"We should not expect great benefit from America": Japanese Expansion and the Breakdown of Communication within the Wilson Administration in 1914

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Abstract: *In August 1914, the Empire of Japan expanded into China with an attack upon the German leasehold of Jiaozhou. The crisis betrayed a Germany unready for a global war, a China unable to guarantee its own security, an expansionist Japan riven with division, and a Britain anxious about unleashing a jinni it could not control. For the United States, the event caught the administration of Woodrow Wilson unprepared as it had crippled itself through poor communication between agencies, and caused Japan to consider war against the United States. Moreover, Wilson showed himself a president prone to place his personal issues above national concerns. Although this last is not unknown among presidents, it can have debilitating and nearly disastrous effects as it did in 1914.*

Keywords: *Woodrow Wilson, Jiaozhou, neutrality, Japan, William Jennings Bryan*

As the First World War began in Europe, many European powers either controlled leased territories in China or administered spheres of influence. Japan coveted Europe's Chinese leaseholds, and Beijing expected Tokyo to use the war as a pretext for Japanese territorial expansion in China. On 3 August 1914, the Dutch Government cabled US Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to request that the United States neutralize China and the Pacific (Strachan, 2001). By then, British and German naval forces had withdrawn from the Chiangjiang River, followed soon thereafter by the Russian and French navies, leaving the United States and Japan in control of Chinese territorial waters. Later that day, Chinese President Yuan Shikai unofficially inquired if the United States would support a formal plea to the European belligerents not to engage in hostilities in Chinese territory, territorial waters, or leased territories. In particular, Yuan wanted neutralization of the German leasehold at Jiaozhou, the British leasehold at Weihai, and the French leasehold at Zhanjiang. John Van Antwerp MacMurray, American Chargé d'affaires at Beijing, confirmed to Secretary Bryan that British and German naval forces had indeed withdrawn from Chinese waters (MacMurray, 1914a).

Concurrently, the German ambassador to Japan, Artur von Rex, cabled Berlin. He reported that Germany could expect Japanese neutrality unless either London formally requested Tokyo's assistance or German forces assaulted British possessions in China (Rex, 1914). In Japan, Vice Chief of the Army General Staff Akashi Motojirō feared that Russia would move into Jiaozhou in the event of a German defeat (Dickinson, 2003). Nevertheless, the Imperial Navy had adopted a plan of operations on 3 August which included an attack upon Jiaozhou by the Imperial Army, provided that the Army did not violate Chinese neutrality (Dickinson, 1999).

As for the United States, the Wilson Administration had no logical reason to risk war with Tokyo to protect Beijing's interests in the Shandong Peninsula. Neutralization of Chinese territorial

and Pacific waters, however, did serve the best interests of the United States. The American-held territories of Guam, Hawaii, and the Philippines, lay exposed to potential Japanese aggression, which the Wilson Administration had worked to defuse since taking office.

In the event, Wilson withdrew from his presidential duties as the Shandong Crisis and tensions in the Pacific heated up. On 6 August 1914, First Lady Ellen Axson Wilson died (Link, 1960). Wilson's main advisor, Edward M. House, had kept in contact with the First Lady's doctor and knew that Wilson had been unaware of the severity of his wife's condition, so her death hit him particularly hard (House, 1914). Wilson withdrew from his duties and left European foreign affairs to House. Wilson left the situation in China to the State Department. That evening, the Yuan government formally requested U.S. support to prevent hostilities within Chinese territory. The cable from Beijing asked the United States to ascertain the position of the German government regarding a prevention of hostilities and requested Japanese aid as well to avoid giving offense to Tokyo. The next morning, without any presidential direction, Bryan cabled his assent to Yuan's proposal to forestall hostilities in China (Bryan, 1914a). But while Yuan had Bryan's support, the Diplomatic Body refused to sanction Yuan seeking any prevention of hostilities within the leased territories (MacMurray, 1914b). It reasoned that although technically Chinese soil, the leased territories constituted integral components of those European powers which owned the leases. Interfering in the leased territories would mean interfering in European affairs, including the war.

