CHAPTER IV

THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE

FEBRUARY 1901 - JANUARY 1902

The reasons for this treaty, marking the beginning of the end of England's splendid isolation, are to be found in the constant progress of Russian influence in China, and more specially in Manchuria and Corea during the last decade of the 19th century. Great Britain and Germany, who both had important trade interests in China to protect, had joined forces against this increasing Russian preponderance by concluding the Yangtse Agreement (October 16th 1900). This Agreement said that the two countries would maintain and uphold the policy of "the open door" in "all Chinese Territory as far as they can exercise influence", and also that they would consult one another as to the steps to be taken to safeguard their own interests, should a third Power take advantage of the Chinese complications to acquire territorial advantages. [1])

It is obvious, however, that for Japan there were much more vital interests at stake in China, and the Japanese Government watched the Russian intrigues in Peking with the greatest suspicion. When, therefore, in February 1901, rumours began to spread that a Russo-Chinese Agreement was about to be concluded, whereby Manchuria would practically fall into Russian hands, the Japanese Government thought the time had come to consider a preventive war against Russia, and instructed her Ambassadors in London and Berlin to sound British and German feelings as to their attitude in a possible Russo-Japanese war.

The German Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mühlberg, told the Japanese representative on March 6th, 1901, that Germany's attitude would be one of "benevolent neutrality", which, in his opinion, would be sufficient to keep France and the French fleet in check, should that country ever consider going to Russia's assistance. [2])

In London, the British Cabinet considered the Japanese request on March 13th and Lord Salisbury reported to the King:

> "....It [Cabinet Council] was summoned unexpectedly for a special purpose, and only sat for an hour and a half. The object of it was to consider communications which Lord Lansdowne had received from the Japanese Minister with respect to Russian encroachments in Manchuria. The Japanese Government was much disturbed by the steady advance of Russia, and especially by the agreement which Russia is said to have concluded with China; and which contains provisions, practically placing Manchuria under the protectorate of Russia. The Japanese have produced some rather ambiguous assurances from Germany promising a "benevolent

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[1]) Br. Doc. II no. 17; Von Bülow I p. 399; G. P. XVI no. 4744. [2]) Cramer p. 63; Br. Doc. II no. 51.

neutrality" in case of a war between Russia and Japan. The Cabinet was unable to affix a meaning to this phrase: and felt that an explanation of it was necessary to enable them to answer the Japanese, who are pressing to know what England's attitude will be in case of a war between Russia and Japan. It was therefore resolved that Sir F. Lascelles should try to elucidate the German assurance. Several members of the Cabinet are disposed to agree that England and Germany should join in undertaking to support Japan: but in the absence of any indication that Germany would be willing to take part in such an alliance it was thought better to defer any discussion on this point until Sir F. Lascelles' answer had been received." [1])

The British request, however, for an elucidation of the words "benevolent neutrality" was met by the reply that nothing was meant but a "correct and strict" neutrality, and this, of course, was not what the Japanese wanted. [2])

Even the Foreign Secretary himself tried his hand; as Eckardstein reported on March 19th, Lord Lansdowne "asked me in the strictest confidence whether I thought there was any hope of a joint Anglo-German action for localising a possible Russo-Japanese war by influencing France. I replied that I did not think there was the least prospect of such a proposal being accepted by the Imperial Government, as Germany would thereby commit itself without getting any assurance of backing from England. [3])

In this situation, with Germany not willing to make the necessary "démarches" in Paris to keep France from coming to Russia's aid in case of a Japanese-Russian war, it was of course, impossible for England, who was deeply involved in South Africa, to promise any kind of help to Japan.

Thus the diplomatic storm abated and Japan bided her time!

These discussions, and the contacts made in the course of them proved, however, to be of much more than temporary value, for they held the seeds of the future Anglo-Japanese alliance. The Japanese Ambassador in London, Baron Hayashi, himself tells us that during March and April, 1901, he had several conversations with Baron von Eckardstein, during which the latter repeatedly pointed out that an alliance between Germany, Japan and Great Britain would be most effective for maintaining peace in the Far East.

Because of this, Hayashi asked his Government for permission to sound the Foreign Office about such an understanding, but he was authorised to suggest it only as a "personal idea", so as in no way to commit the Japanese Government. [4])

This is why, on April 17th, Baron Hayashi told Lord Lansdowne that, in his private opinion Great Britain and Japan should endeavour to come to some permanent understanding to protect their interests in the Far East. But he received a rather non-committal answer. [5])

Some days before, he had asked Von Eckardstein about the German Govern-

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[1]) Royal Archives R 22/no. 13. [2]) Cramer p. 62; G. P. XVI no. 4832. [3]) Eckardstein p. 207. [4]) Hayashi p. 114–116. [5]) Br. Doc. II no. 99.

ment's attitude to a possible Anglo-Japanese-German agreement to protect the "open door" policy and the integrity of the Chinese Empire, but the German had evaded the issue and aired some generalities about possible difficulties. [1])

It is quite probable that, in his earlier conversations with Hayashi, Von Eckardstein had only put forward his own personal ideas, but when his Japanese colleague began to press the point, he had to retreat, for he remembered only too well a letter Holstein had sent him some weeks before, saying:

> "....We can't go beyond benevolent neutrality, as the very restricted agreement of October 16th [Yangtse Agreement] provides no Anglo-German solidarity in case the Russians and the French both attack us in Europe on account of our proceedings in Eastern Asia.
> I may observe for your personal information that the position would be different if there were a defensive alliance between Great Britain and Germany. This might be to the effect that each contracting party should fight one adversary on its own account, the treaty to come into force as soon as there were two or more adversaries. If in that case, England probably with Japan, fought Russia alone, we should be neutral unless and until France joined in, which in that case it would certainly not do. Indeed, England and Japan would be so superior to Russia, that the latter would give way without fighting when it came to the point." [2])

There is no direct proof, but we consider that from the picture of the Anglo-Japanese negotiations it is clear, that the British Cabinet was quite willing to come to an understanding with Japan in order to safeguard their Asiatic interests, but that they considered the price of Germany's inclusion, i.e. England's virtual accession to the Triple Alliance, to be too high.

