THE UNITED STATES DIPLOMATS' RESPONSE TO RISING CHINESE NATIONALISM, 1900-1912

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ABSTRACT

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This study of the United States policy toward China was inspired by several factors: the conclusions of recent scholarship which pushed the birthdate of modern Chinese nationalism back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; a desire to understand better the love/hate relationship between the United States and China; the need to illuminate more clearly the diplomatic policy-making process.

Other studies have noted the effect of public opinion on the United States foreign policy and have examined extensively the policy-making roles played by individual American Presidents, Secretaries of State, and members of the State Department and Congress. But no study of the United States policy toward China during the decade that preceded the national revolution of 1911 has concentrated on the influence the diplomatic personnel in the field exerted on the development of policy. An examination of the consuls' and diplomats' evaluations of and response to the political situation in China provides answers to that question and offers additional insights into the nature of Chinese nationalism in this period as well as the nature and effect of the United States response to that nationalism.

Linda Madson Papageorge

After surveying the background of the revolutionary situation in twentieth-century China and considering briefly the differences between traditional and modern Chinese nationalism, the study focuses on the diplomats' evaluations and response to the Boxer uprising, to the rights recovery movement with emphasis on the anti-American boycott of 1905-1906, and to the various attempts at a peaceful modernization of China's ancient institutions. Extensive use was made of the United States Consular and Legations reports, some of which are in the PAPERS RELATING TO THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES volumes and others in the Department of State Archives. In addition, an attempt was made to determine the degree of correspondence between the diplomats' reports on and recent studies of the political situation in early twentieth-century China.

The diplomatic reports support the conclusions of recent studies concerning the existence of modern nationalism in early twentieth-century China. For the American consular personnel 1905, the year of Japan's victory over Russia and of the anti-American boycott, was the dividing line between traditional and modern China. According to the Consular despatches, both the Manchu-Chinese dynasty and the United States failed to respond adequately to the new reality posited by emerging Chinese nationalism. The imperial government refused to endorse any nationalist measures that seemed to threaten its traditional prerogatives. Although the diplomatic reports noted the implications of the Throne's inability to identify with modern Chinese nationalism, the diplomats failed to affect appreciably the attitude of the decision makers in the State Department who refused

to adjust the United States policy to the new situation. The United States' attitude toward modern Chinese nationalism was an ambiguous one. Although it favored the nationalists' objective of a strong, modern China, the United States opposed any nationalist activities that challenged the privileged position the unequal treaties gave the foreign powers. Both the imperial government's and the United States' response to modern Chinese nationalism subverted their respective objectives. By ignoring and resisting its demands, they forced Chinese nationalism into revolutionary channels and precluded the possibility that China's transition to a modern, industrial state would be a peaceful one, conducted by the Manchu dynasty on terms more favorable to foreign interests than those which ensued.

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF CHINESE NATIONALISM

In 1911 China experienced a political upheaval quite unlike anything that had occurred in its long history. For it destroyed not only the Manchu dynasty but also the Dragon Throne which the Manchu and a long succession of imperial dynasties had occupied. Imperial China was now history; China was proclaimed a republic. It was a revolution and nationalism was responsible.[1]

The nationalism that animated the revolution of 1911 and distinguished twentieth-century China from its past originated in China's traumatic defeat by Japan in 1895, in the impact on China of the West and in the crisis these forces precipitated within the Chinese civilization. The forces that produced Chinese nationalism also determined the shape it would assume. To understand and appreciate fully

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[1]Historians continue to debate whether the events of 1911 were revolutionary or a part of the traditional dynastic cycle. Chūzō Ichiko has taken the latter position, "The Role of the Gentry: An Hypothesis" in China In Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913, ed. by Mary C. Wright (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 308. For an opposite point of view see Mary C. Wright "Introduction: The Rising Tide of Change," pp. 50-51; Michael Gasster, "China's Political Modernization," p. 93; Marie-Clarie Bergère, "The Role of the Bourgeoisie," pp. 294-295, all contained in China In Revolution. The best approach to understanding the revolution is, perhaps, that suggested some time ago by Paul Linebarger who wrote: "China is in only some respects comparable to the West, and . . . the ideas and methods of the West loose the greater part of their relevance when applied to the Chinese milieu," The Political Doctrines of Sun Yat-sen (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1937), p. 52.

the content and thrust of twentieth-century Chinese nationalism, one must consider the nature of and the relationship between the external threat and the internal crisis from which nationalism emerged.