As to Edward House, it was just as well that he restricted himself to European affairs. On 27 May 1914, House had met with Kaiser Wilhelm II. In this conversation, the Kaiser expressed his view that Japanese and 'Orientals' were fanatical; a viewpoint with which House did not disagree. House then expressed his belief that Britain, America, and Germany, should be the dominant powers in the world (House, 1914). Such a view left little room for Japan or China in House's thinking. Wilson did share with House an Anglophilia which sometimes expressed itself through American foreign policy, but during August and September 1914, Wilson's grief at his wife's death overrode any bias towards Britain.

On the afternoon of 7 August, Counselor Robert Lansing, Bryan's direct report, wrote his supervisor a memorandum stating his views on the China situation titled *Course to be Pursued to Preserve the Status Quo in China*. In this memorandum, Lansing submitted that the neutralization of any area of the Pacific would be unwise because neither Britain nor Japan would accept any restrictions of their areas of operation against Germany. He urged Bryan to propose a specific declaration, to which all belligerents would agree, stating that all interested parties would respect Chinese neutrality and the *status quo* of all Chinese ports excluding leases. Lansing recognized that any war in the Far East necessarily would spill into the leased territories (Lansing, 1914a). Meanwhile, British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey had informed Tokyo that, in accordance with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan had a duty to hunt and destroy all German warships within Chinese waters. The Japanese government agreed while indicating its desire to attack the leasehold of Jiaozhou. Britain first resisted then acquiesced (Li, 1969).As a result of London's invocation of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, at 1730 hours, the German chargé d'affaires to Beijing informed MacMurray that Japan would attempt to seize the German lease at Jiaozhou. MacMurray cabled the details of the meeting to Bryan. MacMurray finished by observing that Japanese warships

already had anchored off the coast of Qingdao; Tokyo had prepared its invasion fleet well before London's formal request (MacMurray, 1914c).

Also that evening in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Katō hurriedly convened a meeting of the cabinet to consider a war against Germany; a war which Katō secured after only four hours of debate. In calling the cabinet into extraordinary session, Katō had deliberately circumvented the *genrō*, and the Army sympathizers within. Katō wanted the Foreign Ministry to control the Jiaozhou expedition and subsequent occupation, not the Imperial Army or the *genrō* (Dickinson, 1999).

On the morning of 8 August, Lansing presented his memorandum to Bryan. But before Bryan could consider Lansing's ideas, he received another cable from Beijing. MacMurray reported that the European powers had withdrawn much of their forces from China. Germany had recalled all but ten of its 300 man force in China. Russia had removed its entire 800 man contingent; France had withdrawn 400 of its 1100 military personnel; and, Britain would pull out its entire 2300 man force by the end of the week. Japan recalled 1000 of its 1400 personnel as well (MacMurray, 1914d). Only the United States retained its presence in China at full strength.

In light of MacMurray's cable, Bryan wrote a letter to the president. Sending Wilson a copy of Lansing's memorandum, Forwarding Wilson a copy, Bryan seconded Lansing's recommendation that Washington formally propose at least the neutralization of the treaty ports and included a further proposal that the United States propose the prevention of all hostilities in East Asia (Link, 1960). Bryan still hoped that neither Britain nor Japan really wanted to go to war in China and that the moral suasion of the United States could save Beijing.Meanwhile in Beijing, Chargé von Maltzan proposed, in the name of the Kaiser, that Berlin sell the Shandong concession back to Beijing, but Yuan's government rejected the offer (Xu, 2005).

Wilson did not respond. On 10 August, he buried his wife in Rome, Georgia. Afterward, he remained secluded within his private railcar and allowed nobody to see him without presidential summons (Wilson, J., 1914). The only government official to have access to Wilson, Treasury Secretary McAdoo, served no official function on the train but accompanied the president as his son-in-law. Wilson admitted to his close friend Mary Hulbert that he had become "dead in heart and body" (Cooper, 2009). With no presidential direction, Bryan and Lansing were left to deal with the Far East on their own.