By delaying negotiations on the Anglo-German defensive alliance, they gained the necessary time to find out whether or not Japan thought Germany's inclusion a "conditio sine qua non". Eckardstein reported:

> "Lord Lansdowne quite recognises that an Anglo-German-Japanese special convention about the Far East is impossible for Germany until there is a general defensive arrangement between Great Britain and the Triple Alliance. I infer from something he said that he intends to deal with the two matters quite separately." [3])

Two days later, Lansdowne told Eckardstein that, owing to Lord Salisbury's absence, (the Prime Minister was convalescing on the Riviera), the Cabinet could take no decision as regards the defensive alliance with Germany. But even after Salisbury's return on May 10th, the Foreign Office pursued the negotiations at only a leisurely pace. There is no doubt that if Great Britain had been willing to forge ahead, she could have used each of the two groups of negotiations, one on the Anglo-German defensive alliance and the other on an

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1) G. P. XVII no. 5037, 5038. 2) Eckardstein p. 203 March 9th 1901. 3) Eckardstein p. 218 April 18th 1901.

Anglo-German-Japanese Agreement with regard to China, as a lever for the other. [1])

Lord Lansdowne's decision to deal with these two matters separately definitely indicates that the British Government desired for the negotiations to succeed separately, or not at all.

Quite apart from the British attitude, the Wilhelmstrasse seriously doubted the advantages of a combined Anglo-German-Japanese front and Holstein, on April 18th, sent a warning to Eckardstein not to get too deeply involved in the matter.

> "Be careful with the Japanese. The Anglo-German-Japanese special Eastern Asia agreement that both they and the English desire would be quite against our interests because there would then be no inducement for England to join Germany and the Triple Alliance in a general agreement. Until we are so joined, England and Japan must be satisfied with our neutrality." [2])

In accordance with this policy, the "Auswärtige Amt" instructed their Minister in Tokio, on June 27th, 1901, to tell the Japanese Government once again that if Japan went to war to protect her interests in Corea, Germany would maintain "eine korrekte aber wohlwollende Neutralität". [3])

It is, therefore, not surprising that, when the threads of the negotiations were picked up again in July 1901, when the Ito Cabinet in Japan had fallen, and the Katsura Cabinet with Viscount Sone as Foreign Minister had taken office, there were only some rather half-hearted attempts to raise the inclusion of Germany again.

On the last day of that month Baron Hayashi had a long talk with Lord Lansdowne, and told him, according to the Foreign Secretary's report of the conversation, that

> "the Japanese had a strong sentimental dislike to the retention by Russia of that Province [Manchuria] from which they had, at one time, been themselves expelled.
> But Japan's real concern was for Corea. Corea could not possibly stand alone, its people were far too unintelligent, and sooner or later it would have to be decided whether the country was to fall to Russia or not. The Japanese Government could not possibly accept the former of these alternatives. They would certainly fight, in order to prevent it, and it must be the object of their diplomacy to isolate Russia, with which Power, if it stood alone, they were prepared to deal.
> I [Lansdowne] observed that in our view also it would be most unfortunate that Corea should pass into the hands of another Power. Corea was further off from us than from Japan, but, considering the importance of its geographical position, we could no more than the Japanese regard its fate with indifference.

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[1]) G. P. XVII no. 5038. [2]) Newton p. 199; Eckardstein p. 219. [3]) G. P. XVII no. 5039.

I was speaking without authorisation from his Majesty's Government, but there was so much resemblance between the policy of our two Governments, neither of which harboured aggressive designs in the Far East, although both desired to maintain the status-quo, that I thought it worth while to consider what line of conduct we might follow, supposing the balance of power in the waters of the Far East to be threatened with serious disturbance. If the Japanese Government desired it, he [Baron Hayashi] would find me ready to discuss the matter with a view to the possible establishment of an understanding between our two countries.
Baron Hayashi received my suggestion attentively; such an understanding, he said, would, of course, have to be based on reciprocity of engagements, and that aspect of the case required careful examination; he asked my permission to refer to the matter again. There were, he said, many 'unseen things' connected with it." [1])

The Japanese Minister of course informed his Government about this most momentous conversation and, to his delight, received the following reply:

"Japanese Government acknowledges the purport of the propositions made by England regarding a definite agreement and accepts in toto your reports of your conversations with Lord Lansdowne. It desires you to proceed to obtain full particulars of the British attitude in this matter. Success or failure of this convention depends on your carefulness. When our policy is fully decided upon, the work will be easy." [2])

On August 14th he returned to the Foreign Office to tell Lord Lansdowne that

"he felt no doubt that his Government would be glad to come to such an understanding, and asked me whether I was in a position to explain to him the conditions which we should require.
I [Lansdowne] replied that it seemed to me that as Japan was more immediately interested than we were, it was rather for the Japanese Government to formulate a statement of their requirements. We should then be able to say how far we could meet them, and upon what terms.
Baron Hayashi said that he did not for a moment suppose that there could be any question of an offensive or defensive alliance between us, and that, although he had not received instructions, he felt no doubt that the Japanese Government would desire, so far as China was concerned, to maintain the policy of the 'open door' and the integrity of the Chinese Empire.
It was, however, with Corea that they were most closely concerned, and, as he had already told me, his country would go to war rather than see Corea fall into the hands of Russia, if they could be assured against the hostile interventions of a Third Power.
I suggested to Baron Hayashi that it would be well that he should obtain from his Government definite instructions upon these points, and I undertook that I would in the meanwhile communicate what he had said to

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[1]) Br. Doc. II no. 102; Newton p. 220. [2]) Hayashi p. 126, 127.

my colleagues and endeavour to be ready with a proposal on our side as soon as he was in a position to make a proposal on behalf of Japan." [1])

Edward VII annotated this dispatch with the poignant remark: "The King considers it most essential that we should give Japan our hearty support on all occasions when it is possible to do so. E.R." [2])

Hayashi tells us that the King had already, in July 1901, intimated to the British Ambassador in Japan that it was necessary for England and Japan to come to an understanding in some way or another and that it was desirable that it should not be a merely temporary understanding. [3])

On August 16th, 1901, Lansdowne raised the problem at a Cabinet meeting.

