation and to hold off on a firm commitment of military support to Britain. The Japan hawk, Stanley Hornbeck, Grew's rival in the State Department, would badly underestimate Japan's reaction to the tightening of sanctions and the collapse of the talks between Ambassador Nomura and Secretary of State Hull. On November 27, only days before the Pearl Harbor attack, Hornbeck predicted in a memo to Hull that the "odds" were "5 to 1" against the probability of war with Japan prior to December 15 "and even money that there would be no war by March 1, 1942."[60] Churchill exhibited a similar hubris with regard to Japan. In August 1940 and again in October 1941 he would claim that Japan would not declare war on Britain, and—for that matter—later the U.S., unless Germany could defeat Britain on British soil or subsequently conquer the Soviet Union.[61] Characterizing U.S. decision-making, Christopher Thorne paraphrases the work of fellow historian Roberta Wohlstetter, "the main confusion and ignorance among American officials in 1940-41concerned, not so much the intentions of the Japanese as what was the policy of their own country in the Far

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[59] Thorne*, Allies of a Kind*, 93-94.

[60] Richard Dean Burns, "Stanley K. Hornbeck: The Diplomacy of the Open Door." *In Diplomats in Crisis*, 112-113.

[61] See Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 56.

East."[62] Even going back ten years, confusion reigned over U.S. policy towards Japan. Thorne relays that when Grew first became the U.S. Ambassador to Japan in 1932 he canvassed members of government asking them to describe U.S. policy towards the Far East: "No two men gave him the same answer."[63] Thus, Ambassador Halifax in Washington would not receive a firm guarantee from the U.S. of military action against Japan in the case of an attack on Britain until December 1, 1941.

While U.S. policy goals, to the extent they could be understood, were not always aligned with those of Britain, cultural differences further muddied the relationship between the two allies. In his book, *Allies of a Kind*, Christopher Thorne details the perception by U.S. and British officials of each other's diplomatic heritage, which aptly sets the context for the personal and professional relationship between Ambassadors Grew and Craigie. Historically, British foreign policy was actively engaged in the power politics of Europe, while the U.S. displayed a distaste for intervention, imperialism and becoming embroiled outside of its hemisphere. The U.S. was blessed with the geographic advantage of a diverse economy and abundant natural resources, sheltered by two oceans. Public opinion and political interest groups had a greater influence on policy in the U.S. Stanley Hornbeck of the State Department argued that "In the U.S. we place a much higher valuation upon the concept of political freedom and independence than do the British …."[64] It was popular among Americans to view the British as "a tired people who lacked idealism

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[62] Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 84.

[63] Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, see footnote, 84.

[64] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 95.

and had had their day."[65] Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's Vice-President from 1941-1945, characterized the British at the time as "trying to play their customary role of getting more than they are entitled to."[66]

On the other hand, regarding Americans, Thorne traces several episodes, which point to a commensurate skepticism by the British. Lord Halifax wrote in 1941, "They strike me as very crude and semi-educated … and have not begun to appreciate … that the essential element of education is not to know things but to know how little you know. And I think also that national life has been pretty easy for them and they shrink from things that are hard." The U.S. was sometimes viewed as shirking the responsibility attendant to its international stature. Halifax complained that Americans were "the most mercurial people," similar to the description offered by Britain's Head of the North American Department who claimed that Americans "are prone to emotionalism and exaggeration." Professor T. Whitehead, an advisor to the Foreign Office, determined that American involvement on the side of Britain in the European war "depends more on public opinion in the two countries than on formal relations between the Foreign Office and the State Department." Upon returning in July 1942 from an assignment in Washington, Sir Arthur Salters was quoted by Hugh Dalton, President of the Board of Trade in Britain, as finding "an anti-American prejudice" at the British Foreign Office and Treasury, which Salters attributed to "the jealousy of the old British governing class at the passing of power."[67]

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[65] Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 95.

[66] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 99.

[67] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 97-98, 105-106.

It should come as no surprise, then, that U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, could wear a prickly persona when dealing with his British counterparts. Hull was quite sensitive to any comments which "implied criticism" of the way he was conducting the peace talks with Nomura and at one point accused the Foreign Office of trying to "lecture" him.[68] When Japan coerced the French Vichy government to allow its deeper penetration into southern Indochina, the U.S. swiftly froze the movement of Japanese assets in the U.S. in July 1941 and imposed an oil embargo. The U.S. unequivocally took the lead role in negotiations with Japan. Britain gave its full support to this arrangement in order to enlist U.S. help in prosecuting the European war and buttress against possible hostilities in the Pacific. At this point, Craigie's reservations about Britain not having a seat at the negotiating table did not rise to the level of a strident objection, as they would later in his final report. In his August 26, 1941 diary entry, Grew recounts the contents of Craigie's recent telegram to London: "Craigie said to London that he fully realizes the importance of not crossing wires with the United States and that the lead must be left to us at the present time but he still feels it his duty to keep the British end up as far as possible …."[69] Britain needed the U.S. at its side to overcome Germany; claims Antony Best, "All aspects of British policy were subservient to that essential goal…."[70] There was also a sense within the Foreign Office that if a breakdown in the talks occurred, Britain and the Netherlands would be attacked by Japan first to obtain the natural resources in the East

[68] see PRO, FO 371/27909, F4695, Code 23 File 86, No. 706, Foreign Office to Tokyo, June 16, 1941.

[69] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5529.

[70] Best, "Avoiding War," 367.

Indies and Malaya.[71] Furthermore, Britain and the U.S. were aware of Japan's ulterior motive to disrupt the relationship between the Allies. Craigie opined, "There is still of course much wishful thinking as to possibility of driving a wedge between Great Britain and United States …."[72] Hence, the foremost concern of the Foreign Office was to avoid rankling the U.S. To that end, Britain decided to suffer the consequences of letting the U.S. control the discussions with Japan and regulate the flow of sensitive information.

Within the Foreign Office, Craigie bore the brunt of this policy of selective information distribution by the U.S., but others were also affected. A dispatch from Ashley Clarke in the Foreign Office read, "It is inevitable that we and the Chinese should feel misgivings about these talks both because they are going on at all and because we are being kept in the dark as to their progress."[73] According to D. C. Watt, the State Department failed to notify the Foreign Office "of the American decrypts of the Japanese Magic cyphers indicating that Plan B of the November 20 [1941] proposals represented their final offer."[74] The State Department also restricted the amount of information disclosed to Grew. Joseph Grew was particularly distraught by the deprivation of key details withheld by the State Department. In January 1941 he lamented, "If Ambassadors are something

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[71] See PRO, FO 371/27910, Code 23 File 86, Brief for the Secretary of State from H.A.C (Ashley Clarke), September 18, 1941.

[72] PRO, FO 371/27908, F3310, Code 23 File 86, No. 656, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, April 22, 1941.

[73] PRO, FO 371/27910, F9321, Code 23 File 86, No. 4227, Ashley Clarke, Minutes of United States-Japanese conversations, September 17, 1941.

[74] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 21-22.

more than messenger boys, they must be allowed to see behind the scenes."[75] He confides that he relies on Craigie to share intelligence transmitted to the British Embassy from the Foreign Office, such as conversations between Britain's U.S. Ambassador Halifax and Roosevelt and Hull in early February 1941. Grew's note from February 19, 1941 explains, "Of course these conversations had not been reported by the Department to me, although they very closely concerned my job out here;" the State Department was worried about security.[76] In return, Grew supplies Craigie with only certain intelligence emanating from the U.S. government, other than what he learns locally, "because it is up to the Department to tell Halifax what it wishes to tell him, and not up to me to tell the British Government through Craigie …."[77] For example, Grew did not inform Craigie when he first learned of Prime Minister Konoye's request in August 1941 for a personal meeting with Roosevelt; Craigie learned of the proposed meeting from other sources. In several communications and diary notations in 1941, Grew's tone is one of indignation when referencing his relationship with the State Department.

Through the course of 1941, Grew remained disturbed by his disadvantaged access to information, and was perhaps a bit jealous of Craigie, who would more often receive a reply to telegrams sent to London. In June 1941, Grew shares with Craigie that while he was recently asked for his opinion on whether the Japanese government would actually execute an agreement that would require them to withdraw from China, if one could be concluded, he nevertheless labored "in ignorance both of details of the proposed

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[75] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4737.

[76] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4810-4811.

[77] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5219.

agreement and of the position now reached in the discussions."[78] In July, Grew brings to the attention of Acting Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, that he was shown by Craigie the contents of a confidential cablegram from Halifax reporting on consequential conversations between Halifax and Welles and between the U.S. Director of Naval Intelligence and the British Naval Attaché. Grew objects, "I feel very strongly that the information revealed in those conversations should properly have been brought promptly to my attention … Much of your conversations are sooner or later reported to me by my British colleague here but it seems to me to be distinctly *infra dignitatem* [beneath dignity] to have to depend on that source in order to learn the information and expressed views of my own government."[79] Welles understands Grew's point, but replies that certain types of information cannot be secure if transmitted by cable or radio. In addition to "security considerations," historian R. J. C. Butow identifies "the cost factor, and an already overburdened staff" as reasons for restricting the amount and types of information disseminated to Grew.[80] In September, Grew echoed the complaint he noted in January, "I am not a great admirer in general of the British way of doing things for they are inept in many

[78] PRO, FO 371/27909, F5147, Code 23 File 86, No. 971, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, June 11, 1941.

[79] Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1941 Volume IV The Far East*, The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, July 10, 1941, 299-300; Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5346-5347.

[80] Butow, "Backdoor Diplomacy in the Pacific," see footnotes, 62.

ways, but they at least treat their Ambassadors as something more than pawns or messenger boys.…[81] Grew's take on his position in the information chain, vis-a-vis that of Craigie, was not unfounded.

Averell Harriman, another Groton graduate, Wall Street banker and businessman, who was acting as an advisor to Roosevelt in Britain, wrote to Roosevelt on April 10, 1941, "I find the British Foreign Office has a well-developed method of keeping its ambassadors informed of developments of policy the world over, whereas … our State Department informs each ambassador on matters relating only directly to his particular country."[82] Christopher Thorne makes the point that not only did Roosevelt disregard a swath of his ambassadors, but he would also bypass Secretary Hull, preferring to deal with personal advisors, such as Harry Hopkins. Partly because of his connection through Groton and Harvard, Grew at least had a better relationship with Roosevelt than most. In a January 21, 1941 letter to Grew, responding to Grew's request to hear his thoughts on developments in the Far East, Roosevelt compliments Grew's "masterly judgment."[83] Nevertheless, with respect to the important negotiations in late Summer-Autumn 1941 in Washington between Roosevelt and Hull with Ambassador Nomura, Waldo Heinrich's, Jr. describes the predicament of the U.S. ambassador, "Grew received daily reports and few clues to his government's thinking."[84]

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[81] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5630.

[82] Quoted in Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 114.

[83] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4793.

[84] Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 340.

Craigie was perhaps more handicapped than Grew or Harriman surmised, because Washington insisted on circumscribing what London could share with its outpost in Tokyo. On November 22, 1941, Sir Horace Seymour, who managed the Far Eastern Department for Britain, commented, "I sympathize with Sir R. Craigie—the trouble is the American stipulation that we must not tell him what they tell us."[85] The State Department also, on occasion, insisted on the limited circulation of its dispatches updating the Foreign Office of developments. For example, the State Department's policy was to limit the participation of the Foreign Office in the negotiations with Japan "until a basis of discussion has been found between the United States and Japan…."[86] Craigie would learn even less. When informing the Foreign Office of the details of the discussions whereby Ambassador Nomura proposed the Konoye-Roosevelt meeting, Sir R. Campbell was cabled by U. S. Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles that "the contents" of the papers containing this disclosure "be not circulated by your Government to its diplomatic mission abroad including British Embassy, Tokyo."[87] As Ashley Clarke would admit, "It is difficult to explain to Sir R. Craigie the business about gaining time which we have been expressly asked by Mr. Hull to keep to ourselves."[88] Most disturbing, perhaps, is that Grew did not inform Craigie when he received a cable from the State Department requesting

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[85] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 347.

[86] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, Ashley Clarke minutes, November 6, 1941.

[87] PRO, FO 371/27909, F8168, Code 23 File 86, No. 5891, memo by Sir R. Campbell to War Cabinet, August 22, 1941.