In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu summoned Chinese Minister Lu Zongyu. Ōkuma told Lu that the Japanese Emperor considered the Anglo-Japanese alliance binding upon him. Therefore, Imperial Japanese warships off Qingdao would engage German forces as soon as possible (Li, 1969). Meanwhile London, withdrawing its request for military aid, asked Tokyo to suspend all military operations (Morley, 1974).Katō responded on 10 August by asking London to inform Washington that it ought not to interfere in East Asian affairs, particularly regarding Jiaozhou. The foreign minister then instructed his ambassador in Washington to monitor the US attitude towards the Japanese war (Kawamura, 2000).

At 1500 hours, U.S. Ambassador to Tokyo George Wilkins Guthrie relayed the details about the current situation to Bryan. Guthrie had learned that London had requested that Tokyo fulfill its duty as Britain's ally and enter the war. Berlin, worried about the Japanese fleet, could elicit no

official word from Tokyo regarding its intentions at Qingdao; but a confidential cable from Naval Attaché in Tokyo Korvettenkapitän Wolfram von Knorr reported that Japan would indeed join Britain in declaring war on Germany (Overlack, 1996). Berlin prepared to place all of its Chinese affairs in the protective custody of the United States. Chinese Minister Lu asked Guthrie if Washington would send the Atlantic fleet to protect China's territorial integrity and preserve peace. Two days earlier, newspapers in Tokyo and Beijing had published reports that the United States would commit some of its naval forces to protect China in the event of a Japanese attack. Guthrie denied the stories; the United States would not provoke Japan militarily (Guthrie, 1914a). But the erroneous reports and lack of a clear US position had fueled Tokyo's suspicions. After the meeting between Lu and Guthrie, Ōkuma summoned Lu. He upbraided the Chinese government for seeking aid from the United States, instead of from Japan (Li, 1969). Then as if reports of a possible US defense of China had not made matters difficult enough, Chinese news sources reported that London had given Tokyo permission to declare war on the United States since the dispatch of the US fleet to the Far East constituted US aid to Germany (Fisher, 1914). Such reports alarmed the US Consul-General at Shenyang, Fred Fisher; he immediately reported the rumors to the Secretary of State.

The United States now faced a worried and possibly hostile Japan, and not for the first time. The Wilson Administration had reckoned with possible war against Japan since one month after Wilson's inauguration in March 1913, when the state of California had crafted a bill that restricted Japanese land ownership. The proposed bill had enraged Tokyo, which threatened war that April. Although the Wilson administration attempted to convince Governor Hiram Johnson to veto the bill, it met with no success. In a 14 May 1913 cabinet meeting, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels informed Wilson and Bryan of the potential consequences of war. Should Japan declare war on the United States, Daniels maintained, it easily could capture Hawaii and the Philippines. Daniels further warned that Japan might capture Alaska, due to the poor state of military preparedness. Wilson had disagreed. Even if Japan were to capture the Philippines and Hawaii, he had opined to Daniels, it could not hold them for long before the United States won the war (Baker, 1946). Bryan held views similar to Daniels. As one of the major planks in his own 1900 presidential bid, Bryan had opposed the acquisition of Hawaii and the Philippines due to the possibility that holding the islands might provoke war with Japan (May, 1953).Such debates did not concern the governor of California, however, who signed the bill into law on 19 May 1913. This new law soured U.S.-Japanese relations, which remained frosty well into 1914. US-Japanese relations had remained tense ever since. On the one hand, Tokyo worked to consolidate its gains in Korea and the Pacific without American interference or the further expansion of American influence in China while also not alienating American capital in Manchuria (Morley, 1974). On the other hand, the United States worked to preserve Guam and the Philippines against a covetous Tokyo which Washington knew eyed the Pacific territories.By 16 April 1914, General Leonard Wood expressed confidence to House that the US Army could hold Manila against attack for at least one year, and that Hawaii would soon be as strong (House, 1914).