"....No matters of immediate importance were discussed [at to-day's Cabinet]. The Foreign Secretary explained some communications, which he had had with the Japanese Minister, but which had not reached any decisive stage. The Japanese Minister wished to know how far he could rely on our assistance, if any steps were taken in the Far East, by one Power or by more than one Power, which would be dangerous to the interests of Japan – such for instance as an attack upon Corea.
On the other hand we wished to know what backing we might expect from Japan, if our treaty rights especially by sea were threatened by Russia and France. The negotiation has hardly yet proceeded further than this stage of asking for information as to our mutual intentions – but it will be pursued." [4])

After this Cabinet meeting, Lord Lansdowne went on holiday for some weeks, but before he left he told Hayashi that he would meanwhile give the matter his most careful consideration, and asked the Ambassador to get plenipotentiary powers, in order to be able to pursue the negotiations on an official basis.

Whilst matters rested for some weeks, Count Komura was, on September 21st, appointed Foreign Minister of Japan, and on October 8th Hayashi received the following telegram from his new chief:

"The Japanese Government has carefully considered the question of the proposed alliance with Great Britain and has formed a definite policy supporting the same and approving the course taken by you as previously telegraphed. Hereby you are given powers to exchange officially views with the British Government in regard to the same." [5])

When, therefore, on October 16th, 1901, Baron Hayashi had another conversation with Lord Lansdowne, he told the Foreign Secretary that he was now authorised by his Government to discuss officially the matter of a possible understanding.

But before coming to the point, Hayashi made a last attempt to raise the question of Germany's inclusion.

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1) Br. Doc. II no. 103. 2) Br. Doc. II no. 103; Lee II p. 142. 3) Hayashi p. 122.
4) Lord Salisbury to the King, Royal Archives R 22/no. 51. 5) Hayashi p. 128.

". . . . He asked me", reports Lansdowne," whether it would, in my opinion, be desirable that Germany should be a party to the understanding, which would, he thought, 'look much more formidable' if it were to include Germany. I replied that it seemed to me that in the first instance, at all events, it would be desirable that Great Britain and Japan should endeavour to arrive at a clear idea of their requirements without reference to any other Power. German interests in the Far East were not as important as those of this country or of Japan, but should Great Britain and Japan come to terms it would then be for them to consider, with reference to the scope and character of the Agreement, whether it was one to which we might invite Germany to become a party." [1])

The following letter from Lord Salisbury's secretary to the King's private secretary, Lord Knollys, reveals something of the secrecy with which Lansdowne surrounded the negotiations:

"I have looked up the papers upon Hayashi's overtures for an Anglo-Japanese understanding; they were of course submitted to the King, and H.M. will probably recollect them as he wrote a short minute upon them as to the extreme importance of this country doing all that was possible to support Japan. But Lord Lansdowne regarded Hayashi's proposals as so confidential that he did not have them printed: and they were not communicated to Sir Frank Lascelles.
Indeed I do not think that anyone outside the Cabinet has seen them except Whitehead, the Chargé d'affaires at Tokio (though they cannot have reached him yet).
I imagine from what you say that the German Emperor has got wind of this; if so probably Hayashi has told Eckhardstein that the was trying the ground with Lord Lansdowne, and in that case Eckhardstein would of course report it at once to H.I.M. This is mere conjecture; but it seems not improbable. . . ." [2])

The Japanese were rather keen on Germany taking part in the understanding, but because of the British point of view they allowed the matter to drop. [3])

During the meeting of October 16th, Hayashi sketched the broad outlines of the agreement, as the Japanese Government would like to see it.

". . . . That Government [Japan] was above all things interested in Corea, and it was a matter of life and death for them to keep Russia out of it. Their interest in Manchuria was only secondary, and due to the fact that encroachments in Manchuria might lead to encroachments in Corea. It was necessary for the Japanese Government not only to guard against the absorption of Corea by Russia, but to maintain the privileges conceded to their countrymen by the Russo-Japanese Agreement of 1898.
His Excellency evidently referred to Article III of the Protocol of April 18th, of that year, which runs as follows: –

'Vu le large développement qu'ont pris les entreprises commerciales et

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1) Br. Doc. II no. 105. 2) Royal Archives W 42/no. 29. 3) Cramer p. 74, 75; Hayashi . 187; Br. Doc. II no. 91, no. 106.

industrielles du Japon en Corée, ainsi que le nombre considérable de sujets Japonais résidant dans ce pays, le Gouvernement Russe n'entravera point le développement des relations commerciales et industrielles entre le Japon et la Corée.'

This agreement, Baron Hayashi said, conferred upon Japan rights of 'industrial and commercial expansion' in Corea; rights of exercise of which, he said very frankly, might lead to the establishment of political influence. It was therefore necessary for Japan to stifle in its inception any movement under which Russia might obtain preponderance in that country.

As to China, the Minister said that the policy of Japan was identical with that of Great Britain. Both Powers desired to maintain the integrity and independence of China, and, in regard to commercial matters, the policy of the 'open door'.

The object of the Japanese Government was to secure the support of Great Britain in giving effect to the above policy, and they therefore proposed that Great Britain should undertake to support Japan if Japan should find herself obliged to go to war in defence of it with more than one Foreign Power. If, on the other hand, Great Britain found herself at war with more than one Foreign Power in defence of her interests in any part of China, Japan would undertake to support us with her whole strength.

Baron Hayashi laid some stress upon the fact that the Japanese Government did not propose that the Alliance should take effect in case either England or Japan found themselves at war with a single Power. That, he thought, would be approaching too nearly to an offensive and defensive Alliance. If Japan were to be at war with Russia alone, it would be sufficient if Great Britain remained neutral; the observance by her of a strict neutrality would of itself be of the greatest assistance to Japan, as it would deprive the Russian Fleet of the power of using British Coaling Stations. He added that it was in his view possible that the understanding should be made to extend even to the action of the two Powers in regard to Siam.

I thanked Baron Hayashi for his statement, which I promised to refer to my Colleagues, and which I said appeared to me to form a useful basis for discussion. I added that I presumed that the two Powers would, in the event of such an understanding being arrived at, agree that neither of us should, without consulting the other, make separate arrangements, or come to separate understandings with another Power as to Chinese or Corean affairs, and that we should in all cases where there was a probability of the Agreement coming into force, undertake to communicate with one another in good time and with the utmost frankness. I also said that I thought that the two Navies might with great advantage work together even in time of peace, each Power affording the other facilities for the use of docks, harbours and coaling stations. Baron Hayashi cordially agreed with this suggestion." [1])

In this report of Lord Lansdowne's are to be found the main items of the future agreement – and this time the British Foreign Secretary meant business.

) Br. Doc. II no. 105.