[88] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, Ashley Clarke minutes, November 6, 1941.

that he begin mobilizing for the departure of the U.S. Embassy from Tokyo. In a November 29 diary entry, Grew notes that the telegram was marked "Strictly Confidential for the Ambassador;" however, the message was sent in the "Brown code," which had stopped being designated as "confidential" by November.[89] Craigie's team had to learn of the State Department's telegram inadvertently, apparently within a few days, from another member of the U. S. Embassy who "let slip" the instructions.[90]

Craigie was not alone among his British colleagues in expressing concern about the incomplete disclosure coming from Washington. In September, Campbell would express "anxiety" over the course of the talks because "all knowledge is withheld from us…." Tiptoeing around Hull, in order to get an update, Campbell recommends that "enquiries should be made to the United States Ambassador in London.…"[91] Secretary Hull had decided not to give a modus vivendi proposal to the Japanese, in part because of what he perceived to be a cool reaction from Britain, after he had shown it to them on November 24. Hull was annoyed, and did not show the British a copy of his ultimate proposal until after it was delivered to the Japanese on November 26.[92] In reference to the document which Hull did deliver to the Japanese on November 26, Ashley Clarke demurred,

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[89] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5974.

[90] PRO, FO 371/27913, F13091, Code 23 File 86, No. 2429, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, December 1, 1941.

[91] PRO, FO 371/27910, F9321, Code 23 File 86, No. 4227, From Washington (Sir R. Campbell) to Foreign Office, September 14, 1941; also, F9321, United States-Japanese conversations, September 13, 1941.

[92] See Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 6065-6067. Hull's proposal contained two sections. The first section listed political and economic principles to be shared by the U.S. and Japan, including "non-discrimination in matters of trade between countries." Section two identified 10 steps to be followed for reconciliation between Japan and the U.S., such

"Indeed we are greatly handicapped by not knowing what this proposal was and Lord Halifax would surely be justified in pressing for a copy."[93] Halifax commented, "I think in such an important document that we have never seen, Secretary of State has behaved badly—but I do not think it will do practical harm."[94]

The British Dominions were also critical of the U.S. about the limited access to information relevant to the Washington discussions and other matters. In August 1941, the High Commissioner in South Africa cabled three related concerns in a discussion about the issuance of a warning to Japan: 1) "United States of America often uses strong language without following it up with strong action but British practice has been opposite …;" 2) "we have little definite information to go on and provocative ultimatum to Japan may have to be made good by us while United States of America takes further months of preparation and organization for war …;" and 3) "Before using provocative language to Japan we should make quite sure of America's fullest active support in war."[95] According to the Foreign Office, British reticence and deference to the U.S. offered one key benefit to offset the deprivation of information, "if the Washington talks break down in present

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as the lifting of trade restrictions and removal of Japanese troops and police from China and Indochina.

[93] PRO, FO 371/27913, F12992, Code 23 File 86, No. 5474, Ashley Clarke minute, December 1, 1941.

[94] PRO, FO 371/27913, F12859, Code 23 File 86, No. 5419, From Washington (Viscount Halifax) to Foreign Office, November 26, 1941.

[95] PRO, FO 371/27910, F8621, Code 23 File 86, No. 1029, From the United Kingdom High Commissioner in The Union of South Africa to Dominions Office, August 29, 1941.

circumstances the United States will be heavily committed towards us to assist in dealing with any unfortunate consequences."[96]

Grew and Craigie had a protocol that what Grew would show Craigie could be shared with certain members of the Foreign Office in London, but not repeated to the British embassy in Washington: "I have an understanding with Craigie that such confidential information as I give him will be distributed only to Churchill, Eden and other members of the War Cabinet and not to the Foreign Office in general, and Craigie has made a definite arrangement with Eden to this effect."[97] Craigie explains this understanding with Grew to the Foreign Office, in particular Foreign Secretary Antony Eden and Ashley Clarke: "it is only in virtue of our close personal relations and assurances I have given him, that my United States colleague feels justified in passing on to me information which he thinks should be known to yourself only and to Ministers directly concerned."[98] However, the Foreign Office insisted on its obligation to "exercise discretion" in distributing Grew's messages, "it is essential for Lord Halifax to be in possession of all available information if he is to carry out his mission successfully."[99] As a condition, Halifax, being Britain's Ambassador to the U.S. in Washington, was prohibited from repeating the

[96] PRO, FO 371/27910, F10329, Code 23 File 86, U.S.-Japanese conversations, Ashley Clarke, October 6, 1941.

[97] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5219.

[98] PRO, FO 371/27908, F4344, Code 23 File 86, No. 840, From Tokyo (Sir Robert Craigie) to Foreign Office, May 22, 1941.

[99] PRO, FO 371/27908, F4344, Code 23 File 86, No. 657, draft Foreign Office to Sir R. Craigie, June 2, 1941.

content to U.S. officials. Likewise, the Foreign Office also felt the need to distribute certain confidential information to Craigie but was often restricted by the U.S. to communicating only a "general indication,"[100] which represented a vague guideline. According to Ashley Clarke, with regard to the warning issued by Roosevelt to the Japanese Government in August 1941, "It is necessary to inform Sir R. Craigie of what is going on within the limits allowed us by the U.S. Govt. It is not quite clear what those limits are."[101] Though unclear, those limits did not extend to highly classified intelligence.

Recommendations from Grew and Craigie became less relevant as the technology to decrypt Japanese communications improved.[102] David Kahn claims that by 1937, "codebreaking outperformed the diplomats," obtaining indications about Italy joining the Anti-Comintern Pact between Japan and Germany "six months before American diplomats began reporting on it."[103] The entire U.S. apparatus for decoding Japanese diplomatic intelligence was named "Magic." B.J. (British-Japanese or Black Jumbo) was the British code name for decrypted messages. Roberta Wohlstetter has reported that one of

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[100] PRO, FO 371/27909, Code 23 File 86, No. 1075, From Foreign Office to Tokyo, August 28, 1941.

[101] PRO, 371/27909, F8226, Code 23 File 86, Ashley Clarke memo, August 26, 1941.

[102] see Best, "Avoiding War," 369.

[103] David Kahn, "Pearl Harbor as an Intelligence Failure," in *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War: A Brief History with Documents and Essays*, ed. Akira Iriye (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 162.

Japan's more sophisticated diplomatic codes, "Purple," was not cracked by the U.S. "until August of 1940," when the first Purple message was decrypted and read.[104] Kahn places the date in the following month, around the signing of the Tripartite Pact, though the feat was accomplished by the same team under the direction of Colonel William F. Friedman.

There are conflicting reports regarding the extent to which decrypted intelligence was shared with government officials. According to Rusbridger and Nave, "Magic was to be a security classification higher even than Top Secret, with the aim of restricting distribution to as few people as possible;" Roosevelt and Hull did not get on the circulation list for Purple decrypts until January 1941.[105] Ruth R. Harris, an historical consultant, suggests that Roosevelt and Hull may have seen decrypts before January 1941, but were not "permitted to retain copies of Magic intelligence."[106] Harris contends that about the time when the U.S. Magic operations were discovered and communicated to Japan in April 1941 by the German Embassy in Washington, the U.S. Navy placed further restrictions on Roosevelt's exposure.[107] Grew never made the circulation list in 1941, as he so testified before the "Joint Congressional Investigation" into the Pearl Harbor attack.[108] The

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[104] Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 75.

[105] Rusbridger and Nave, 80-81.

[106] Ruth R. Harris, "The "Magic" Leak of 1941 and Japanese-American Relations," *Pacific Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (February 1981), 81.

[107] Harris, "The "Magic" Leak of 1941," 84, 87.

[108] Roland H. Worth, Jr., *Pearl Harbor: Selected Testimonies, Fully Indexed, From the Congressional Hearings (1945-1946) And Prior Investigations of the Events Leading Up to the Attack* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993), 51.

machines used to decode Purple were controlled by the Army and Navy. A few machines were sent to Britain's intelligence operation, the Government Code and Cypher School (GCCS). Commenting on Grew's quandary, Wohlstetter explains, "the information reaching him from Washington was so sparse at this time that he cabled on July 10 complaining that he was obliged to go to his British colleague to learn the progress of the State Department conversations with the Japanese ambassador in Washington." As a result, "his dispatches to Washington … lacked the sure confirmation available in the capital."[109] There are also no signs of Craigie having direct access to Japanese decrypts.

The structural context of British-American foreign policy relations in 1941 was clearly complex and fraught with the challenges of an ongoing war in Europe and the threat of war in the Pacific. However, it can be described as exhibiting the following facets, which impacted the ability of Grew and Craigie to influence the peace discussions and the possibility of avoiding war with Japan: 1) Britain and the U.S. had different national interests. Britain needed to enlist U.S. military involvement in Europe, and possibly in the Pacific. To further that end, they deemed it necessary to defer to U.S. leadership in discussions with Japan. The U.S. shared an economic interest with Britain in Asia, was concerned about the German war machine and the future of its ally, but had an historical inclination to recoil from foreign entanglements, and needed time to make military preparations and wait for public opinion to shift; 2) the foreign policy players in Britain and the U.S. had cultural reservations or prejudices about the workings of each other's department, and instructions about sharing information were often confusing and inconsistent; 3) the State Department did not share all that they knew with the Foreign Office; and 4) Ambassadors Grew and Craigie were shown even less of the big picture. In the

[109] Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor*, 129.

swirl of these currents, Grew and Craigie had to form a personal and professional relationship which would allow them to communicate most effectively with each other and their Japanese counterparts, as well as to advise their governments with appropriate emphasis.

Chapter IV

The Personal Relationship between Craigie and Grew, and their Relationship with the Japanese Moderates

Building a sense of trust with one's colleague was critical to the functioning of the U.S. and British embassies in Tokyo, as Joseph Grew and Sir Robert Craigie relied on one another for information and confirmation during the course of 1941. Both ambassadors had to manage through departmental prejudices, and what became an awkward social relationship between them. A cumbersome social bond should ordinarily be a sign of a poor professional relationship. In this case, it was not. Furthermore, their access to certain intelligence was restricted by the State Department and the Foreign Office. The efforts by Grew and Craigie to cultivate local sources, mostly among the Japanese moderates, often resulted in accusations of appeasement, an awful stigma to bear at the time. Understanding the context of these relationships shows just how hard the ambassadors had to work to retard the migration towards war in the Pacific. The evidence shows that Grew and Craigie molded an effective professional relationship, notwithstanding these obstacles. They shared a mutual respect for their roles, and a common mission, which was to extend the peace as long as they could while representing their country's national interest.

Joseph Grew had two gripes with his colleague, Sir Robert Craigie: the clumsy diplomacy of the British Foreign Office, and Craigie's embarrassing social graces, including those of his ill-tempered wife. Mirroring the prejudices of the State Department as

early as 1937, Grew admonishes in his diary, "The British Foreign Office is certainly at times inept, if nothing worse."[110] Prior to his appointment as ambassador in 1937, Craigie was in charge of the American Department of the British Foreign Office for nearly ten years, and played an important role in the negotiations held during the 1935 London Naval Conference. According to Antony Best, Craigie—perhaps unjustifiably—earned a reputation from the State Department of being "unhelpful."[111] From most accounts, Craigie was introverted by nature, compared to the more sociable Grew. Prior to his first meeting with Craigie, Grew had received information "from unofficial sources that Craigie was inclined to be somewhat anti-American.…"[112]

Grew considered himself to be the more seasoned and resourceful diplomat. In the summer of 1937, prior to his introduction to Craigie, Grew had worked closely with the younger James Dodds, Britain's Counsellor in Japan, with whom he had an amiable relationship. Regarding the suggestion of a coordinated British-American approach to Japan on resolving differences in China, Grew writes that he rather than Dodds should take the first step because "the usual Britisher is generally inclined to overlook the values of finesse."[113] Later, Grew would remark that he was unimpressed by Craigie's choice of military attaché, General Francis Piggott. Piggott was so partial to Japan "that his estimates

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[110] Grew papers, 1937 Diary, 3337.

[111] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 61.

[112] Grew papers, 1937 Diary, 3457; for additional comments on Craigie's personality, see Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented in November 1941?," 7-8, 13.

[113] Grew papers, 1937 Diary, 3318.

and judgments cannot possibly be sound. In his eyes the Japanese can do no wrong."[114] In January 1941, Grew raises the possibility of being asked by Craigie to speak to French Ambassador Arsene-Henry on Craigie's behalf, because Craigie and Henry "are not on speaking terms;" Grew accuses the British of "expediency when it suits their book, and all for principle when it doesn't."[115] Not coincidentally, Grew's wife, Alice, and Henry's wife, Yolanda, were best friends, according to Grew.