Japan was not Bryan's only worry on the morning of 11 August. At 0800, hours he received reports from both London and Tokyo. Walter Hines Page, U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, informed the State Department that the British government had refused to accept neutralization of the Pacific, but might accept the *status quo* in China if Britain, Germany and the United States jointly would enforce it (Page, 1914). London now also worried about its East Asian ally. Behind

the scenes, London withdrew its request for alliance aid and asked Tokyo to suspend all military operations (Morley, 1974). Tokyo now severed communications between Berlin and its ambassador to Japan.Unable to communicate with his government and convinced that Tokyo intended to attack Jiaozhou, Ambassador von Rex, through Guthrie, requested Washington to relay his communications to Berlin for him (Guthrie, 1914b). As Bryan pondered the morning's dispatches, he received another cable, this one from Beijing. The Japanese chargé d'affaires had confided to MacMurray that the Japanese government welcomed the opportunity to attack Jiaozhou, and that Japanese forces were prepared for the assault (MacMurray, 1914e).

With the president uncommunicative and unwilling to confront the tensions in East Asia, Bryan acted on his own authority. First, he contacted Guthrie in Tokyo to advise him that for the United States to relay messages between a belligerent government and its ambassador might jeopardize Washington's neutrality(Bryan, 1914b). If Japan received word that Washington had relayed diplomatic cables between Berlin and von Rex, then it might consider the United States one of the Central Powers. Second, Bryan cabled U.S. Ambassador to Germany James Gerard and instructed him to test Berlin on the possibility of establishing a *status quo* in China. If the secretary could obtain Berlin's approval for a cessation of hostilities in East Asia before the Japanese attack, he might prevent hostilities in China. Using the earlier British cable, Bryan could then tell the Japanese that Britain had arranged the armistice. In this way Bryan hoped to manipulate Tokyo out of an attack upon the German leasehold. Late that evening, Bryan received word from Ambassador Page in London that Japan had promised Britain it would respect China's neutrality and territorial integrity (Page, 1914). Such careful wording, however, failed to promise the cancellation of any attack upon Jiaozhou.

At the White House, Wilson returned from his wife's funeral. Although technically back at work, Wilson remained in seclusion while Japan mobilized its forces (Daniels, 1914). In response to a request from J. P. Morgan for an audience with the President, Wilson replied that "I find myself so out of spirits that I have for the moment only strength and initiative enough for the absolutely necessary duties of my official day" (Wilson, 1914b). Moreover, House found Wilson disengaged from the European war. Wilson would admit to House that he was no longer fit to be president and had "no heart" for the position. Wilson had even developed a death wish, vouchsafing to House in November that he wished to be assassinated (House, 1914). With the president in such a mental state, the United States could formulate no coherent foreign policy to either the war in Europe or to the crisis in the Far East and the Pacific.

On 12 August, Germany tried to convince Japan that it was not a threat. Responding to Bryan's inquiry, German Secretary of Foreign Affairs Gottlieb von Jagow cabled German Ambassador von Rex. The German East Asiatic squadron off the coast of China would avoid hostilities with the British in East Asia if Japan would remain neutral. Jagow ordered von Rex to report Tokyo's response (Jagow, 1914). Jagow hoped that Washington had found a way to prevent hostilities in East Asia. Germany knew that it could not defend Jiaozhou against a Japanese attack. Berlin seemed to interpret Bryan's proposal to mean that the United States could restrain Japan and prevent the attack, but that misinterpretation did not accurately reflect the facts. If Tokyo refused Jagow's offer, then Washington could do nothing.MacMurray then reported from Beijing that Japan had provoked an incident in Manchuria and accused Beijing of spurning a joint U.S.-Japanese offer to prevent

hostilities. The Yuan government in turn pleaded with Washington to prevent any Japanese occupation of southern Manchuria or Jiaozhou (MacMurray, 1914f).

In Tokyo, the Japanese government had begun to split over the Jiaozhou enterprise. Navy Minister Yashiro Rokurō advised the cabinet to postpone the declaration of war against Germany so that the government could issue Berlin an ultimatum demanding the surrender of Jiaozhou to China and the withdrawal of all German forces from the China Sea (Dickinson, 1999). The Japanese Navy had second thoughts about transporting the Imperial Army to Shandong. Japanese officials now divided over the Jiaozhou issue: the Imperial Army wanted to storm the leasehold and administer it as an army territory; the Foreign Ministry wanted Jiaozhou taken by military forces but administered by the Foreign Ministry; and, the Navy wanted Berlin to surrender the leasehold directly to Beijing. In all options, Germany lost Jiaozhou. But if the Japanese government had divided over Jiaozhou, the American government had malfunctioned. Wilson had withdrawn from his official duties, and Bryan futilely tried to find a solution which preserved the *status quo ante bellum*.