Given China's hostility to foreigners, the western approach to China in the nineteenth century had assumed the character of imperialism. The treaty system forced on China was the prime example; it became the sine qua non of relations between the Chinese Empire and other nations. These treaties gave foreign nations special rights and privileges in China. The right of extra-territoriality recognized foreign rather than Chinese jurisdiction over the activities of their respective nationals. The most-favored-nation clause gave all nations the rights and privileges acquired by one of them. Foreign governments obtained the right to limit China's tariff on imports to five per cent ad valorem. The treaties limited foreign residence to certain districts within the treaty ports but gave foreigners virtual autonomy within those districts. China had to tolerate Christianity and permit missionaries to settle at will. In 1858 China extended treaty protection to American missionaries and their Chinese converts.[2] These were concessions that no sovereign nation would have given. Yet, considering the state of the Chinese Empire in the nineteenth century, relations were impossible without them.[3]

A serious enough threat to Chinese territorial and administrative

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[2]Paul A. Varg, The Making of the Myth (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968), pp. 9-11.

[3]Ibid.

integrity in the nineteenth century, imperialism had greatly accelerated after 1895. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 occupies a pivotal position in the challenge of and in China's response to imperialism. China's defeat by Japan set in motion a chain of events with far-reaching effects on Chinese and world history. It inspired an unsuccessful popular uprising in Canton in 1895. It led the foreign powers to demand much greater concessions from China than they already possessed. This scramble for concessions initiated an intense policy debate and struggle for power within China that precipitated the unsuccessful radical reform movement of 1898 and the Boxer uprising of 1900. The imperialism that followed the Boxer uprising further undermined the strength and prestige of the already failing Manchu dynasty and, perhaps, hastened its collapse. Finally, it contributed to the development of the revolutionary nationalism that has characterized twentieth-century China.

China's defeat in 1895 occurred at a time when western nations had reached an advanced stage of industrialization and had begun to worry about the depressive effects on their economies of over-production. With its 380 million people, China loomed as a vast market for the absorption of America's surplus manufactures and capital.[4] Japan's victory completely dispelled what had remained of the myth of China's military strength and stimulated the foreign powers' desires for additional special privileges and territorial cessions.

The Treaty of Shimonoseki, 17 April 1895, forced China to pay

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[4]Ibid., pp. 14-15, 36-37.

Japan an indemnity of 200 million taels; China had to recognize Korean independence and cede outright to Japan the Pescadores, Taiwan, and the Liaotung Peninsula. Japan also forced China to open new ports and gained the right to establish industries throughout China. These last two concessions automatically went to those powers whose treaties with China contained the most-favored-nation clause. The terms of the treaty reconfirmed Japan's imperialistic objectives on the Asian mainland and aroused Russian fears. With France and Germany cooperating, Russia threatened Japan with war if it occupied the Liaotung Peninsula.

This Triple Intervention of 23 April 1895 launched the scramble for concessions among the various nations. The prospect of war with Russia, France, and Germany led Japan to sell the Liaotung Peninsula back to China. Russia forced Japan to reduce the price from fifty to thirty million taels and then offered the impoverished Manchu government loans to meet its expenses. Because of its actions, Russian stock in Peking greatly increased in value, paving the way for the secret Sino-Russian Alliance of 1896 wherein Russia and China agreed to defend each other and Korea against future Japanese attack. In addition, Russia received the right to build and control a railroad across Northern Mongolia and Northern Manchuria from Chita to Vladivostok. Determined not to be left out, Germany demanded a naval base and when refused used the 1897 murder of two German missionaries in Shantung Province to compel China to lease it Kiaochow Bay for ninety-nine years and to grant Germany two railway concessions in Shantung. Russia countered by seizing Dairen and Port Arthur on the Liaotung Peninsula, in violation of the Sino-Russian Alliance; it also received

the right to build the South Manchuria Railway.

Great Britain, France, and Japan followed suit: Great Britain leased Weihaiwei for twenty-five years, Kowloon for ninety-nine years, and claimed the Yangtze Valley as its sphere of influence; France leased Kwangchow Bay for ninety-nine years and marked the provinces of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Yunnan as its sphere of influence; Japan selected Fukien Province for penetration from its Taiwan base.