Grew, not one for humility, fondly refers to himself as "Dean of the Diplomatic Corps" in Japan.[116] A Japanese acquaintance had informed him that a lecturer in the Japanese Secret Police had counseled new members that Grew could uncover "what is going on behind the scenes in Japanese politics even before the military or even the secret police know." Attached to this particular note in his diary, Grew appends that Craigie's "reputation" was, by comparison, "very low in Japan…."[117] Moreover, he disparages Craigie's farewell speech for Britain's Polish Ambassador, as one in which Craigie "hesitates and stammers. A speech should flow smoothly and without hitches or "ers" while searching for the next phrase."[118] (It is interesting to note that these and other unflattering comments by Grew, such as his depiction of Lady Craigie, were left out of his book *Ten*

[114] Grew papers, 1937 Diary, 3542.

[115] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4728-4729.

[116] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4895.

[117] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5219.

[118] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5869.

Years in Japan, which is the published, abbreviated summary of his personal diary and other papers left to Harvard.)

Craigie could be equally disparaging of U.S. tactics, though not necessarily personalizing his criticism. He harbored reservations about letting the U.S do the talking for Britain. Craigie did recognize London's interest in currying U.S. favor should tension in the Pacific escalate while Britain had its hands full with Germany. However, Best describes him as reluctant to "bank on Washington's support … as the Americans were masters of moralistic rhetoric but loath to take action."[119] In his final report to Churchill, written subsequent to the Pearl Harbor attack, Craigie openly criticizes U.S. as well as British policy, "American methods in the conduct of diplomacy often err on the side of rigidity and formality, whereas the situation in the Far East called for a more delicate touch …."[120] This ironically mimics Grew's comment that the British overlook finesse. Craigie claims that he beseeched his department to push Washington to exert more flexibility in its discussions with Japan in October-November 1941, believing it was the last opportunity for a compromise. In a November 1, 1941 cable to his Foreign Office, Craigie asserts, "little attention seems to have been paid in Washington to Japanese psychology …," which Craigie thought required more patience.[121]

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[119] Best, "Avoiding War," 363.

[120] Rusbridger and Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, Appendix 9, 6.

[121] FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to the Foreign Office, November 1, 1941; Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 344.

Compared to Grew, "Craigie was not a political animal but a professional diplomatist to his fingers' ends."[122] In a manuscript, unpublished in English, historian D. C. Watt comments on the political naivety displayed by Craigie at the time of drafting his final report, "Only a man driven by a profound sense of his own abilities and prescience, and a man ignorant of what opinion others had of him would have sought to launch such an indictment of Britain's principal ally and of his own government in the circumstances of October 1942…."[123] Grew, on the other hand, was more cautious, sensitive to the opinion others had of him, and savvy about displaying the correct mannerisms to advance his career. For the most part, he relegates his true feelings about Lady Pleasant Craigie to the confines of his original, unpublished diary.

In addition to assimilating the reservations held by their respective departments, a further challenge to the relationship between Craigie and Grew was that the Grews found Lady Craigie, with whom Sir Robert Craigie had an "unusually close" relationship, to be obnoxious.[124] At times, this limited the social interaction between the Grews and Craigies. Grew condemns Lady Craigie's particulars for a farewell dinner for the British Naval Attaché as "very gauche," and suggests that this staffer "found the atmosphere of our Embassy so much more congenial than his own.…"[125] Watt points out that "Craigie was

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[122] Donald Cameron Watt, "Chamberlain's Ambassadors," in *Diplomacy and World Power: Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890-1950*, edited by Michael Dockrill and Brian McKercher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168.

[123] Watt, "Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented?," 7.

[124] Watt, "Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented?," 13.

[125] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5381,5249.

not beloved of his juniors who found him pompous and distant…."[126] One exception, perhaps, is Paul Gore-Booth, who "has spoken warmly of Craigie in his memoirs."[127] When the Craigie's host a couples dinner for the former British Minister to Budapest, Grew explains that his wife "Alice's relations with Lady Craigie are such that we could hardly expect to be asked to that gathering," and that "Lady C. has been so utterly nasty…. that Alice "simply shudders to come in contact with the woman."[128] Recalling an earlier social affair at the Craigies, Grew chastises the choice of war films that were shown, "There you have the British muddling at its worst."[129] Pleasant Craigie, who did not have the ancestral pedigree of Alice Grew, had, according to Watt, "left behind her a trail of wounded susceptibilities in the Tokyo embassy and elsewhere."[130] At his own embassy, Grew chooses not to invite any Japanese to a particular March 10, 1941 dinner, which involved diplomats from several countries and their spouses, "because Lady Craigie is so rude to them."[131] The fact that she "commented on their absence," indicates that Japanese officials would have typically attended.[132]

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[126] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 7.

[127] Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 34.

[128] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5148-5149.

[129] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5015.

[130] Watt, "Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented,"13; also quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 9.

[131] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4915.

[132] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4915.

There is at least one account of an act of kindness from Lady Craigie. Upon finding a young Japanese woman who had wandered into her kitchen suffering in pain, Pleasant Craigie insists on providing transportation and escorting her to the hospital. She later found out the woman had delivered a baby. Mrs. Craigie was treated to a sumptuous bouquet of flowers from a most thankful husband, a police man, who was accompanied by the Police Chief, as the representative of the entire local police force.[133] D. Cameron Watt, who has apparently seen some of Craigie's private papers, characterizes Craigie's letters to his wife, Pleasant, as "redolent of love and affection."[134] Whatever was Lady Craigie's true nature, to his credit, Grew was aware of the risk that a poor social relationship could jeopardize his professional association with Craigie.

Conventional wisdom might conclude that the awkward social relationship between Grew and Craigie would markedly taint their professional workings, by impairing their ability to collaborate. Gillian N. Moore has studied the interactions between American Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers and postulates that a "good personal relationship" leads to more numerous and positive policy outcomes between the countries.[135] Moore claims that a strong personal relationship can be fostered by a common heritage and mutual social activities, including family vacations, private visits and participation in

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[133] See Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 97.

[134] Watt, "Could War in the Far East Have Been Prevented?," 13.

[135] Gillian N. Moore, "Personal Relations between the American Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers and the Impact of These Relationships on Diplomatic Ties from 1981 to the Present," (Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies Thesis, Harvard University, November 2003), 100.

or attendance at sporting events, such as golf or tennis. Officials who enjoy socializing with one another collaborate better and accomplish more professionally.

By way of example, Moore highlights the positive relationship between U.S. President Reagan and Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney. Both men were of Irish heritage and leaders of their country's respective conservative party. They joked during press conferences. Mulroney "genuinely liked Americans and understood their system," while Reagan refers warmly to his excursions to Canada, accompanied by his wife, "Nancy and I traveled to many countries when I was president, and among our most enjoyable trips were the short ones we made across our nation's northern border."[136] Nancy Reagan and Mila Mulroney, the Prime Minister's wife, were good friends, who, according to Mila Mulroney in her biography, "always seem to have so much to talk about."[137] Gillian Moore identifies a Free Trade Agreement and the establishment of annual policy symposiums as accomplishments resulting from the close personal relationship of the Mulroneys and Reagans. In the conclusion to her thesis, Moore offers the following advice to candidates running for the office of President and Prime Minister: "I would suggest that they engage the leader of the other country in a game of golf or an informal dinner, as it is likely to result in a better relationship…."[138]

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[136] Quoted in Moore, "Personal Relations between the American Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers," 28.

[137] Quoted in Moore, "Personal Relations between the American Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers," 34.

[138] Moore, "Personal Relations between the American Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers." 101-102.

From Grew's account of his social relationship with Craigie, they certainly did not traverse the halcyon path recommended by Moore. While arriving in Tokyo to take up his post as Ambassador in 1937, Craigie, for example, did not ask to join Grew's "Saturday golf group" until November 1941; it is not clear whether he was ever invited to join prior to that or whether he was just too unsure of his game.[139] Furthermore, Grew's disdain for Lady Craigie's dinner parties is well documented. Nevertheless, Grew concludes that although the social situation is unfortunate, "I cannot, however, let it interfere with my close cooperation with Craigie himself…."[140] Though their social orientations were quite different, the ambassadors shared a common rapport with the moderate elite of Japan.

The moderate contingent in Japan was a primary source of information for Ambassadors Grew and Craigie. This affiliation led the two of them to exercise a flexible diplomacy, between conciliation and confrontation, depending upon the movement of the power pendulum in Japan between the moderates and the extremist, military groups. The "pendulum theory" postulates that, over time, Japan's foreign policy has oscillated between periods of militaristic nationalism and peaceful collaboration, which would ultimately bring the moderates back into power if they lost ground. The advance of the moderates could be facilitated by Britain, or for that matter the U.S., "adopting a more conciliatory attitude toward Japan.…" This would assuage Japanese public opinion and the

[139] See Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5976.

[140] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5149.

more militant members of the Japanese press. John Dower labels the enticement to placate Japan as a "moderation-in-the-offing."[141] In order to anticipate the direction of the pendulum, the ambassadors were focused on understanding Japanese psychology, and its reaction to "a loss of face," which could trigger an unpredictable swing in behavior; Grew paraphrases his thoughts on the peculiarity of Japanese psychology in one of his telegrams to the Secretary and Undersecretary of State, "we cannot gauge Japanese actions by any Western measuring rod.…"[142] Saving face, or avoiding shame and preserving respect, is not unique to Japanese or Asian culture, though the Japanese were stereotyped that way at the time. Nevertheless, the importance of this concept was underappreciated by the State Department and Foreign Office, who considered accommodating the issue to be tantamount to appeasement.

The enigma of Japanese psychology, and the concept of saving face, is poignantly illustrated by a vignette contained in *The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye*. In an October 12, 1941 conference with members of his new Cabinet, Prime Minister Konoye is informed in a report by the Director of the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Navy Office that: "The Navy does not desire to have the American-Japanese negotiations disrupted. The Navy desires to avoid war as much as circumstances permit. But the Navy cannot say it openly." The Director of the Naval Affairs Bureau maintains this view, notwithstanding the assurance of the Director of the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Office that, "if the

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[141] Dower, and quoted in J. W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988 Second printing), 127.

[142] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5637.

Navy says to the Army officially 'The Navy at this time doesn't desire to have war,' the Army will find it easy to control the men in the Army." Instead, the Navy defers the decision to the Prime Minister, concluding "The Navy is not in a position to say it doesn't desire war in a formal way."[143] Whether the navy was attempting to "save face" by not openly admitting its disinclination to go to war, or trying to shift accountability to the army or Prime Minister for any botched decision to rush into war, is unclear. In any case, Grew was definitely attuned to the potentially "abnormal results of a loss of face …."[144]

In contrast to the conciliatory diplomacy advocated by ambassadors Grew and Craigie, their respective departments were more confrontational. The State Department and the Foreign Office were concerned that any sign of compromise would be viewed as weakness, only encouraging the Japanese to demand further concessions. The willingness to advocate what Grew termed, "constructive conciliation," towards the moderates earned the two ambassadors the epithet of appeasers—gripped with "ambassador's disease," i.e. partiality towards their host country—by some in the media and within their respective cabinets.[145] Although Grew defined this approach of constructive conciliation as a level tougher than mere appeasement, the outcome was unchanged in the eyes of the State Department. Waldo H. Heinrichs Jr. describes the quandary of dealing with the Japanese: "Japanese who were impressionable were powerless and those in power had closed

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[143] Quoted in Fumimaro Konoye, *The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye*; Translated from the Asahi Shimbun (Okuyama Service: Tokyo, 1945), 54, 58.

[144] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5637.

[145] Quoted in Bennett, "The Diplomacy of Pacification," 85; quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 368.

minds."[146] In October 1939, when Grew argued for a delay in the possible implementation of an oil embargo proposed by Senator Key Pittman, so Japan could reconsider its behavior towards American possessions in China, members of the Far East Division of the State Department "construed this as additional evidence that Grew was moving even further towards appeasement."[147] Members of the British government were still chastened by the memory of the tragic September 1938 "Munich Agreement." In reference to Craigie and the moderates, Sato Kyozo writes: "He held the ill-founded and over-optimistic belief that each concession on the British part would encourage this faction and thus help bring about a redirection of Japanese policy…."[148]

The Japanese moderates remained an important source of information for the two ambassadors until the latter part of 1941, including information about the views of their colleague's respective department. However, they were typically not identified by name in formal correspondence. Therefore, the ideology of particular sources, moderate or otherwise, cannot be verified with certainty. For example, Craigie would learn of Hull's foundational principles first from Grew in September 1941, which was confirmed two months later by a "local contact." A November 1941 cable reads, "From a sure Japanese source [unnamed] I learn original American proposals or principles around which negotiations have been revolving were as follows: (a) No aggression, (b) No interference in in-

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[146] Heinrichs Jr., *American Ambassador*, 326.