The next day, Germany sent word to Bryan via Gerard that if Tokyo asked Berlin to forswear hostilities against British possessions in the Pacific and Asia, then Germany would comply in exchange for reciprocal guarantees from London (Gerard, 1914a). Berlin further proposed that London and Tokyo proscribe hostilities in the Pacific between Cape Horn and 90° east latitude.With its colonies vulnerable, Berlin needed a compromise. This led Lansing to write a new memorandum on the Jiaozhou situation. Lansing warned Bryan that if Washington approached Tokyo with a compromise just as Japanese forces began their attack on Jiaozhou, then Tokyo would delay negotiations. He recommended that the United States wait until Japan formally declared war against Germany, Washington could then propose a cease-fire to all belligerents. If Tokyo refused then Bryan ought to remind Japan of the Root-Takahira notes in which both the United States and Japan pledged to respect one another's territories in the Pacific, and to negotiate peacefully any differences that might arise (Lansing, 1914b). Lansing hoped that invoking Root-Takahira would both maneuver Japan out of attacking the leaseholds in China, much less violating China's neutrality. Lansing also wanted to gently remind Japan that it previously had agreed to respect US possessions in the Pacific.

Bryan did not have much time to consider Lansing's stratagem. On 16 August at 0655 hours, Guthrie cabled Bryan to inform him that Japan had served Germany with the ultimatum. Tokyo demanded that Berlin recall its ships from Japanese and Chinese waters and ordered Germany to surrender the entire leased territory of Jiaozhou to Japan by 15 September 1914 for eventual restoration to China. Tokyo allowed Berlin only until 23 August at noon, when Japan would declare war, to respond. Foreign Minister Katō assured Bryan; "the Imperial Government are not seeking in any wise territorial aggrandizement or any other selfish end, but they are actuated entirely and solely by the aim to establish a status which will amply ensure a lasting peace in Eastern Asia" (Katō, 1914). The foreign minister also informed Bryan that the Emperor did not consider Root-Takahira a binding agreement; this subtly hinted that Japan did not completely accept US control of Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines. In addition, Tokyo informed Washington that due to Beijing's fiscal instability, the Chinese people might revolt if the Japanese seized Jiaozhou. In that event, the Japanese expected the British and the Americans to help Japan preserve order in China.

The German ambassador in Japan also sent a message to Bryan through Guthrie, stating that Berlin would not accept the terms of the ultimatum, and that German officials in Jiaozhou planned to turn over their archives to U.S. authorities (Guthrie, 1914c).That day Chargé von Maltzan proposed, in the name of the Kaiser, that Berlin sell the Shandong concession back to Beijing. Yuan's government rejected the offer (Xu, 2005).

By 17 August,Bryan again brokeWilson's seclusionand forwarded Lansing's memoranda of 7 and 14 August. Noting that recent Japanese actions had rendered Lansing's proposals obsolete, Wilson returned them to Bryan (Wilson, 1914a). The White House then issued a statement in which the Wilson Administration expressed no official opinion regarding Japanese actions in the Pacific. On that same day, however, Bryan received word that an ongoing threat to US national security might finally end. A cable to Bryan from Paul Fuller, US negotiator to Francisco Villa, diverted the secretary's attention from Japan to Mexico. From Ciudad Camargo in Mexico, Fuller had reported that Villa would halt his revolution if the current strongman in Mexico City, Venustiano Carranza, would submit to a free election (Fuller, 1914). Bryan leapt at the chance. Mexico had caused problems for the United States since before American forces had occupied Vera Cruz in the spring. Since Mexico presented a more immediate national security issue than Japan, Bryan had to take the chance of possibly concluding peace on the US southern border. With his attention divided, Bryan no longer focused so much on the situation in Jiaozhou.