His Japanese colleague held the "opinion that if anything [ought] to be done it [ought] to be done quickly" and Lansdowne assured him that he looked upon the situation as being "extremely hopeful". [1])

Mr. F. Bertie, the Assistant-Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was of the same opinion for he noted in a memorandum of November 9th, 1901, that "a formal understanding between England and Japan for the protection of their interests in the Far East by force of arms is of the utmost importance to both countries." [2])

As soon as the British Cabinet had reassembled after the Parliamentary summer recess, Lansdowne put forward his proposals, which were discussed at the Cabinet meeting of November 5th. The account of the Cabinet proceedings given to the King by Lord Salisbury was, as usual, a clear and bare statement of fact, but he must have been sorely tempted to add his views on the decision taken, and to finish his report with the words "this is the end of isolation".

> "Lord Salisbury with his humble duty respectfully submits that a Cabinet was held to-day. In the first instance Lord Lansdowne brought before the Cabinet a projected agreement with Japan, which he has been negotiating since last June. The object of it is that in any war between Japan and one other Power *we* should be neutral: and similarly if we were at war. If the war involved two Powers against Japan, we should then be bound to join her: and similarly Japan would be bound to help us against any two Powers.
> The decision of the large majority of the Cabinet was in favour of Lord Lansdowne's proposal...." [3])

On the very next day Lord Lansdowne handed to Baron Hayashi the British draft of the forthcoming agreement, and told him that

> "I [Lansdowne] had prepared the draft solely with reference to the possibility of either Power becoming involved in hostilities in consequence of events in China or Corea. This was in accordance with the understanding at which he and I had arrived, and I had therefore not felt that I was justified in extending the scope of the draft. On the other hand, I felt bound to tell him that an Agreement limited in this manner seemed to be in some respects an incomplete solution of the question. What after all was of importance to both Great Britain and Japan was that neither of them should be overwhelmed by a combination of foreign Powers. The disappearance of Great Britain as a sea Power in the Far East would be a calamity to Japan, and it would make no matter to her whether such a calamity were to be brought about by a quarrel originating in the Far East or by complications in some other part of the World.
> Baron Hayashi replied that, speaking for himself, he felt the force of this observation, and that he would not fail to repeat it to the Japanese Government, to which he would at once refer the draft which I had placed in his hands. This he read through in my presence, and told me that the

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1) Br. Doc. II no. 109. 2) Br. Doc. II no. 91. 3) Royal Archives R 22/no. 57; There is no record of the names of the Cabinet-members who made up this majority.

only criticism which occured to him at the moment was that our mention of the absorption of Corea as a contingency against which we desired to provide did not quite sufficiently meet the requirements of Japan, which desired to be protected not only against the complete absorption of Corea, but against any serious encroachments on the part of Russia in that country, or, indeed, any action on her part which might interfere with the preponderant influence exercised by Japan in many parts of Corea." [1])

Although the Japanese Government had at an earlier date expressed their wish to quicken the pace of the negotiations as much as possible, they now took about five weeks to make their counter-proposals. This delay cannot be explained entirely, as the Japanese tried to, by the illness of Mr. Komura and the absence of most of the members of the Japanese Cabinet, who were visiting the autumn manoeuvres of the Army. It was, in fact, mainly due to the long tour being made by Marquis Ito, a former Prime Minister and one of the most influential Japanese statesmen in or outside the Cabinet, of most of the capitals of Europe.

The main reason for this journey was that Marquis Ito and some of his Japanese colleagues still favoured a Russo-Japanese agreement, giving Russia a free hand in Manchuria in return for Japan's being allowed a free hand in Corea, rather than a possible Anglo-Japanese alliance. With this object in mind, he had set out to sound opinion in St. Petersburg, but he first stopped at Paris, where, on November 14th, he had a meeting with Hayashi. The latter, who had been instructed by Mr. Komura to travel to Paris to give Marquis Ito a full account of the pending negotiations with Britain, was of course furious. He saw, quite correctly, Ito's journey to Russia as a threat to his policy of coming to an understanding with England.

He succeeded, however, in bringing Ito round to his point of view – that it was no longer possible to break off negotiations with England as they had already gone too far. The Marquis told Hayashi that he now agreed in principle with the idea of an agreement between Japan and Great Britain, but as his visit to St. Petersburg had already been arranged, it would be impossible not to go. And, as Hayashi had already cabled to Tokyo the Marquis' assent to the present policy, he did not think that any harm could come of it.

Hayashi, in his turn, promised not to hand in any Japanese counter-proposals to the British Government until it was known what Ito had found Russian intentions to be, during his visit to St. Petersburg. [2])

In order to avoid misunderstandings, Hayashi, after returning to London on November 19th, sent the following telegram to Ito:

> "So long as it is our policy to conclude a Russo-Japanese Convention we should adopt one or other of the following courses: first conclude the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, then notify Britain of our intention to negotiate a convention with Russia and proceed to the conclusion of the convention;

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1) Br. Doc. II no. 110. 2) Hayashi p. 134–144; Cramer p. 71.

or secondly so long as the Anglo-Japanese negotiations in London are in progress you shall not discuss a convention with the Russian statesmen, unless they first propose it. In that case you must put them off as best as you can."

To this the Marquis replied that he would adopt the second course. [1])

During his visit to the Russian capital and in the course of his conversations with Lamsdorff and Witte, it was made plain to Marquis Ito that Russia wanted a free hand in Manchuria. Ito realised fully that in Manchuria Russia could now already do whatever she liked, and that a similar position for Japan in Corea could only be obtained by Japanese concessions to Russia. [2])

Nevertheless Ito sent many telegrams to Tokio, to try to persuade his Government to reverse its policy and try its fortune with Russia, [3]) but ideas in Tokio moved in a different direction. [4])

This was of course, largely due to the feeling that Japanese interests in the Far East had more in common with England than with Russia, but we assume that it was the conversation on November 25th in Tokio between the British Ambassador and the Acting Director of the Political Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Office which finally tipped the scales. Sir Claude MacDonald told Mr. Yamaza quite frankly that Marquis Ito's visits "to Berlin and St. Petersburg at this juncture had doubtless given rise, and with much reason, to misgivings on part of [the British] Government." [5])