[147] Bennett, "Joseph Grew: The Diplomacy of Pacification," 79.

[148] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 7.

ternal affairs of other countries, (c) Equality of economic opportunity, (d) Non-recognition of territorial changes effected by force."[149] Hull stipulated that Japan needed to accept these four principles before the American-Japanese talks could advance from preliminary discussions to actual negotiations. From the same source, Craigie learned that Japan perceived these terms as ambiguous with regard to the recognition of Manchukuo and the extent of troop reductions in China. Similarly, in mid-November, Craigie learned that Japan was growing extremely impatient with the slow pace of discussion and the burden of economic sanctions. His source was a "fully reliable Japanese informant (whose name I am pledged not to disclose)…."[150]

The moderates, as well as other groups in Japan, would appeal to the two ambassadors to carry their message directly to the recalcitrant departments in London and Washington. As remembered by Craigie in his book, "These so-called 'moderates' believed no less than the extremists that the Japanese race was destined by dint of superior character, industry and courage to occupy an increasingly dominating position throughout the Orient. But they were opposed to war as a means of hastening this process …."[151] For example, in a September 6, 1941 private dinner with Grew and his interpreter, Prime Minister Konoye endeavored to advance the diplomatic peace process by reiterating his earlier request, delivered by Ambassador Nomura, to meet with Roosevelt. Konoye

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[149] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11971, Code 23 File 86, No. 2249, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 7, 1941; See Grew papers, 1941 diary, 5793-5794.

[150] PRO, FO 371/27911, F12299, Code 23 File 86, No. 2313, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 14, 1941.

[151] Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 49-50.

"dwelt on the necessity of … seeing the President as soon as circumstances permitted and exchanging views with him on the fundamental issues," including the mechanics of Hull's four principles.[152] Konoye argued before Grew, "If we miss the present chance, the chance will not come again during our lifetime."[153] When the American-Japanese discussions were deadlocked following the fall of the Konoye administration, Craigie would report that, "My United States colleague informs me that at reception of heads of Missions, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to dangerous recent deterioration of American and Japanese relations and requested Mr. Grew's co-operation in securing successful conclusion of the Washington conversations without delay."[154] Likewise, the Japanese government would petition the British to intervene in the discussions with the hope of softening the U.S. position.

One Japanese moderate who was an important influence on Craigie, and especially Grew, was Yoshida Shigeru, Japanese Ambassador to London from 1936-1938, and former Ambassador to Italy, who would later serve two terms as prime minister, (1946-1947; 1948-1954). Yoshida's unwavering rationalization of Japan's erratic behavior would damage his credibility with even Grew and Craigie by the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. According to his biographer, J.W. Dower, Yoshida's "influence in shaping

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[152] Konoye, *The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye*, 51-52.

[153] Quoted in Konoye, *The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye*, 52.

[154] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11747, Code 23 File 86, No. 2210, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 3, 1941.

Grew's understanding of and sympathy for Japan was considerable."[155] Dower argues that Yoshida's diplomatic objective regarding the U.S. and Britain was to "buy time," for the Allies to become more empathetic towards Japan's desire to control Asia, forming an association of "cooperative imperialism."[156] For Yoshida, this would serve the purpose of isolating China, limiting support from the Allies. While in Britain, as ambassador, "the most crucial aspect of Yoshida's endeavors …lay in his attempt to convince the British that they would profit, not only in China but *globally*, by appeasing Japan."[157] When he could, Yoshida would act as a facilitator, arranging private meetings between Grew and Japanese statesman away from their offices to avoid the notice of the Japanese press. In the 1930s, "During a period of increasing anti-Americanism, Yoshida remained an open and loyal friend, and more."[158]

When he returned to Japan in 1939, after his stint as Ambassador to Britain, Yoshida continued to network with Grew and Craigie, "constantly urging the necessity for patience, moderation, and positive gestures of good will by the respective governments of the two ambassadors."[159] Dower argues that Yoshida and other moderates had an important influence on Grew's adoption of the pendulum theory of Japanese politics. Yoshida was the son-in-law of Count Makino Nobuaki, Foreign Minister of Japan from

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[155] J.W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 96.

[156] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 97.

[157] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 138.

[158] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 108.

[159] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 213.

1913-1914 and Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, 1925-1935. Dower claims that Count Makino was "one of the emperor's most intimate confidants."[160]

An anecdote described by Dower, and told in Grew's diary, is illustrative of both Makino's persuasive articulations, as a member of the Japanese elite, and Grew's vulnerability to the influence of Japan's upper class. Following a festive dinner hosted by the Grand Master of Ceremonies and Viscountess Matsudaira one evening in May 1935, Grew engages in conversation with Count Makino. Makino shares that in a recent meeting with a Mr. Dubosc, the editor of the Paris Temps, Dubosc observes from his travels in Japan that the political climate was "dangerous." Makino's rejoinder to the editor was that, "We have a safeguard in Japan which other countries do not possess in the same degree, namely, the Imperial Household. There will never be 'danger' from military Fascism or Communism or from any other kind of 'ism' simply because the Emperor is supreme and will *always* have the last word."[161] This was an example of the type of "wishful thinking"[162] that by 1939—if not sooner—would lead Grew and Craigie to begin questioning Yoshida's credibility, and perhaps that of other moderates. However, the passion with which Makino spoke about the Emperor that night moved Grew to extol: "I was greatly impressed to-night by this momentary glimpse into the mind of the usually suave, courteous, and eminently gentle Count Makino, whom I shall always regard as one of the

[160] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 29.

[161] Quoted in Grew, *Ten Years in Japan,* paperback edition, 142-143.

[162] Quoted in Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 189.

world's greatest gentlemen."[163] To this, Dower adds a missing line from Grew, which Grew chose not to print in the published version of his diary: "I told him that I completely understood…."[164]

Makino's belief in the emperor as a safeguard was, of course, sadly misplaced. Yet, Grew, at the time, was charmed by its sentimental appeal. Dower puts it sardonically, "And Grew, with his clubbish propensity to equate high society with the "real" Japan and gourmet dining with democracy, linked it all together like a string of pearls: the emperor; the old count and his honest, "liberal" son-in-law; civilization, moderation, respectability, comfort, internationalism, peace…."[165]

While partial to the moderates, Craigie and Grew certainly became more suspicious of the hardline, military element in Japan and its influence on the country's behavior. Moreover, they were increasingly aware of the tendency of some moderates to always paint a rosy picture of Japan's intentions, contingent upon an expression of conciliation from the U.S. and Britain. By way of flexibility, Ambassador Grew issued his "green light" telegram on September 12, 1940, after the demise of the Yonai cabinet and signs of closer Japanese ties to Italy and Germany. Grew was becoming more receptive to stronger measures, such as sanctions, in an effort to check Japanese militarist sentiment, notwithstanding the acknowledged risk of retaliation by Japan. Craigie was leaning in the

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[163] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 143.

[164] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 111; see also Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, note 41, 514.

[165] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 111-112.

same direction. During the 1941 discussions between Hull and Nomura, Sir Robert Craigie reminds Grew of his growing wariness of the military's control of Japan's direction," I represented once more to my colleague the dangers inherent in discussions with a Government which was still under the influence of extremist section of the army … irrespective of any assurances given meanwhile."[166] To Craigie's point, in July 1941 U.S. eyewitnesses determined that Japan had intentionally bombed the U.S. ship Tuituila in a river near Chungking. In his memoir, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, Craigie's conclusion on the moderate camp was that, "they had possessed neither the moral courage nor the staying power to hold out against the extremists…. They had allowed the army to usurp their parliamentary rights, to tie their country to the apron-strings of Germany and to trample underfoot the last vestiges of liberty in Japan."[167]

By mid-July 1941, information from the moderates and other contacts was beginning to dry up. In July, Grew has a diary note which paraphrases a confidential telegram to acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles, "Please remember that in Tokyo few of our Japanese friends now dare come to see us at the Embassy or to meet us elsewhere and that many of them have received warnings from the police to keep away from us."[168] Moreover, Grew and Craigie had already come to suspect as early as 1939 that Yoshida

[166] PRO, FO 371/27909, F4925, Code 23 File 86, No. 946, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, June 7, 1941.

[167] Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 158.

[168] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5346.

was usually putting a positive spin on Japan's actions, sparking this comment from Craigie: "Yoshida has so persistently told us that a solution of all our difficulties is 'just around the corner' that one suspects him naturally of wishful thinking."[169] Grew had a similar reaction some thirteen months later in 1940, during "a long talk with Yoshida who always predicts the rainbow just around the corner…."[170] However, Yoshida's interest in avoiding war was as ingrained as theirs, and they dared not avoid him altogether. Dower relays that Yoshida continued to confer with both Grew and Craigie up to November 1941, telling Grew "that time was running out" for the Washington talks, and telling Craigie that Britain should exert a moderating influence.[171] By November 1941, both Ambassadors were cautioning about the likelihood of Japan commencing war.

In his memoirs, Yoshida confides that he "was on particularly friendly terms" with Grew, and had arranged for the delivery of food and other necessities to the U.S. embassy in Tokyo while Grew was detained following the Pearl Harbor bombing.[172] Yoshida's association with the U.S. and British Ambassadors to Japan, especially with Grew, led to his interrogation by the Japanese military police, following the outbreak of war. Yoshida praises Grew for his ability to differentiate between the extremists in the military and the majority of Japanese society. Moreover, Grew played a role in drafting

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[169] Quoted in Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 189.

[170] Quoted in Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 214.

[171] Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 222.

[172] Shigeru Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs: The Story of Japan in Crisis* (London: William Heinemann, 1961), 27.

U.S. occupation policy for Japan, which maintained a position for the Emperor. According to Yoshida, Grew endeavored "to preserve amicable relations between his country and Japan up to the fifty-ninth minute of the twenty-third hour … Here at least we have someone whom one need have no hesitation in calling a true friend of Japan."[173]

Ambassadors Grew and Craigie labored under a burden created by different social backgrounds, departments whose agendas were not always clear or aligned, and a restriction on information. They built solid, local contacts among an elite group of Japanese moderates, but had to be on guard about the allegiances of these sources. Fortunately, as the momentum towards war was building, and their contact with local sources dwindling, the ambassadors could rely on their mutual respect for a cordial, professional relationship. That they were able to effect and maintain this bond to carry them through the challenging months of 1941 is just one testimony to their skills at diplomacy.

[173] Yoshida, *Yoshida Memoirs*, 19, 21.

Chapter V

The Ambassadors' Professional Relationship

Ambassadors Grew and Craigie maintained an effective professional relationship, notwithstanding their social differences, limited access to information, and reservations regarding the diplomatic interests and operational style of their colleague's department. Confirmation of this deduction is influenced by multiple factors, including the likelihood that days could pass before communications between the Tokyo embassies and home departments were received. The ambassadors did not always have the same data available to them at any given time. Consequently, the context in which they operated was challenging, and their emphasis on particular issues could differ.

Moreover, by 1941, they were both ready for a break. Grew, in fact, tendered his resignation to Roosevelt upon Roosevelt winning a third term in office during the Presidential election of November 1940. Roosevelt declined the offer, writing Grew that he wished him "to continue at this post."[174] Less than two weeks later, Grew's wife Alice would suffer a heart attack. In September 1941, Craigie would request a one to two month leave to visit the U.S., and perhaps meet with the State Department. The Foreign Office was initially sympathetic to his desire for a respite. Ashley Clarke would remark, "After so long a spell in crisis conditions Sir R. Craigie must need leave badly…."[175] Churchill was ultimately against the idea and Craigie's temporary replacement fell ill, so

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[174] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, Grew letter to Craigie, January 4, 1941.

[175] PRO, FO 371/28049, Code 23 File 10307, Ashley Clarke minute to Sir A. Cadogan's minute on telegram No. 1768: Sir R. Craigie's request for leave, September 22, 1941.

the trip never materialized. It was deemed more important for Craigie to remain at his embassy in Tokyo, rather than to incur the speculation which would be aroused by his absence. Any conclusion on the success of the collaboration between Grew and Craigie and their reliance on each other as a resource to enhance diplomatic aims, requires a careful review of their professional correspondence, especially during 1941.