The next morning, MacMurray cabled Bryan that the German ambassador had met unofficially with the Yuan government to discuss retroceding Jiaozhou directly to Beijing. Soon after the meeting, Tokyo warned Beijing to discontinue discussions. Tokyo claimed that the ultimatum did not concern China and ordered the Yuan Government to remain absolutely passive in the event of hostilities. London concurrently informed Beijing that it would not recognize a direct retrocession of Jiaozhou to Chinese sovereignty. Again, Beijing begged Washington to intervene (MacMurray, 1914g).

At 1400 hours, Bryan cabled Guthrie in Tokyo. He ordered the ambassador to inform the Japanese government that although Washington had no official opinion regarding the Jiaozhou situation, it did express satisfaction that Japan had demanded the surrender of the German lease for restoration to China. Bryan pronounced such a move in the spirit of the Open Door policy. Further, Bryan requested that Tokyo consult the United States before intervening in any internal Chinese problems which might arise from the Jiaozhou transfer (Bryan, 1914c). This last request might represent Bryan wanting to keep abreast of Japan's future moves, but it was confusing in light of the White House's stated neutrality.

Later that evening, MacMurray cabled Bryan; should China respond with any internal disturbances, then Japan and Great Britain would suppress them. The British minister again informed Beijing that London would not recognize a direct retrocession of Jiaozhou to Chinese sovereignty. The Chinese government then proposed that Germany cede Jiaozhou to the United States, and then China would take control of the territory. MacMurray ended the cable reporting China's fears that a Japanese occupation of the port of Qingdao would threaten Chinese independence (MacMurray, 1914g). In China, distrust of the Japanese permeated the highest levels of the military. Chinese General Xu Shuzhen secretly began to provide munitions to the Germans in Qingdao as a way to cultivate improved Sino-German relations, especially in the event of a

Japanese victory (Xu, 2005).German Ambassador von Maltzan proposed to his American opposite number "an American naval demonstration against Japan," but the proposal fizzled. Von Maltzan reported to Berlin that Bryan had informed the American legation in Beijing that the United States would "remain absolutely passive towards Japan" (Mehnert, 1996).

On 20 August, Bryan informed Beijing that Washington could not comply with its request. If the United States attempted to subvert Japanese intentions regarding Jiaozhou, then Tokyo might declare war (Bryan, 1914d). The United States could not risk losing its Pacific possessions either to aid China or to enforce the Open Door. Neither Wilson, Bryan, nor Lansing, would support such a move which would invite the wrath of Japan. The next day, Bryan sent a not so subtle hint to Foreign Minister Katō; "[The US Government] notes with satisfaction that Japan, in demanding the surrender by Germany of the entire Leased Territory of [Jiaozhou], does so with the purpose of restoring that territory to China, and that Japan is seeking no territorial aggrandizement in China in the move now contemplated . . ." (Guthrie, 1914d).yet, not everyone in the US Government considered Japanese expansion in the Pacific a threat. In a 22 August 1914 dinner conversation, House expressed his opinion that "Japan was no more dangerous to us than Germany, and if Japan wanted to take the German base on [Samoa], […] we should not protest" (House, 1914).

On 23 August, Japan declared war on Germany. Tokyo requested and received protection of its embassies and interests in Germany; Washington granted Berlin the same favor. On the afternoon of 26 August, Berlin requested Washington's aid again, and asked the United States to mediate a neutralization of the African colonies (Gerard, 1914b). This time, Bryan found his decision much easier than that regarding Jiaozhou. The United States had no interests in Africa, and easily could remain neutral regarding the continent. On 28 August, Bryan replied that the United States had no position on the African war, and would take no action (Bryan, 1914e). By 3 September, war had engulfed the Shandong Peninsula. MacMurray reported that a joint Anglo-Japanese fleet had engaged German forces at Jiaozhou, Longkou, Laiyang, and Qingdao (MacMurray, 1914h). The main defensive force protecting Jiaozhou, the East Asiatic Squadron, never engaged the Japanese at the German concession. The squadron's commander, Graf Maximilian von Spee, wanted to keep his freedom of movement in the Pacific (Strachan, 2001).