In London, a similar attitude was adopted by Lord Lansdowne, who was very suspicious about Ito's trip to St. Petersburg, and did not for a moment accept Hayashi's lame explanations. Mr. Bertie, the Assistant-Under-Secretary of State, was even more outspoken, when he told the embarrassed Japanese Ambassador: "If the news of our negotiations with you were to leak out and come to Russian ears, Russia would most certainly try to make an agreement with you and perhaps offer you what at first sight would appear to be more advantageous terms. But, you [can] not rely on those terms, for Russia [will] certainly repudiate them whenever it appeared to suit her. I want to warn you to be very careful." [6])

This remark must have made it clear to the Japanese Government that England was quite willing to come to an understanding but that she was not prepared to become Japan's ally simply because Russia refused to do so. The following letter written by Mr. F. Bertie to Sir Francis Knollys on November 23rd, 1901 shows how deeply these suspicions were rooted:

"My dear Francis,

You will have seen that our negotiations with Japan are hanging fire. Some time ago Eckardstein was continually advocating an understanding between England and Japan to curb the ambition of Russia and France

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1) Hayashi p. 144, 145. 2) Cramer p. 71. 3) Cramer p. 71; Hayashi p. 153–161.
4) Br. Doc. II no. 118. 5) Br. Doc. II no. 112. 6) Hayashi p. 146, 147.

in the Far East. He frequented the society of Hayashi a good deal and I have no doubt that the latter partly unbosomed himself as to the great advantage of an understanding with Germany brought in. Germany would not have been brought in for it might have brought her into disagreeable relations with Russia which she must avoid at all risks in the Far East even to the length of Russia having a free hand in Manchuria so far as Germany is concerned. I suspect that the German Government have knowledge perhaps through the Japanese Government perhaps through Eckardstein, of the desire of H.M. Government to extend the Agreement being negotiated with Japan to cover not only a case of an attack by any two Powers on Japan or England in the Far East, but to any double attack anywhere. This would not at all suit Germany, for pleased as she might be to feel that her interests in the Far East would be safeguarded by an understanding between England and Japan limited to the Far East and that such an understanding when communicated to Russia – as it would be by Germany – would be a bar to an Anglo-Russian Agreement, she would feel that with a general alliance with Japan we could more easily than now dispense with German offers of alliance. Therefore the German Government have probably advised Japan to defer *any* agreement with us till it is seen how we come out of the South African business, and meanwhile she will as the honest broker see what can be done at Petersburg. The German Government have seized upon the pretext of Mr. Chamberlain's unwise speech to complain and they have revived a Press campaign against this country in the hope of driving H.M. Government into accepting a German alliance after which they would explain away their ill-humour, the Press agitation would subside by degrees, and Japan would be encouraged to conclude the Agreement with England with limitation to the Far East.
I may be too suspicious, but long experience here makes one so.

Yours ever,

Francis Bertie." [1])

The Japanese Cabinet, however, took the British warning at its face value and started to get the necessary things done in the shortest time possible. They amended the Lansdowne draft on certain points, and on December 3rd, 1901 submitted the document to the Emperor, for his consent. [2])

However, in a conversation between Sir Claude MacDonald and Viscount Katsura on December 6th, the latter pointed out "that the idea was so new and so unprecedented that it required the most careful consideration and that the Emperor had, therefore, instructed him to ascertain the opinion of the elder statesmen on the subject. He had accordingly consulted the elder statesmen one by one and found them on the whole favourably disposed, so he had arranged to meet them privately in a body at Hayama (where he had a villa) the day after, to decide upon the matter. He had no doubt that the result of his consultation would be satisfactory, but even of it were not, he was prepared to take the responsibility for the conclusion of the Agreement upon himself." [3])

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[1]) Royal Archives W/42 no. 43. [2]) Lee II p. 143. [3]) Br. Doc. II no. 118.

After this private meeting of the Genro, there was an official Council before the Throne, presided over by the Japanese Emperor himself.

> "At the Council, reports were submitted to his Majesty with regard to the Anglo-Japanese negotiations and then with regard to Ito's Russian negotiations. After reading them and studying them His Majesty turned to a Secretary and said: 'Go to the Imperial Cabinet and get Marquis Ito's report on a proposed Anglo-Japanese Alliance when he was Prime Minister.' When the report was brought the Emperor looked through it and then turning to the Council said: 'In this report Marquis Ito, when Prime Minister, most strongly advises that an Alliance be made with Great Britain, and nothing has happened to change the situation during the last few months.' The Mikado then ordered Komura to instruct Hayashi to go ahead with the negotiations and then to telegraph to Ito to stop all negotiations with Russia." [1])

On December 10th, Count Komura sent his instructions to Hayashi in London, and when the latter asked for information about Ito's attitude, he received the following reply by telegram:

> "The instructions which you have received to present the amendments to the British Government were sent to you after a consultation of the Cabinet with the Elder Statesmen, and after careful consideration of Marquis Ito's views, and with the sanction of the Emperor. You will therefore fulfil your instructions immediately." [2])

The Japanese Ambassador must have been a very happy man, when, on December 12th, he handed to Lord Lansdowne the amendments of his Government to the British proposals of November 6th. [3])

Lansdowne immediately circulated the paper amongst his colleagues and at the Cabinet Meeting of December 13th the matter was brought up for discussion. Lord Salisbury reported to the King:

> "At the outset [of to-day's Cabinet meeting] Lord Lansdowne informed the Cabinet that he had received from the Japanese Minister a statement of the views of his Government in regard to the terms of the defensive alliance which was proposed between this country and Japan. The paper had only arrived to-day and therefore it was resolved not to take it into consideration till next Thursday. In the meantime Lord Lansdowne hopes to see Count Metternich, and to give him a general indication of our views on this question of Japan, in order that Germany should have no ground for complaining that we had observed undue reticence towards her." [4])

On December 18th the British Cabinet discussed the Japanese counter-proposals in full and the Prime Minister reported to the King on the next day:

> "Lord Salisbury with his humble duty to your Majesty respectfully submits that a Cabinet was held yesterday which terminated at half past five.

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[1]) Hayashi p. 161. [2]) Hayashi p. 162. [3]) Br. Doc. II no. 115. [4]) Royal Archives R 22/no. 62.