One incident, which Grew apparently did not share directly with Craigie, but which nevertheless illustrates the importance of carefully reviewing the actual transcripts at the time, involves Grew first learning of a possible attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor. In a January 27, 1941 telegram to the State Department Grew relays the following message: "My Peruvian colleague told a member of my staff that he had heard from many sources including a Japanese source that the Japanese military forces planned, in the event of trouble with the United States, to attempt a surprise mass attack on Pearl Harbor using all of their military facilities. He added that although the project seemed fantastic the fact that he had heard it from many sources prompted him to pass on the information."[176] Historian Edward M. Bennett misleadingly writes, "Yet when Grew got around to reporting this to the Department he described it as a 'fantastic rumor.'"[177] However, nowhere in Grew's cable to the State Department does he use the term "rumor." In the personal notes section of his unabridged diary for January 1941, Grew uses neither the term "fantastic" nor "rumor."[178] Indeed the description that a Pearl Harbor attack by Japan would amount

[176] *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1941 Volume IV The Far East*, The American Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, January 27, 1941, 17.

[177] Bennett, "Joseph C. Grew: The Diplomacy of Pacification," 83.

[178] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4740.

to a "fantastic" feat is attributed by Grew to his Peruvian colleague. The Office of Naval Intelligence would label it a rumor.[179] Three years later, when Grew published an abridged version of his diary notes in *Ten Years in Japan*, this account would appear under the subtitle: "First Rumours of a Surprise Attack on Pearl Harbour."[180] In any case, it was not initially reported by Grew as a rumor. Though it may have been a rumor at the time, it became a fact in less than eleven months. According to historian Peter Mauch, the "failure" of U.S. government officials to act on this information was not due to a shortcoming in diplomacy, but a lack of "imagination." Mauch explains that "most in Washington summarily dismissed the possibility of Japan actively engaging the United States in hostilities, if only because they regarded as self-evident the certainty of Japan's subsequent defeat."[181]

Joseph Grew and Sir Robert Craigie agreed with and supported one another on several key issues, which defined their professional relationship during 1941 and makes clear their shared view that war with Japan could have been averted. These key issues include: 1) both believed in exhausting all diplomatic channels before resorting to war, and favored the proposal for a meeting between Roosevelt and Konoye; 2) both were willing to risk the epithet of appeaser for their patience with and diplomatic affinity towards the moderate elite in Japan; however, they were not duped by the tactics or inflated optimism

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[179] Peter Mauch, "The Failure of Diplomacy, 1931-1941," in *Politics and Ideology,* ed. Richard J. B. Bosworth and Joseph A. Maiolo, 253-275. Volume 2 of *The Cambridge History of the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 272.

[180] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 318.

[181] Mauch, "The Failure of Diplomacy," 272.

of the moderates; 3) they each stressed the importance of understanding Japanese psychology, with an orientation towards saving face, and 4) the ambassadors were both on the record as warning their respective departments not to underestimate Japan's resolve and proclivity to commence war, notwithstanding the odds, if the negotiations in Washington failed to produce a settlement, or Japan felt backed into a corner. In the conclusion to his book, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War*, Peter Lowe writes, "The most serious error made in Britain—and in the United States—was the comfortable belief that, if war came to the Pacific, Japan could be contained without undue difficulty."[182]

There was at least one precedent during the lead up to Pearl Harbor which illustrated the power of diplomacy to avert outright war. In 1938, one year after the start of the Sino-Japanese war, which began with the July 1937 skirmish at the Marco Polo Bridge proximate to Peking, a border dispute ensued between Japan and the Soviet Union in Changkufeng, at the corner of southeast Manchuria and northeast Korea. This was preceded by a 1937 confrontation over boundaries between Japan and the Soviet Union along the Amur River.[183] Historian Alvin D. Coox called the Changkufeng incident, which erupted at the beginning of July 1938, "the most dangerous Russo-Japanese border controversy to date…."[184]

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[182] Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War: A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 285.

[183] See Alvin D. Coox, *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939,* Volume 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 102-119.

[184] Alvin D. Coox, "Shigemitsu Mamoru: The Diplomacy of Crisis," in Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett, eds., *Diplomates in Crisis* (Santa Barbara, CA:ABC-CLIO, 1974), 255.

Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Shigemitsu Mamoru, and Soviet Foreign Affairs Commissar, Maxim Litvinov, began negotiations on July 20, 1938. They reached a "cease- fire" pact by mid-August of that year. It was a compromise, which even the Japanese army accepted. Litvinov offered a conciliatory gesture, in that the Japanese could maintain their current troop positions, even though they had offered to give up ground; this meant that they did not have "to pull back unilaterally."[185] Coox elucidates what was behind this diplomatic achievement, "Even today, few historians know that the USSR took an unexpected step to appease the Japanese or at least to save face for them, even after Shigemitsu had pleaded for and won a ceasefire."[186] Shigenori Togo, who served as Japan's Ambassador to the Soviet Union after Shigemitsu, "used to say that the most important point in diplomacy is to be prepared to give 51 percent to your counterpart, and be prepared to accept 49 percent."[187] Perhaps Litvinov's perception, shared by Grew and Craigie, was that the concept of saving face was a useful tool for diplomacy.

With regard to the critical period following the summer of 1941, when Konoye proposed the meeting with Roosevelt and the bellicose Foreign Minister Matsuoka resigned, Grew and Craigie were more closely aligned with each other than with their departments. They favored a Konoye-Roosevelt meeting, and advised that the U.S. should guard against an overconfidence in its demands, which was partly based on a mistaken belief that Japan's resolve had weakened under the burden of economic sanctions. Grew surmised that Konoye was taking a considerable personal and political risk by exposing

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[185] Coox, "Shigemitsu Mamoru: The Diplomacy of Crisis," 262-263.

[186] Coox, "Shigemitsu Mamoru: The Diplomacy of Crisis," 264.

[187] Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel Sneider, *Divergent Memories: Opinion Leaders and the Asia-Pacific War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 136.

Japan to humiliation should his initiative become public, only to be dismissed by the United States.

The consequences from an aborted meeting should not be ignored. Grew's concluding point in a telegram to the State Department on August 19, 1941 reads: "Finally, we must accept almost as a mathematical certainty the thought that if this outstanding and probably final gesture on the part of the Japanese government should fail … the alternative would be … an all-out do-or-die effort to extend Japan's hegemony over all of 'Greater East Asia' entailing the inevitability of war with the United States."[188] In his correspondence to Foreign Minister Eden on September 30, Craigie posits that the two embassies in Tokyo read the meeting proposal as an opportunity to pull Japan away from the Axis, "[M]y United States colleague and I are firmly of the opinion that on balance this is a chance which it would be the hight [*sic*] of folly to let slip."[189] Peter Lowe interprets this message from Craigie as marking "the growing divergence between the British and American ambassadors in Tokyo, on the one side, and their home governments on the other side."[190]

Grew welcomed Craigie's combative assistance in pushing for the Konoye-Roosevelt meeting. An October 2, 1941 item in Grew's diary reads, "He has supported my thesis in telegrams to London, and when his own Government disagreed, as he knew it would (characterizing my attitude as "appeasement") he came right back at London with

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[188] *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1941*, vol. 4: *The Far East*, The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, 382-383.

[189] Quoted in Best, "Avoiding War," 339.

[190] Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War*, 259.

a strong telegram."[191] Again, on November 1, 1941, Craigie's telegram to the foreign office would appeal, "it is of vital concern to us to draw Japan away from the Axis and to keep her in a strictly neutral position until the end of the war…."[192]

There are other examples of alignment in the ambassadors' actions. On September 6, 1941, both Grew and Craigie reported to their respective departments that Japan, following a reorganization of its Cabinet, was now "more capable" of partaking in behavior independent of Germany, and that its commitment to the Axis powers had diminished.[193] In October 1941, when the Emperor granted the premiership to General Tōjō, Craigie reported that his sources confirmed this was done on the "condition that negotiations with the United States should continue and that every effort be made to avoid war with that country." According to Craigie's retelling, Grew's version of the story was slightly different, but with a similar outcome to his: the Emperor had "enjoined" the army and navy "to abstain from any action likely to lead to war." The key point, stressed Craigie, was that the "Imperial intervention … was of unprecedented vigour."[194] In another example, when responding to departmental concerns that the Japanese would give only lip service to agreed-upon commitments in exchange for the possible lifting of economic sanctions, Craigie explains that he and Grew had acted in unison to caution Japan, from their posts in Tokyo: "Both my United States colleague and I have made it abundantly clear to the

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[191] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5827-5828.

[192] Public Records Office, FO 371/35957, Code 23 file 751, Sir Robert Craigie to Mr. Eden, November 1, 1941.

[193] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5643-5644.

[194] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11624, Code 23 File 86, No. 2169, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, October 30, 1941.

Japanese Government that in the future mere assurances will be valueless for this purpose, and on this point at least they are under no misapprehension."[195]

Grew had an understanding with Craigie that Washington would not allow him to share certain of its confidential correspondence, as exhibited in the following cable from Craigie to the Foreign Office, "My United States colleague, with whom my relations are of the closest, is in this matter hampered by the strictest injunctions of secrecy."[196] Yet this impediment did not damage Craigie's regard for Grew's professionalism. Grew would often unveil the gist of U.S. correspondence, rather than leave Craigie dangling. For example, on September 19, 1941, Craigie would inform the Foreign Office, "My United States colleague, who has received the strictest injunctions from the State Department in regard to secrecy, feels unable to give me any details in regard to progressive negotiations at Washington, but he gave me in strictest confidence the following outline of the position."[197] From Grew's outline, Craigie would learn that during the September time frame the U.S. was treating the discussions "not as negotiations, but as an informal effort to ascertain whether in fact any basis existed for understanding with Japan, and … should such a basis be found, the United States Government would wish to consult the

[195] PRO, FO 371/27913, F12866, Code 23 File 86, No. 2394, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 25, 1941.

[196] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

[197] PRO, FO 371/27910, F9742, Code 23 File 86, No. 1761, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, September 19, 1941.

British, Australian, Chinese and Netherlands Governments before starting formal negotiations."[198] On November 13, Craigie repeated that Grew would do his best to give him the general contour of what he knew; in a communication to the Foreign Office, Craigie writes, "My colleague is precluded by his instructions from giving me details of Japanese proposals but he intimated privately that…."[199] Though the State Department's restriction on information sharing was more onerous than that of the Foreign Office, members of the Foreign Office valued what they did receive from Grew. For example, in June 1941, Grew was presented with a message from Foreign Secretary Eden by Craigie expressing Eden's "appreciation of the confidential information periodically relayed to him through the latter [Grew] which he said had been of the greatest help to the British Government."[200]

Craigie was generally complimentary of Grew's diplomacy, insights and recommendations. For example in reference to Grew's rundown of a meeting with Foreign Minister Matsuoka in May 1941, whereby Matsuoka outlined the specific U.S. actions which would require Japan to come to Germany's defense under Article 3 of the Tripartite Pact, Craigie extols, "My United States colleague discussed each of Mr. Matsuoka's remarks in turn and very effectively."[201] In his memoir, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, first

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[198] PRO, FO 371/27910, F9742, Code 23 File 86, No. 1761, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, September 19, 1941.

[199] PRO, FO 371/27911, F12281, Code 23 File 86, No. 2305, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 13, 1941.

[200] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5219.

[201] PRO, FO 371/27908, F4158, Code 23 File 86, No. 800, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, May 15, 1941.

published in 1946, Craigie pauses in the middle of his story to interject praise for Grew's professionalism, "I should like here to pay a tribute to Mr. Grew's steady co-operation in all such matters, despite the many efforts that were made … to sow discord in Anglo-American relations."[202] Grew's talents were also recognized by others. Major General Sherman Miles testified during a Congressional hearing on Pearl Harbor that the U.S. "Embassy in Tokyo," under Grew, was "by far the most important source" of intelligence in Japan: "We had a very excellent Ambassador who had been there a number of years with a staff that had been there a good deal longer than that."[203]

Within the Foreign Office, Craigie had been favorably recognized by Chamberlain in 1939 for his negotiating skills, "The only thing that gives me any confidence is Craigie's attitude … He always seems to preserve his calm and never to get rattled … Only the anti-Japanese bias of the Foreign Office in the past have never given him a chance."[204] In the same letter to his sister, Chamberlain embellishes his thought on Craigie, "If he gets us through this mess I shall insist on his having an honour to mark our gratitude."[205]

Grew was bound by what he could share with Craigie, and was critical of Craigie's social graces, albeit in the confines of his personal diary. Nevertheless, Grew held mostly a positive appraisal of Craigie's professional effort. Indeed, in early January 1941 Grew sends Craigie a letter of congratulations on Craigie's recognition and appointment

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[202] Craigie, *Behind the Japanese Mask*, 99.

[203] Worth, *Pearl Harbor: Selected Testimonies*, 38.

[204] Quoted in Watt, "Chamberlain's Ambassadors," 166.