In a letter to Wilson on 19 September, Bryan confessed; "The European situation distresses me. The slaughter goes on and each day makes it more apparent that it is to be a prolonged struggle." He noted that; "Both sides seem to entertain the old idea that <u>fear</u> [<u>sic.</u>] is the only basis upon which peace can rest" (Bryan, 1914f). Now that fear had landed in China. But while war gripped China, Japan cast a wary eye upon any American moves in the Far East (Kimitada, 1967).While Japanese forces engaged the Germans at Jiaozhou, Major-General Tanaka Giichi called for Tokyo to declare war upon the United States before Washington became too powerful in East Asia. On 24 September the *genrō*, of which Tanaka was a member, met with Prime Minister Ōkuma and pushed him to sideline Foreign Minister Katō. Sympathizing with the Imperial Army, the *genrō* disliked Katō's foreign ministry exercising so much influence in the empire's current expansion; an expansion which the *genrō* expected to result in increased US interference in Sino-Japanese relations.

On 7 November, Qingdao fell to Japanese forces. During the campaign, the Japanese navy had seized not only Jiaozhou, but many of the Pacific islands of German New Guinea, including the

Marshall Islands and the Carolines.Three days later, Katō convened the cabinet and pushed through a new occupation government under the aegis of the Foreign Ministry (Dickinson, 1999). Once again, Katō had outmaneuvered the Army and the *genrō*.

On 8 December 1914, Guthrie forwarded a translation of a speech that Foreign Minister Katō had delivered to the Imperial Diet. The speech alerted Washington to abandon any illusions it might have held in regard to Japan's intentions vis-à-vis Jiaozhou. Katō had told the Japanese legislature; "Whether [Jiaozhou] will be restored or not is a question for the future; today is not the time to make a definitive declaration" (Guthrie, 1914e). Less than one week later, Guthrie reported Katō's interpretation of Washington's ambiguous neutrality in the Jiaozhou affair; "That the United States should have felt satisfaction at our declaration is excellent, and in view of Japan's justice and impartiality, which I have often mentioned in the Diet, it is in my opinion only natural that the United States should be satisfied" (Guthrie, 1914f).Katō chose to interpret American paralysis as acquiescence to Japanese expansion, possibly to keep more militant elements within the government and the military from instigating war against the United States. Meanwhile on 9 December in Germany, after Japan's seizure of Jiaozhou, the director of the Hamburg-Amerika Line noted "we should not expect great benefit from America" (Mehnert, 1996).

Wilson's neglect vis-à-vis Japan, if not his apparent lack of concern about China, has at time been interpreted as stemming from his racism against East Asian peoples. That Woodrow Wilson was racist, if not a white supremacist, is supported from his own writings as well as from his Lost Cause thinking, but the evidence indicates that the administration's actions, or lack of action, in the Jiaozhou episode derived mainly from a lack of leadership, and from a lack of communication (Ambrosius, 2007. Wilson, 1901-1902). Poor communication would cripple the administration at other times, such as during the dispute with Britain over the London Declaration in late 1914, and the Siberian Intervention in 1919. To charge that racism was the sole cause of American inaction in 1914 is much too simplistic an explanation and does not comport with the evidence.

Wilson could easily have established US neutrality vis-à-vis Jiaozhou with one unambiguous communication to Bryan, but the president chose to withdraw from his official duties strongly in Rome, Georgia and less severely back in Washington DC. In withdrawing from his presidential duties, Wilson left Bryan and Lansing to figure the Far East and Pacific out on their own. The two men had differing ideas on how to proceed, and in the end, they proceeded in a half-hearted manner which made Japan nervous and led some within the Japanese government and military to expect war with the United States over China. As to Colonel House, his dismissiveness toward Japan makes it fortunate that he did not involve himself in the Jiaozhou matter. That the situation in the Far East between the United States and Japan did not deteriorate into open conflict is due more to luck and to the quick Japanese victory in the Shandong Peninsula than to any deliberate American actions.

The 1914 Shandong Crisis revealed an American presidency paralyzed and an administration rudderless, but the crisis also betrayed a Germany unready for a global war, a China unable to guarantee its own security, a Japan at war with its own traditions and confused by American actions, and a Britain uncertain about its Japanese ally. In short, the Shandong Crisis served as a foreshadowing for a wider war which would carry its participants lurching towards an uncertain conclusion.

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