Owing to an accident Lord Salisbury's report of it to Your Majesty was delayed.
There were only two subjects of discussion – the Education Bill, and the Japanese negotiations; and in respect to neither of them was any definite progress made.... On the Japanese question the differences of opinion were more with respect to details than to substance. The Japanese had proposed as conditions of their agreement, several new stipulations some of which were not agreeable to our views. Especially was the Cabinet disposed to reject a proposal that each Power should bind itself always to keep in Japanese seas a fixed naval force. We could not sacrifice the free disposal of our ships and the Japanese treaty would not repay us for the surrender. On the other hand many members of the Cabinet thought that the terms offered to us were hardly equivalent to the practical guarantee which we were offering to Japan: and desired that the Japanese engagements should extend to India and Siam. On these two grounds further communications between the Japanese Minister, and the Foreign Secretary were held to be necessary before a further step in the negotiation could be taken." [1])

Immediately after the Cabinet council Lord Lansdowne had another meeting with Baron Hayashi and told him:

"There was a strong feeling amongst my colleagues that it would be desirable, if possible, to give wider scope to the Agreement. It seemed, for instance, scarcely reasonable that, while we were to face the possibility of a war with two great European Powers in consequence of a dispute between Japan and Russia in regard to Corea, we were not to have any assistance from Japan should we find ourselves involved with the same two Powers in regard to a dispute as to India. We should, I thought, be less critical in our examination of the terms if we had reason to expect that we might depend upon the assistance of Japan in a war arising out of other than Chinese or Corean interests. Baron Hayashi replied emphatically that his instructions from his Government left him in no doubt that it was useless to propose such an extension of the scope of the Agreement. He did not agree with us in considering the Agreement too one-sided. Japan had very little interest in the Valley of the Yangtse, and yet she would be compelled to support us should we find ourselves opposed by France and Russia in those regions....
I had already informed Baron Hayashi of my anticipation that separate article No. 2, binding the High Contracting Parties to endeavour to maintain in the Far East at all time Naval Forces superior to those of the Powers having the largest Naval Force in those waters, would not be accepted by His Majesty's Government. Their objection to any stipulation which might fetter their discretion in disposing of the distribution of their fleets was unsurmountable and I [Lansdowne] could hold out no hope that any proposal of the kind would be admitted." [2])

In the same interview Lansdowne explained that the British Government would like to dispense altogether with anything in the nature of a secret or

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1) Royal Archives R 22/no. 63. 2) Br. Doc. II no. 117.

separate agreement, as it was impossible to accept anything of the kind for political reasons. He suggested, therefore, that any agreement providing for concerted action by the Naval Forces of the two Powers, should be laid down in an exchange of notes. This proposal was accepted by the Japanese Government and the Agreement to be concluded was, in fact, accompanied by such an exchange of notes, laying down provisions for concerted actions by the respective fleets.

A draft of this note and some Japanese suggestions for alterations in the Agreement were handed to Lord Lansdowne by Hayashi on December 31st, 1901. [1]) Then, on January 14th, 1902, Hayashi received from the British Foreign Secretary the text of the proposed Agreement and Note which the British Government was willing to sign. Lord Lansdowne told the Japanese Ambassador that this text had been very carefully considered and that he did not think it probable that any further modifications would be acceptable. [2])

Meanwhile Marquis Ito, who had left St. Petersburg on December 4th, [3]) had been visiting Berlin and Brussels and arrived in London on December 24th, 1901. [4]) The King advised Lord Lansdowne to organise an elaborate reception in view of all the fuss made of him at St. Petersburg and Berlin. On December 26th the King once again drew Lord Lansdowne's attention to the matter, when he wrote:

> "Though he arrives at a most inconvenient time of the year, I think every possible civility should be shown him on a account of the great importance of our being on the best possible terms with Japan. I am, therefore, anxious to receive him personally in uniform to-morrow, with you being present. If not very inconvenient to yourself I hope you may be able to ask him to Bowood from a Saturday to a Monday, and I hope also that Lord Salisbury will ask him to Hatfield for luncheon." [5])

Consequently the Marquis was entertained by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House on January 3rd and he had lunch with the Prime Minister at Hatfield House the next day. He visited Lord Lansdowne at Bowood on January 5th, and on January 6th, the day preceding his departure for Paris, he had another conversation with the Foreign Secretary in London. The King invited him to come to Sandringham and "the Marquess was much pleased at Your Majesty's suggestion that he should prolong his stay and visit your Majesty at Sandringham, but he had made all his arrangements for leaving to-morrow and it was clear that he would have had very great difficulty in postponing his departure." [6])

In a long despatch to the British Ambassador in Japan, dated Jan. 7th, 1902, Lord Lansdowne described the two conversations he had had with the distinguished visitor.

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1) Br. Doc. II no. 119. 2) Br. Doc. II no. 121. 3) G. P. XVII no. 5042. 4) Lee II p. 143. 5) Lee II p. 143. 6) Lansdowne to the King, Jan. 6th 1902, Royal Archives W 42/no. 45a.

"I explained to him that the Japanese Government had proposed important amendments in the original draft, and that these had yet to be disposed of by the Cabinet. I said that the Agreement would certainly be made public, and that I did not conceal from myself that it was likely to be severely criticised. It was an entirely new departure for us. Our policy of late, as he was aware, had been to avoid entangling ourselves in foreign allian-

ces, and if that policy was to be abandoned and this country was to accept obligations such as those which we should incur under the Agreement, it would be necessary for us to satisfy Parliament that we obtained sufficiently valuable considerations in return.

I had, as he probably knew, explained to the Japanese Minister that the Agreement, even in its original shape, might be represented as more in favour of Japan than of Great Britain, and the amendments which the Japanese Government proposed to introduce rendered the draft still more open to such criticism. I quite understood that from the Japanese point of view it might be necessary for Japan to reserve to herself full liberty to take timely measures for the purpose of guarding against Russian encroachments in Corea. But it seemed to me that the terms of the notes which the two Governments were invited to exchange went too far in that direction, and that these stipulations were not balanced by any corresponding stipulations in favour of British interests. People would certainly notice for example that, whereas no foreign Power was to be allowed to occupy any portion, no matter how small, of Corean territory, the corresponding obligation in regard to China merely bound the Contracting Parties in a general way to maintain the integrity and independence of that Empire.

. . . . . .