[205] Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador, 40-41.

to the British New Year's Honours list, as Chamberlain had intimated two years prior. Grew's letter reads, "Valuing our relationship and cooperation particularly as I do, such a mark of support and esteem from your king and Government is a cause for genuine rejoicing on my part.…"[206]

Although Craigie had reservations about the American diplomatic personality, he had greater professional regard for Grew than he did for the State Department in general. In a November 1941 cable to the Foreign Office, at the height of the tension surrounding the American-Japanese discussions, Craigie warns that Americans are, for the most part, "leaving us in the dark." From what he has seen, he worries that "the Americans are expecting of the Japanese too complete a change of policy in too short a time." He asks that the Foreign Office request more complete and frequent updates from the State Department apprising the Foreign Office of the status of the negotiations in Washington with Japan. In an apparent reference to his satisfactory, professional relationship with Grew, Craigie adds that "it has not been my own experience that Americans take exception to the frank and friendly expression of the British view on matters of common concern."[207] In an incident which occurred early in 1940, Craigie issued a public statement in Tokyo, defending Britain's search for German soldiers on the Japanese vessel Asama Maru. He recounted the" more than 191" similar "cases" where Japan detained British boats near Hong Kong. Craigie was pilloried by the Japanese press for his statement. Grew records in his diary, that in a friendly gesture towards him, Craigie "apologized for having for the

[206] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, Grew letter to Craigie, January 4, 1941.

[207] PRO, FO 371/27912, F12486, Code 23 File 86, No. 2345, From Japan (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 18, 1941.

moment crowded me out of the limelight. I replied that he was more than welcome to the limelight and begged him to stay right where he is…."[208]

Notwithstanding their favorable professional association, Grew and Craigie were not afraid to disagree respectfully with each other. Peter Lowe points out that when Craigie initially became a proponent of economic sanctions against Japan in late 1938, Grew was not yet on board.[209] In May 1941, Craigie and Grew disagreed over a suggestion that Foreign Minister Matsuoka visit the United States. Grew approved of a visit as an opportunity for Matsuoka to experience firsthand the U.S. dedication to limit Japanese expansion in Asia. Craigie explained to Grew that he would oppose a visit on grounds that Matsuoka would only try to divide the U.S. and Britain, though he acknowledges that Grew's points "are cogent."[210] This disagreement was frankly recorded without prejudice by Grew in his diary as part of a summary of a telegram sent by Craigie to the Foreign Office.

Grew and Craigie shared notes regularly. As we have seen with the proposed Konoye-Roosevelt meeting, the ambassadors supported one another on significant matters. For example, on September 3, 1941 Craigie shows Grew a draft of a communication he intends to send to his Foreign Office, which relays the contents of a telegram Grew had recently sent to the State Department. In a collegial gesture, Craigie requests Grew's comments before final transmission, to make sure he is capturing Grew's full intent. Craigie expresses his complete support for Grew's recommendation that a prominent U.S.

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[208] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, 271-272.

[209] See Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 36-37.

[210] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5163-5164.

statesmen, such as Roosevelt, should speak publicly "to explain the advantages which Japan may expect to derive from loosening her present close ties with the Axis and abandoning her policy of economic exclusionism in the Far East."[211] Such a communication would strengthen the cause of the moderate element in Japan. In defense of Grew, Craigie adds that a proclamation of this type would not be a gesture of appeasement, implying no diminution of sanctions or other restrictions in place. Addressing a possible accusation of appeasement, Craigie reassures Grew in a subsequent September 10 letter, "What you and I have in mind of course is nothing of the kind but we are up against a state of mind which is very general in Great Britain as a result of the failure to reach an accommodation with Germany before the outbreak of the present war."[212] Craigie had recommended that his government issue a similar proclamation prior to the formation of the Tripartite Pact in 1940.

Two items from Grew's diary in November 1941 suggest that he and Craigie were stiffening their resistance to any form of appeasement. First, when Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs offers a rationalization for the occupation of Indochina, Craigie admonishes him, "it would be a great mistake on the part of the Japanese military authorities to assume that Great Britain was either afraid of Japan or insufficiently prepared to meet any threat to British security in southeastern Asia."[213] Second, Grew notes in his diary that he disagrees with the assessment of a Japanese associate of Craigie's who surmises that the sentiment in Japan in November 1941 "against war and away from the Axis is

[211] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5791-5792.

[212] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5795.

[213] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5938.

growing and that, other things being equal, army influence is likely to wane in the next few months."[214]

By November 1941, both Grew and Craigie drew consolation from the fact that they were "on record" as having warned their departments that Japan had made war preparations which could be triggered on short notice if peace discussions failed. In a November 3, 1941 telegram to the State Department, Grew advises that if Japan's efforts to seek conciliation flounder, the country would attempt '"an all-out, do-or-die' effort to make Japan invulnerable to foreign economic measures, even to the point of risking national hara-kiri …. It is apparent to us who are in daily contact with the sentiment here that such an eventuality is not only a possibility but a probability."[215] Similarly, a November 5, 1941 telegram from Craigie's embassy to the Foreign Office, restated by Grew in his diary, cautions, "The belief I have frequently expressed in past years that Japan would avoid war with America at almost any cost no longer holds good today."[216] This followed a November 1 memo by Craigie to the Foreign Office which evaluated Japan's mood, "In particular I feel that about the worst mistake that we and the Americans can make at this juncture is to under-estimate the strength and resolution of this country and its armed

[214] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5945.

[215] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 6095; also quoted in Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 6095; see *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 404-406.

[216] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 5948.

forces, in the event—perhaps now not far distant—that it may feel itself driven to desperation."[217] By the time of the attacks on Pearl Harbor, Malaya and Hong Kong on December 7, 1941, Grew and Craigie had developed a dependency on one another for information. Their working relationship had come to resemble Grew's initial perception upon first meeting Craigie in 1937, when he noted, "We had a pleasant talk which gave me the impression that he desires the closest cooperative relations between us."[218]

As the year 1941 progressed, the ambassadors' Japanese contacts began to shrink under the heightened suspicion of war, and they were also receiving fewer transmissions from London and Washington for security reasons. In testimony before the Congressional hearings investigating the Pearl Harbor attack, Grew reports that as events unfolded during 1941, " The Japanese did not dare to be seen with us and did not dare come to the American embassy, and most of my contacts had just slipped away…."[219] Yet, the strong professional relationship between the British and American ambassadors to Japan was unimpaired, as illustrated by the following communication from Craigie: In a November 1941 telegram to Eden, arguing for greater disclosure from Washington on its talks with Japan, Craigie reiterates that Grew "with whom my relations are of the closest, is in this matter hampered by the strictest injunctions of secrecy."[220]

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[217] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

[218] Grew papers, 1937 Diary, 3457.

[219] Worth, *Pearl Harbor: Selected Testimonies*, 50.

[220] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

On December 8, after learning that diplomatic relations between Japan and the Allies had been severed, Craigie paid a visit to Grew at the U.S. Embassy. Grew reports that Craigie, after being accosted by the Japanese police, was "trembling" and accepted a glass of whiskey. "We had a last talk with mutual expressions of appreciation of our co-operation.…"[221] Some three years later Craigie would write the Foreword to Grew's publication of *Ten Years in Japan*, which was a selection of Grew's diary notes. Craigie would admire that despite Japan's efforts to divide the two allies, their ties only drew closer. "He and I, working in close association and with a common objective, were impressed with the importance of neglecting no opportunity of persuading Japan to pursue a peaceful course."[222]

The professional relationship between Ambassadors Joseph Grew and Sir Robert Craigie survived several challenges during the crucial year leading up to the outbreak of war in the Pacific: national interests of the United States and Britain which overlapped, but were not identical; the selective dissemination of crucial information from the U.S. State Department and British Foreign Office; an awkward and strained social relationship, and; the curtailment of contact with local sources due to police observation. With regard to relations between the United States and Britain from 1931 to 1941, David H. Klein aptly describes the context bedeviling the ambassadors: "The relationship was, to be sure, a very delicate and uncertain one in the Far East, marked by deeply felt suspicions, distrust and even hostility. It was made more difficult by the absence of a common

[221] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 6107.

[222] Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 8-9.

basis of cooperation …."[223] The collaboration between Grew and Craigie was actually enhanced as a consequence of navigating these shared privations.

While ambassadors Grew and Craigie saw their diplomatic mission, as Craigie wrote, in terms "of persuading Japan to pursue a peaceful course," one might ask if they did enough to persuade their governments to do the same? The writings of Grew and Craigie subsequent to the Pearl Harbor attack, as gleaned mostly from Craigie's final report to Churchill and Grew's unsent letter to Roosevelt, suggest that they thought they had. Yet, important parts of their entreaties were not heeded. To answer this last overriding question, we must investigate the actual intensity and conviction with which the ambassadors expressed their opinions at the time, compared to how they remembered it, by looking at their choice of words and the reactions of those who received their messages.

[223] David Hyman Klein, "Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Pacific War: The Politics of Confrontation," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1977), xxv.

Chapter VI

Conclusion: Sharing Responsibility for Missed Opportunities

On December 8, 1941, the day Joseph Grew learned of the outbreak of war with Japan, he wrote with a seemingly clear conscience in his diary, "I am glad to have gone on record in a recent telegram to the effect that if Japan were driven into a corner she would be perfectly capable of an all-out, do-or-die attempt to render herself impervious to foreign pressure even if it meant national hara-kiri, and that we should be ready for any step of 'dangerous and dramatic suddenness. That is precisely what has happened.'"[224] Indeed, both Ambassadors Grew and Craigie warned of a possible violent reaction by Japan if the negotiations in late 1941 failed. The warnings were a corollary to their effective collaboration. The focus of Grew and Craigie had been to highlight diplomatic channels, such as a Konoye-Roosevelt meeting, that could steer Japan towards a peaceful path, as well as to assess the consequences of failing to exploit such opportunities. Although the efforts of Ambassadors Grew and Craigie were not successful in avoiding war with Japan, it can be argued that they made a contribution towards delaying its onset.

The evidence presented and analyzed in this thesis has made the case for concluding that Ambassadors Grew and Craigie maintained a collaborative, effective professional association despite several challenges, some of which, such as their social relationship, were self-imposed. Their reporting of local events and Japanese behavior was timely, insightful, and largely accurate. With regard to their efforts to avert war, ham-

[224] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 6108-6109.

pered by the inability to convince their departments to heed what they viewed to be opportunities to capitalize on Japanese peace initiatives, the evidence points to the following conclusions: 1) The ambassadors did not fully comprehend the rationale behind the perceived inflexibility of their respective departments; 2) The conviction with which Grew and Craigie delivered recommendations in 1941 to their governments was not as persuasive or emphatic as it could have been, contrary to their portrayal of events in subsequent writings; and 3) On this score, compared to Grew, Craigie deserves greater recognition for showing persistence in representing his case, sticking his neck out and accepting the consequences. Grew, on the other hand, demonstrated superior political skills when it came to advancing his career.

Joseph Grew was not always optimistic about the possible outcome of negotiations with Japan. In early September 1941, Craigie reported that Grew was "not very sanguine as to the outcome of these negotiations, both sides being still far apart," … with the Japanese stubbornly disinclined to leave Indochina "until peace had been made with China" on their terms.[225] Grew was, however, not alone in expressing that Japanese Prime Minister Konoye was taking a big gamble by offering to confer with Roosevelt. Ashley Clarke, head of the Far Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office, rendered the following interpretation of Konoye's predicament, "if they do reach a compromise with the U. S. Govt. they risk assassination and if they do not reach an agreement with the U.S. Govt. they will have either to yield to the extremist elements in the Army or

[225] PRO, FO 371/27910, F8814, Code 23 File 86, No. 1590, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, September 2, 1941.

resign."[226] Nevertheless, Grew regarded Konoye as making a bold stroke towards peace, and he consequently championed the idea of a meeting.

When Grew landed back in the United States in August 1942, Waldo Heinrichs writes that he made a beeline to Secretary Hull's office to bring up the subject of his final report, including the opportunity missed by the scuppered meeting between Konoye and Roosevelt. As the session with Hull proceeded, John K. Emmerson, who served under Ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, after the war, reported, "the rising tones of angry Tennessee profanity penetrated the door," to the ante-room where Grew's personal secretary was waiting.[227] According to Grew's biographer Heinrichs, Hull flatly dismissed the subject of the failed meeting, snapping at Grew, "If you thought so strongly, why didn't you board a plane and come to tell us?"[228] Grew reacted hesitantly while he cogitated. "The thought that he had not conveyed his strong feeling in favor of a meeting must have shaken Grew."[229] He knew what he believed but did not want to start a public commotion at such a sensitive time. Grew ultimately backpedaled, sacrificing a chance to be more emphatic. "This is not a moment to bring forward controversial issues," he reasoned.[230] In similar fashion, Grew did not send a letter to Roosevelt that he drafted on August 14, 1942, which pointedly questioned why the meeting with Konoye and other of

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[226] PRO, FO 371/27910, F9987, Code 23 File 86, No. 1834, U.S.-Japanese Conversations, Ashley Clarke, September 30, 1941.