He then asked me what would be thought of the proposed Agreement between us by the United States and by Germany. He observed as to Germany that he was under the impression that she had at one time sought to throw Japan and Great Britain together. Was it likely that she should give her adherence to the Agreement, or was she likely to take any exception to it." [1])

Answering the British proposals of January 14th, Baron Hayashi visited Lansdowne on the 18th with some newly-suggested amendments from his Government. It was a last minute attempt by the Japanese to get the best of the deal, but Lansdowne pointed out to him that "the proposed new drafting, which recited the special interests, 'political as well as commercial and industrial', possessed by Japan in Corea, and then went on to refer to 'the interests of Japan and Great Britain in China', was calculated to produce the very impression which, as he was aware, we had so much desired to avoid, namely, that while Japan was to be bound to Great Britain only in respect of interests which were common to both Powers, Great Britain was to be bound to Japan in respect of interests which were peculiar to the latter country. We had endeavoured, in our draft, to place both Powers on exactly the same plane. That the omission from the new draft of the words enabling either Power to invoke the assistance of the other only in the event of their respective

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[1]) Br. Doc. II no. 120.

interests being threatened 'by the agressive action of another Power' had the effect of removing a safeguard to which we attached the greatest possible importance. There was a good deal of apprehension in our minds that Japan, in consequence of her close proximity to Corea, and her intense nervousness with regard to Russian intrusion in that country, might involve herself in a quarrel with Russia upon some insufficient pretext, and we desired to put it beyond all question that the casus foederis could not arise except where the third Power was clearly the assailant. I would take upon myself to say that the Cabinet would not allow these words to be expunged." [1])

At the Cabinet meeting of January 24th, the "aggressor" point was once again discussed and Lord Salisbury reported to the King that "on the British side objection was taken to some phrases which would have imposed upon Great Britain the obligation of assisting Japan in case of a quarrel with Russia and France, even though Japan should have been the aggressor. Japan was willing to correct this defect up to a certain point: and some negotiation has passed as to the precise form of words to be used. Another formula was considered to-day which it is to be hoped will close the controversy. . . ." [2])

The last difficulties were surmounted when Japan agreed that the Agreement ought to outline clearly that the "casus foederis" could only arise when a Third Power was beyond doubt the assailant, and Britain gave in to the Japanese wish that Japan should be able to take action in Corea if her interests were seriously threatened by internal disturbances in that country. [3])

The last obstacles having thus been removed, Lord Lansdowne and Baron Hayashi, on January 30th, 1902 signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance on behalf of their respective countries.

The treaty being concluded, the moment of its announcement to the world had still to be decided upon. Lord Salisbury reported to the King that at the Cabinet meeting on January 31st "there was a short discussion in relation to the Treaty with Japan which has now been signed. The point raised by the Foreign Secretary was to know whether the Cabinet wished it to be announced at once. The general view was that it should be announced to Germany within the next few days, and that after that an interval of at least a week should be allowed to elapse before it was generally announced. Japan had insisted that five or six days should intervene between the disclosure to Germany and the more general publication. It was agreed that we should as far as possible consult the Japanese wishes in the matter. . . ." [4])

The King himself had urged Lord Lansdowne that "there should be no loss of time in informing German Government of the Anglo-Japanese Agreement – or else they will hear from some other source – secrecy being almost an impossibility. The Emperor will be much interested in hearing the news as he has strongly advocated a close alliance between Great Britain and Japan." [5])

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[1]) Br. Doc. II no. 122. [2]) Royal Archives R 22/no. 66. [3]) Br. Doc. II no. 123.
[4]) Royal Archives R 22/no. 67. [5]) Lee II p. 143; Br. Doc. II no. 126.

The Japanese Government at this moment made a last-minute attempt, not only to notify Germany of the Alliance, but to get British consent to a joint Anglo-Japanese invitation to Germany to become a partner to the Agreement.[1]) The British Foreign Secretary, however, explained to Hayashi that the friendliness of British and German public opinion left much to be desired owing to the recent speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Count Bülow. Thus it was decided to do no more than notify the German representatives in Tokio and London – both in the same manner. [2])

Although on December 13th, 1901 Lord Salisbury had told the King in writing that Lord Lansdowne would give Count Metternich "a general indication" about the pending negotiations and Baron Hayashi had told Lansdowne on December 16th, 1901, that it was for the British Government to "decide when the moment had arrived for taking the German Government into [their] confidence", [3]) this idea seems not to have been pursued. There is nothing to be found in the records about a communication at that stage of the negotiations between Britain and Germany about the Anglo-Japanese Alliance; neither does the German Ambassador in London, in his report of his conversation with Lord Lansdowne on February 3rd, during which he was informed of the conclusion of the Alliance, allude to any earlier information on the subject. [4]) The German Emperor himself told the British Ambassador, Sir F. Lascelles, on February 5th, that he had received the news "with interest and satisfaction" [5]) and three weeks later he wrote privately to King Edward as follows:

"26th Febr. 1902.

"Dearest Uncle,

The bearer of these lines is the new military attaché Count v. d. Schulenburg, whom I venture to "empfehlen" to you. I know him since many years, for he served for a long time in the Gardes du Corps and also on staff appointments. He is a most distinguished officer and a very refined and accomplished young gentleman. He is married to a handsome and charming young wife Countess Arnim-Muskau, whose mother was a great friend of mama's. I hope he will be liked and appreciated, the more so as he has the honour of now wearing the uniform of Your Dragoon Guards. I congratulate you on the conclusion of the new Alliance, which we all here look upon as a guarantee of peace in the East. Henry had an awful passage, which he is rapidly forgetting under the warmth of his reception, verifying Lord Salisbury's prophecy some years ago of the union among the Teutonic Races, which he hoped would once take place; this is at least a beginning!
The "Moltke" will salute you at Dartmouth where Admiral von Arnim the director of the Naval Academy will represent me.
With best love to Auntie,

Ever Yours Affectionately,
Willy." [6])

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[1]) Hayashi p. 188. [2]) Hayashi p. 189; Br. Doc. II no. 126. [3]) Br. Doc. II no. 116.
[4]) G. P. XVII no. 5043. [5]) Br. Doc. II no. 128. [6]) Royal Archives X 37/no. 55.

The news of the Alliance was also communicated, some hours before the official publication, to the American Ambassador in London, Mr. Joseph Choate, who immediately sent off a telegram to the Secretary of State.

"Febr. 11th 1902.

"Strictly Confidential.