[227] John K. Emmerson, *The Japanese Thread: A Life in the U.S. Foreign Service* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978), 123.

[228] Quoted in Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 362.

[229] Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 362.

[230] Quoted in Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 362.

his recommendations were not embraced. He buried the original draft of his final report, as Hull had requested, leaving behind a simple chronological accounting of events, drafted in February 1942, as the official record.[231] As a consequence of abandoning the original draft of his final report, which had adopted a stronger tone, Peter Mauch claims that Grew, "declined to challenge the wartime American consensus, which maintained that the Japanese had 'deceitfully negotiate[d] for peace while preparing for war.'"[232] Hull reassured himself that despite Grew's grasp of local affairs in Japan, Grew did not have the Secretary's global perspective of Japan's movements.

In a telegram to Secretary Hull on September 29, 1941, Grew's position was that the U.S. should not risk foregoing the likely benefits of a meeting between Konoye and Roosevelt by insisting on a set of pre-conditions before holding the meeting, which would only agitate Japan. Looking back on the possible benefits of the proposed meeting, in a 1952 conversation with Postmaster General Frank C. Walker (1940-1945), Grew argued that no one should have known better about Japan's intentions than he, someone "right on the spot in Tokyo…."[233] Yet, in the same September 29, 1941 telegram to Hull, Grew hedges by qualifying his own perspective, "The foregoing discussion is submitted in all deference to the far broader field of view of the President and yourself and in full

[231] Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 362,384,436 notes; also see Grew, Grew papers, "A Report on the Final Developments in Tokyo Leading to the Outbreak of War between the United States and Japan," February 19, 1942.

[232] Mauch, "The Failure of Diplomacy," 254.

[233] Quoted in Butow, "Backdoor Diplomacy in the Pacific,", 64.

awareness that my approach to this problem is restricted to the viewpoint of the Embassy in Tokyo."[234]

In his book, Turbulent Era, published in 1952, Grew elaborates on this notion that his recommendations were subject to what he could gather from Tokyo, acknowledging "the fact that a far broader field of intelligence, including the world picture, had been open to the Government in Washington. This intelligence included the important Japanese telegrams to and from the Japanese Embassies in Washington and other capitals bearing the code name "Magic" which enabled our Government, through the interception of these telegrams and the breaking of the Japanese cipher codes, to learn that the Japanese Government was rapidly going ahead with its plans of conquest even while talking peace with us."[235] Historian R. J. C. Butow sees Grew's caveat about his limited perspective from Tokyo, as "a diametrically opposite opinion" to his assertion to Walker regarding the advantage of having his ear to the ground in Tokyo.[236] Recall that in Chapter II, another contradiction was mentioned: Grew initially praised Hull's ten-point proposal of November 26, 1941 as "a broad-gauge objective proposal of the highest statesmanship …," but, less than one year later, chastised the issuance of the document for its "egregious error in timing."[237]

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[234] Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1941*, vol. 4: *The Far East*, The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, September 29, 1941,489.

[235] Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1244.

[236] Butow, "Backdoor Diplomacy in the Pacific,", 65.

[237] See "Unsent Letter to Roosevelt from Grew," 11; also see Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador*, 357.

Likewise, Grew's August 30, 1941 telegram to the State Department, requesting that one or more top U.S. officials publicly proclaim the benefits to Japan were they to forego "the use of force as an instrument to national policy," lacks conviction. The language is insipid: "I therefore respectfully raise the question whether the administration might not helpfully consider the advantages to be gained by a public discussion from some official source of this general subject…."[238] While the absence of exposure to the Magic decrypts and other sources available to their governments was certainly a disadvantage for the Tokyo embassies, both Grew and Craigie had nevertheless developed—through their own means of detection—a well-founded suspicion that Japan would attack either Britain or the U.S. if the talks between Nomura and Hull broke down. The distinction between these similar reservations held by Craigie and Grew is that they didn't stop Craigie from continuing to more forcefully press his agenda, whereas the politically savvy Grew was more likely to shift gears and tone down his rhetoric. Yet, even Craigie could have been more consistently emphatic.

Craigie originally drafted his final report in October 1942. It was held up until Ashley Clarke could prepare a companion memorandum, "Memorandum by Far Eastern Department: From the Burma Road Crisis to Pearl Harbour," representing the view of the Foreign Office on the eighteen months leading up to the Pacific war. Furthermore, a delay would allow Craigie time to temper his report's harsh criticism of U.S and British foreign policy, being "persuaded by Sir Alexander Cadogan," Permanent Under-Secretary of

[238] Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers 1941*, vol. 4: *The Far East*, The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State, August 30, 1941, 418.

the Foreign Office, "to amend it."[239] In arguing his recommendation for greater British involvement in the discussions between the U.S. and Japan, Craigie was hoping to secure Japan's neutrality in the battle between Britain and Germany. This was more likely to be obtained, argued Craigie, if Britain itself maintained a neutral stance in the Sino-Japan war, instead of siding with China. In dissecting Craigie's argument, Ashley Clarke writes, "The implication here is that if British sympathies had not been engaged on China's side there need have been no difficulty between us and the Japanese military!"[240] However, the Foreign Office felt obligated to protect China's sovereignty under the terms of the Nine Power Treaty.

Craigie's edited final report was ultimately released in the late Spring—early Summer of 1943. Craigie had appealed for its printing, even as amended. In a note to Prime Minister Churchill, Clarke explains "The reason for holding it up in the first place was that it was liable to promote controversy and ill-feeling (e.g. with the Dominions) …."[241] Craigie's revisions still made for a highly contentious report. Craigie saw little need for major changes even after reviewing the rebuttal memorandum from the Far Eastern Department. As one member, thought to be Sir Esler Dening, of the Foreign Office

[239] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 1.

[240] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, Ashley Clarke minute, April 14, 1943.

[241] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, Ashley Clarke minute, April 14, 1943.

commented, "Sir R. Craigie's amendments are a matter of degree, rather than of principle."[242] Historian D.C. Watt claims that "the unexpurgated original was taken back by Sir Robert Craigie and no copy left in the files,"[243] of the Foreign Office.

In his edited final report, Craigie claims that he had "begged His Majesty's Government on more than one occasion to keep themselves informed of the details of the negotiations…." He rebuked the failure of Britain to obtain a bigger seat at the negotiating table, "there can be no doubt that the absence of any British moderating influence, whether at Washington or at Tokyo, increased the chances of that breakdown which eventually occurred."[244] In support of Craigie's assertion, the opening line of his telegram to the Foreign Office on November 1, 1941 complains, "I have for some time felt that it was unfortunate that matters of such vital concern to us should be under discussion between the United States and the Japanese Governments, not only without consultation with his Majesty's Government, but without our being given anything but the barest outline of what was happening."[245] In order to best represent British interests in the discussions in Washington, Craigie continues "to suggest that no time be lost in asking the United States Government for full and precise information as to the exchanges which

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[242] PRO, FO 371/35957, Code 23 File 751, Note appended to Minute from H.A.C. (Henry Ashley Clarke), February 8, 1943; See Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 1.

[243] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 2.

[244] Rusbridger and Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, Appendix 9, 6.

[245] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to the Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

have occurred …. It seems to me that we can now request this more as a right that a favour."[246] The tone used here is in the form of an urgent demand.

On November 16, the Foreign Office responds with an explanation that the need to maintain a "united front" with the U.S. entailed the risk of instigating hostilities with Japan, "a danger which must be accepted."[247] Somewhat chastened, Craigie then attempts to soften his demand on November 18, by intimating a more benign approach toward the U.S.: "I do not wish to press unduly for a course of action to which you see objection …. I have not suggested that we should at this stage intervene in the American-Japanese negotiations but only that we should invite the United States Government to keep us fully informed…."[248] As a diplomat, Craigie was being deferential to the concerns of the Foreign Office. Nevertheless, what was heretofore his assertion about exercising an urgent "right" to information is watered down to issuing an "invitation" to consider a request for information.

Though he was not as emphatic as he later claimed to be in his final report, Craigie still had a point. Britain's acquiescence to receive limited information during the Washington discussions with Japan resulted in a misunderstanding on at least one critical issue: Hull's decision to withhold a proposal for a modus vivendi. In a memo to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, Halifax, Britain' Ambassador to the U.S., relates that he rejected a charge by Secretary Hull made through Sumner Welles, U.S. Under Secretary of

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[246] PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to the Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

[247] PRO, FO 371/ 27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 1523, From Foreign Office to Tokyo, November 15, 1941.

[248] PRO, FO 371/27912, F12486, Code 23 File 86, No. 2345, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to the Foreign Office, November 18, 1941.

State, that Britain had given "little support" to Hull's gesture of a possible modus vivendi, and hence Hull "was not inclined to proceed with it." Halifax explains to Eden, "I contested this attitude, saying that while you [Eden] had made comments and suggestions as invited to do, we had, contrary to what he [Hull] had said, promised to give full support."[249] Had Eden or Halifax been a party to the negotiations, or demanded more timely appraisals from the U.S., as Craigie had advised, the British position may have been better understood by Hull.

Both Craigie and Grew were perceptive enough to recognize that, by the second half of 1941, their home departments had much more information at their disposal than did the embassies in Tokyo. Richard Challener sees the neglect of the State Department to adequately apprise their Ambassador in Tokyo of important findings and communications as "a chronic failing of American diplomacy," a shortcoming also displayed in WW1.[250] In the first paragraph of his published final report, Craigie acknowledges, as did Grew, the more expansive perspective of his government compared to that of the Tokyo embassy: "My comments are made in the full realisation that only a part of the picture has been visible to me …."[251] The bigger picture that was available to the Foreign Office included discussions with the British Dominions, such as Australia. These considerations were not fully known to Craigie. On November 20, Sir R. I. Campbell, stationed in Washington, relays to his London Foreign Office the gist of a telegram sent by the Australian Minister in Washington "to his Government," following a discussion with Hull: "I

[249] PRO, FO 371/27913, F12939, Code 23 File 86, No. 5426, From Washington (Viscount Halifax) to Foreign Office, November 27, 1941.

[250] Challener, "Career Diplomat: The Record of Joseph C. Grew," 274-275.

[251] Rusbridger and Nave, *Betrayal at Pearl Harbor*, Appendix 9, Final Report, 2.

suggest there has been and will continue to be considerable advantage in the United States carrying on these conversations with Japan practically on their own. Firstly, the United States has greater strength in the Pacific than the British and so their arguments carry greater weight, and secondly, if negotiations fail and war results, the principal onus is on the United States and their active participation becomes more probable."[252] The important consideration for Australia, as well as for Britain, was bringing the U.S. into the war against Germany, and Japan if necessary.

The State Department was not confident about the prospect of a favorable outcome from the Washington talks with Ambassador Nomura. In May 1941 when Halifax asked Hull "how he assessed chances of making real solid progress," Hull replied, "it was one chance in ten."[253] By September, Hull had lowered the odds of these discussions leading to a resolution of the disagreement over Japan's occupation of China to "one chance in 25 or 50…."[254] Furthermore, Roosevelt was not placing a high probability on altering Japan's aggression as the result of holding a personal meeting with Konoye, if that were to happen. Hull also "doubted Konoye's ability to line up the extremists behind the policy implied by such a meeting."[255] In an August 1941 communique with Britain's

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[252] Quoted in PRO, FO 371/27912, F12560, Code 23 File 86, No. 5303, From Washington (Sir R. I. Campbell) to Foreign Office, November 20, 1941.

[253] PRO, FO 371/27909, F4570, Code 23 File 86, No. 2394, From Washington (Viscount Halifax) to Foreign Office, May 28, 1941.

[254] PRO, FO 371/27910, F8863, Code 23 File 86, No. 285, From Dominions Office to the Governments of Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in the Union of South Africa, September 2, 1941.

[255] PRO, FO 371/27910, F8613, Code 23 File 86, No. 3973, From Washington (Sir R. I. Campbell) to Foreign Office, August 27, 1941.

U.S. Ambassador Halifax, Ashley Clarke posted his interpretation of Roosevelt's intentions, "The President's policy is to keep the Japanese in play for the next 30-90 days so as to gain time. He is even ready to meet the Japanese Prime Minister. He does not expect anything to come out of the talks (in this he is surely right)…."[256] As a precondition to any meeting with Konoye, Roosevelt insisted on seeing a written plan from Japan outlining a redirection towards a more peaceful path, which Japan resisted. The talks in Washington, which included a discussion of the conditions for a Konoye-Roosevelt meeting, ultimately reached an impasse. In October the Konoye cabinet resigned, and the more belligerent General Tōjō became Prime Minister.

While imperfect in the exercise of diplomacy to avert war with Japan, Craigie has won acclaim among some scholars for persistently representing events as he saw them. Historian Peter Lowe summarizes, "In drafting his final report on his mission in Tokyo, he showed much courage in adhering to his opinions and criticized British and American policies for inconsistency in dealing with Japan in 1941. Churchill was incensed, but Craigie stood by his assessment, which must command respect from the historian."[257] In his memoirs, Yoshida Shigeru reflects on his impression of Japanese statesmanship as it was displayed leading up to the Pacific war, "all the men of any political importance … were united in opposition to war," including Foreign Minister Togo; yet, "none … gave

[256] PRO, FO 371/27909, F7985, Code 23 File 86, Ashley Clarke to Viscount Halifax (Washington), August 20, 1941.

[257] Peter Lowe, "Retreat from Power: British Attitudes Towards Japan, 1923-1941," in *War and Diplomacy Across the Pacific, 1919-1952*, ed. A. Hamish A. Ion and Barry D. Hunt (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 59.

direct expression to their opinions."[258] To some degree, the same inhibition can be attributed to Ambassador Grew, and to a lesser extent, if at all, to Craigie. Grew, however, was more wily about preserving his legacy as the consummate ambassador.

On January 26, 1943, P.H. Gore-Booth, part of the British Embassy in Japan and later Ambassador to Burma, wrote to Ashley Clarke, commenting on the audacious maneuvering by Joseph Grew to cast his stewardship of the Tokyo embassy in a positive light. As reported to Gore-Booth by Wilfred Fleisher of the New York Herald Tribune, Grew was spreading the notion "that he and the rest of the American Embassy in Tokyo foresaw what was coming and warned the State Department well in advance of Japanese strength and intentions." While raising a question about Fleisher's motives, Gore-Booth still finds Grew's behavior to be "amusing" since "the American Embassy were always inclined to accuse us of panicking whenever we began to try and convince them … that the situation had taken a turn for the worse." After reading Gore-Booth's letter, George Sansom, Britain's Commercial Counsellor at their Tokyo embassy, revealed that "a number of better informed people in Washington think that Grew is going too far," and that another colleague was of the opinion that Grew was a greater appeaser than Craigie "in the period before August 1941." In any case, Sansom was "sore" because Grew was "converting hindsight into foresight in a most disingenuous way."[259]

Sansom's critique of Grew's behavior is similar to Yoshida Shigeru's depiction of the manner of Japan's politicians, "It is perhaps a characteristic of the Yamato race not to

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[258] Yoshida, *The Yoshida Memoirs*, 20.

[259] PRO, FO 371/35957, F751, Code 23 File 751, Letter from P.H. Gore-Booth to Henry Ashley Clarke, January 26, 1943; also quoted in F751.

say things when they need saying, and to be wise after the event. It is not so with the British."[260] Yoshida was not necessarily referring to Craigie in that last statement, but to members of Anthony Eden's Cabinet who had protested against the then Prime Minister's dispatching of British troops into the Suez Canal Zone in 1956. Yet, the unflattering Yamato trait identified by Yoshida fits Grew's demeanor better than it fits Craigie's. Craigie was more willing to risk his career and popularity to follow his conscience, reminiscent of a modern day "whistle-blower." He would later pay a price for his outspokenness.

Following the Pearl Harbor attack and his debriefing with Hull, Grew would embark on a government-sponsored speaking tour, emphasizing the tenacity of the Japanese fighting machine and the need to totally vanquish the militants. He was awarded with an honorary LL.D. degree from Harvard at its 1943 Commencement, and he delivered the alumni address. Grew received an appointment in 1944 as Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, and from this perch, played an important role in the decision to retain the institution of the Emperor in post-war Japan. Craigie, on the other hand, was left to drift inconspicuously into the background. Historian D. C. Watt laments that Craigie "was not allowed to resign and was passed over when plum jobs like the British directorate on the Suex [sic] Canal Company, normally given to retiring ambassadors, were withheld from him." According to Watt, Craigie finished his career with the Foreign Office "as British

[260] Yoshida, *Yoshida Memoirs*, 20; also see Dower, *Empire and Aftermath*, 225.

adviser on the Far Eastern War Crimes section of the International War Crimes Commission …"[261] Fellow historian Peter Lowe shares Watt's sentiment, paraphrasing a comment from Gore-Booth's memoirs, "it was sad that Craigie's abilities were not utilised again and that he was something of an outcast."[262]

What Grew and Craigie failed to appreciate was the conviction with which the State Department and Foreign Office felt justifiably distrustful of Japan's motives and sincerity, and therefore held that a united policy of firmness rather than conciliation was necessary to deal with Japan's apparent implacability. According to Ashley Clarke, "Our experience has been that any obvious concession to a Japanese Government has the effect of stiffening the extremists rather than encouraging more moderate elements … there is greater hope of inducing a reasonable frame of mind in the Japanese by keeping up the pressure rather than in relaxing even in so small a measure."[263] Nearly one month later, in mid-November, the Foreign Office would reiterate its position in a telegram to Craigie. London contended that any conciliation towards Japan would gain Britain "a short respite at the cost of forfeiting both the respect and the material assistance of our friends;" Japan would only be emboldened to seek further spoils, "confirmed in the conviction that aggression pays …."[264] While the Emperor was disappointed with the turn of events in late 1941, and counseled the Japanese government and military against any provocation of

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[261] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 11.

[262] Lowe, "The Dilemmas of an Ambassador," 54.

[263] PRO, FO 371/27911, F10960, Code 23 File 86, HAC (Henry Ashley Clarke) to Viscount Halifax (Washington), October 19, 1941.

[264] PRO, FO 371/ 27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 1523, From Foreign Office to Tokyo, November 16, 1941.

war, the British Foreign Office assumed that "His constitutional position to a great extent precludes him from direct intervention in the affairs of the State."[265]

U.S. Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, was also on guard about appearing overly solicitous to Japan's interests. For example, with regard to Ambassador Nomura's request for a meeting between Konoye and Roosevelt, Hull insisted on obtaining "an agreement in principle on major questions" in advance.[266] Hull wanted the details decided prior to a meeting, so there would be no misunderstanding about Japan's obligations pursuant to an ensuing agreement. Relative to his four key principles, which would guide the meeting, Hull was concerned that "the Japanese army would apply them in its own way."[267] Already, Japan was augmenting its military capacity in China and continuing to bomb Chinese targets. By the time Hull received Japan's compromise proposal on November 20, 1941, U.S. codebreakers uncovered that Nomura had received orders to prepare to move out of his Washington office in case the U.S. response to the proposal was unfavorable. A subsequent decrypted message set November 29 as an internal Japanese deadline for an

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[265] PRO, FO 371/27913, F12976, Code 23 File 86, No. 2415, Ashley Clarke minute, December 1, 1941.

[266] Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 1022.

[267] Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Volume II, 1029. The four principles included "respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations; noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries; the principle of equality, including equality of commercial opportunity; and nondisturbance of the status quo in the Pacific except as it might be altered by peaceful means." See also: Iriye, *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War*, 74-75.

acceptable U.S. response; "After that things are automatically going to happen."[268] Regarding the November 20 proposal from Japan, which Craigie deemed promising subject to amendments that he thought Japan would accept, Hull was disdainful. In his memoirs, Hull objects that the proposal's points "were of so preposterous a character that no responsible American official could ever have dreamed of accepting them…."[269]

From Hull's memoirs, we further learn of his disappointment that British and Australian representatives in Washington had not been given explicit direction by their home offices on how to react to his suggested modus vivendi, which would at least buy the U.S. three-months time to enhance its military arsenal and demonstrate for the record that the U.S. had pursued all diplomatic avenues. Hull was particularly miffed at London's "lukewarm approval," and frustrated that China could not comprehend the advantage in showing that if Japan dismissed his modus vivendi it "would serve more fully to expose their predetermined plan for conquest of the Orient."[270] In the end, Hull reasoned that it was not worth offending China and risking the spirit of its troops for the dim chance that Japan would accept his modus vivendi.

A Japanese code from Tokyo was decrypted by U.S. intelligence operatives on December 3, 1941, commanding the Japanese embassy in Washington to dismantle its intelligence operation. Author and editor David Kahn attributes the fact that the U.S. did not react with a greater sense of urgency and insight to conclude that Japan was about to launch a surprise attack on the U.S. in the direction of Pearl Harbor, to "a racism that led

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[268] Quoted in Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2, 1074.

[269] Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2, 1070.

[270] Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2, 1078, 1080-1081.

Americans to underrate Japanese abilities and will," and to a Western mindset that it would be foolish for Japan to attack a power with such superior resources as the U.S..[271] After all, in late 1941, the U.S. "population was twice as large" with an "industrial output nine times as great as" that of Japan.[272] Churchill shared this misperception. Both Grew and Craigie had already warned about the risk of under-estimating Japan, counseling that the country could resort to an act of "desperation" or "national hara-kiri."

No doubt, the display of hubris by the Allies, as well as at least a partial disregard for the ambassadors' advice, support the claims leveled by Grew and Craigie that their governments missed opportunities to at least improve the likelihood of delaying or averting war with Japan. Historian D. C. Watt exclaims, Foreign Secretary Eden "ignored completely both Craigie's warning and the argument that the confrontation with Japan might be postponable. On all these issues … Craigie was right and he, and his advisers, wrong."[273] The two ambassadors knew better, having correctly advised against attributing Western standards of behavior to the Japanese. In that alone, they displayed the invaluable role of an ambassador. However, had these, and other warnings by the ambassadors, been more emphatic and consistent all along, the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office just might have used a different approach to peace negotiations with Ja-

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[271] Kahn, "Pearl Harbor as an Intelligence Failure," 166.

[272] Kahn, "Pearl Harbor as an Intelligence Failure," 165.

[273] Watt, "Could War in the Far East have been Prevented?," 18. Craigie's specific warning to which Watt is referring is that it would be a "mistake … to under-estimate the strength and resolution of" Japan, who "may feel itself driven to desperation." See PRO, FO 371/27911, F11672, Code 23 File 86, No. 2186, From Tokyo (Sir R. Craigie) to Foreign Office, November 1, 1941.

pan, or conversely they might have collaborated more closely with their respective military services to better prepare to resist an attack. Grew, for example, did not follow-up with vigor on the January 1941 tip he received from the Peruvian ambassador, specifically identifying Pearl Harbor as the object of a strike. A diary note from Grew at the time indicates that he brushed off the potential significance of the Peruvian ambassador's warning: "I rather guess that the boys in Hawaii are not precisely asleep." In the published version of his diary, *Ten Years in Japan*, Grew omitted the comment about "the boys in Hawaii" and substituted, "Of course I informed our Government."[274] In testimony before the Congressional Committee investigating Pearl Harbor, Grew explained that he did not pressure his Peruvian colleague for his source because "it may put him in a rather difficult position …" by exposing his contact. Grew also testified that, subsequent to January 1941, he did not encounter any other talk in Tokyo about an attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor.[275]

It is one thing to be right on the issues, but another to convince your superiors and colleagues to act on your recommendations. Arguably, this outcome was impacted by the ambassadors' restricted access to information, and an implicit posture of deference towards the leadership of their departments. Nevertheless, Grew and Craigie were able to overcome the embedded differences in diplomatic style and national interests between the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office, an awkward social relationship, as well as accusations of appeasement, and forge a cadre of well-positioned contacts among

[274] Grew papers, 1941 Diary, 4740; Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, paperback edition, 318.

[275] Worth, *Selected Testimonies*, 50-52; Grew, *Turbulent Era*, vol. 2, 1233 note.

the Japanese elite to gather useful information. Between the two ambassadors, there is evidence that Craigie was more stubborn but had the courage to act on his convictions, whereas Grew was more of a team player, willing to toe the party line. However, both Grew, and to a lesser extent Craigie, remembered their recommendations as being more emphatic than they were, and overestimated the extent to which they were likely to be adopted. Consequently, Joseph Grew and Sir Robert Craigie, despite their best intentions, hard work, and commendable professional relationship, made a contribution of varying degrees towards the very same "missed opportunities" to further delay or avert war for which they criticized their governments.

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