Great Britain and Japan have signed strictly defensive treaty, to be published to-morrow probably. Recites desire to maintain status quo in East and their special interests to maintain independence and integrity of China and Corea, and open door; agrees, first, that in case either becomes involved in war with any Power, the other will maintain strict neutrality and try to prevent other Powers from engaging against its ally; second, if in same event any other Power should join in hostilities against ally the other will come to its assistance and conduct the war in common. This is absolutely confidential till publication." [1])

and the next day he forwarded a short commentary:

"... It seems to me greatly to fortify the policy of the open door, and goes far to secure the independence and integrity of the Chinese and the Corean Empires. Perhaps also it explains the decision of His Majesty's Government, announced in Parliament the day before, not to proceed further with the fortification of Wei-hai-wei as a naval base." [2])

The official publication of the text of the treaty took place on February 11th, 1902, in London, and on February 12th in Tokio. Although Lord Salisbury had written to the King on February 7th:

"It was determined that the Japanese treaty should be laid upon the table of the Houses of Parliament on some day between Tuesday and Friday in next week: and the day should be selected so that the publication of the Treaty should be simultaneous here and in Tokio...." [3]),

it had been impossible to publish the Treaty both in London and Tokio on the same day. Wednesday, February 12th was a private business day in the House of Commons so that no Government business could be handled and February 11th was an important Japanese holiday.

On February 12th the "Times" carried the news and on February 13th Earl Spencer, the leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, questioned the Government's attitude:

"....I have the highest estimation of the capabilities of the country [Japan] and I desire this nation to be on the most friendly terms possible with it. At the same time it is a question of very great importance, and it strikes me we ought to have very good reasons, strong reasons, why we should depart from what has been, certainly of late years, the policy of this

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[1]) Archives of the U.S. State Dept. [2]) Archives of the U.S. State Dept. [3]) Royal Archives R 22/no. 69.

country – namely, that of avoiding what are called offensive and defensive alliances.
Now – I am not going into that question; I am not going to pronounce in any way myself against alliances of this sort, but I feel strongly that we should not enter into such alliances unless there are very strong and urgent reasons for doing so. . . ." [1])

The British Foreign Secretary, who had been greeted by loud ministerial cheers when he entered the House of Lords, rose with a cheerful heart and defended his policy and the new departure that had been taken in a most impressive way:

> ". . . .I do not think it can be said for an instant that any other Power has interests in the Far East at all comparable to those of Great Britain and Japan, and therefore it is that this Agreement is made between this country and Japan. The noble earl suggested the matter was one of very great importance and I do not differ from him in that view. He said in particular that it was of importance because it involves a new departure – a departure from the traditional policy of this country, which I think he said had until now been a policy of isolation. I think it is true that in recent years international agreements involving assistance on the part of this country to other Powers have been generally regarded with considerable suspicion and misgiving; but I say frankly we are not going to be deterred by these considerations, or to admit for a moment that because this agreement does involve a new departure it is therefore open to adverse criticism. [Hear, Hear]. I do not think that anyone can have watched the recent course of events in different parts of the world without realising that many of the arguments which a generation ago might have been adduced in support of a policy of isolation have ceased to be entitled to the same consideration now. . . .
> We observe a tendency to ever-increasing naval and military armaments involving ever-increasing burdens upon the people for the defence of whose countries their armaments were accumulated. There is also this – that in these days war breaks out with a suddenness which was unknown in former days, when nations were not, as they are now, armed to the teeth and ready to enter into hostilities at any moment.
> When we consider these features of the international situation we must surely feel that a country would indeed be endowed with an extraordinary amount of what I might call self-sufficiency, which took upon itself to say that it would accept without question, without reservation, the doctrine that all foreign alliances were to be avoided as necessarily embarrassing and objectionable.
> Therefore I would entreat Your Lordships to look on the matter strictly on its merits and not to allow your judgment to be swayed by any old formula or old-fashioned superstitions as to the desirability of pursuing a policy of isolation for this country. If, considered on its merits, I venture to suggest that what you have to take into account in regard to an alliance of this kind is, first, whether the ally is a desirable ally, in the next place whether the objects of the alliance are commendable and last but not

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[1]) Times February 14th 1902.

least, whether the price you pay for the alliance is greater than you ought to pay.
If these questions can be satisfactorily answered then I say the alliance is not a bad thing for the country, but on the contrary is a good thing, for prima facie, if there be no countervailing objections the country which has the good fortune to possess allies is more to be envied than be country which is without them." [1])

With the signing of the Japanese Alliance and its author's commentary in the House of Lords, the Salisbury era of "isolation" came to an end.

The former Liberal Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, Lord Roseberry, spoke in the same debate and pointed out the importance of the step that had been taken:

> "Let me say at the outset that my first impression, 'without prejudice' if I may say so, is favourable to the Treaty, and that so far as I can see we may congratulate the noble marquis and the Government upon it.... On one point, however, let us be clear before we attempt to make up our minds on this treaty. It is not a treaty the effect of which will only be felt in the Far East. It will be felt in every part of Europe and the civilised world. That is why it is so large and pregnant a departure." [2])

On that same day but in "another place", the Government was defending the Alliance against feeble attacks by the Liberal Opposition and after an able speech by Lord Percy, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the debate was wound up by Mr. Arthur Balfour:

> "....So far as I am aware every gentleman in this House is perfectly competent to understand the full weight of the grounds upon which we have made, what I quite admit is, at all events in recent years, a new departure. I am not prepared to minimise in the slightest degree the importance of the steps we have taken. [Cheers]. I do not pretend at all that it is one of the ordinary, everyday diplomatic transactions between Power and Power. But the reasons for it seem to me not to lie in the secret archives of this or any other Foreign Office, but upon the broad facts and the large necessities of our interests and our policy in the Far East [Cheers]....
> I do not deny for one moment that this treaty throws an obligation on this country, which might possibly be onerous. I do not pretend that by a treaty of this kind you get everything and you risk nothing, nor do I believe in the policy which asserts that any such object is within the reach of diplomacy; but I do believe it makes for peace and I do believe that it builds up into a more solid and coherent alliance all forces which tend towards an object which every man in this House has in view – the object of maintaining the status quo in the Far East, with equal trade opportunities for every nation anxious to take part in Eastern commerce. That is the only motive which animated us in making this treaty and I am sure

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[1]) House of Lords Febr. 13th 1902. Times February 14th 1902. [2]) Times February 14th 1902.

that the House and the country will think that motive sufficient." [Loud cheers]. [1])

This moment can be rightly claimed to be the beginning of the end of Britain's "splendid isolation".

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[1]) Times February 14th 1902.