The United States would have liked to join in the concessionairing and had its eye on Samsah Bay in Fukien. Amoy Consul Anson Burlingame Johnson desired to reserve the "magnificant harbor" for future American use. Consul John Fowler urged that the United States secure a base in North China. Minister Edwin Conger wanted the United States to take a base and Secretary of State John Hay confessed that he favored a China port for America. Although Hay recognized that adverse American public opinion presented a problem, he carefully preserved his options.[5] In the end the United States settled for the Open Door Notes which it hoped would secure American interests in China. The scramble for concessions halted in 1900 just short of partitioning China. At this point the foreign nations confronted the anti-foreign Boxer uprising.

The Boxer uprising is significant in the context of Chinese history because it awakened Chinese to the nature of the imperialist

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[5]Marilyn Blatt Young, The Rhetoric Of Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 98-106.

threat and stimulated the development of nationalism.[6] Imperialism at the turn of the century threatened not only China's territorial and administrative integrity but also its economic autonomy. The objective of the powers in opening China had expanded in the course of the nineteenth century from promoting trade to developing industry.[7] Under the western impact the Chinese economy had begun to develop a modern sector beside its traditional agrarian and handicraft economy. Foreign nations completely dominated the modern sector.[8] Foreign banks monopolized the financing of imports and exports in China and even assumed such extraordinary roles as issuing their own bank notes and acting as treasury agents for their respective governments. Shipping on Chinese coastal and inland waters had become an extremely competitive international industry, one which discriminated against native shipping; for the unequal treaties allowed foreign firms to monopolize shipping. Between 1880 and 1900 China's share in shipping activities had declined from 30.4 per cent to 19.3 per cent.[9]

The foreign influence extended into other vital areas of China's emerging modern economy. Foreign nations had rushed to take advantage of the Shimonoseki Treaty provision that had opened China

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[6]John E. Schrecker, Imperialism and Nationalism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 55-58, 250, 252-253; Wright, pp. 3-4.

[7]Bergere, pp. 232-235.

[8]Albert Feuerworker, China's Early Industrialization (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 6, 245.

[9]Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, The Rise of Modern China (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 519-521.

to foreign industry and had acquired extensive mining and railroad rights from the Manchu government. Foreign firms built, owned, and operated a total of 2,356 miles of railroad in China in the early twentieth century, which amounted to 41 per cent of the total railroad mileage. Foreign capital had financed the remaining Chinese-built-and-operated lines and therefore controlled them to a certain degree. The imperial government derived no revenues from foreign railroad properties and incomes since as concessions they were protected by the treaty system and exempted from taxation.[10] Imperialism greatly handicapped China's economic growth. Yet, China's survival in the modern world depended on its ability to make the transition to an industrial society.[11]

Chinese nationalists realized the implications of China's loss of control over its economic affairs and natural resources. They characterized China as a sub-colony, a position they considered inferior to that of a colony such as Annam or Korea. As Sun Yat-sen explained, Annam and Korea had but one master, while China with many had no one to look to for protection and was plundered by all of them.[12]

Chinese responded to the imperialism that came in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion in a completely unexpected manner. They met it

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[10] Ibid., pp. 521-522.

[11] Feuerwerker, p. 8.

[12] Linebarger, p. 127.

with an outburst of nationalism.[13] "China for the Chinese" was the demand and it increased in volume as the decade progressed. Whether reform-oriented or revolutionary-minded, Chinese nationalists blamed China's troubles,--the degrading unequal treaties, the humiliating military defeats, and the omnipresent threat of dismemberment and receivership, on China's weakness. That weakness they attributed to two sources: 1) China's decentralized political order and agrarian economy which rendered it incapable of resisting the dynamic, more efficiently organized, industrial nation-states of the West; 2) the Manchu dynasty whose decadence and ineptitude had permitted the imperialist victories. The radical reformers of 1898 wrote from exile to impress upon the Court and the country the importance of thoroughgoing reform if either were to survive the foreign threat. Other even more radical Chinese began to organize a revolution to rid the country of a government which in their opinion was corrupt beyond redemption and to replace it with one capable of meeting the challenges of imperialism and the modern world.

The new spirit of nationalism appeared to have infected even

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[13]Wright, pp. 4-5.

the imperial government.[14] The Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi assumed responsibility for the Boxer disaster, and when it returned to Peking in 1902 the Manchu Court under her leadership seemed willing to underwrite a program of wholesale reform. In modernizing China the imperial government faced formidable obstacles, chief among which were a well-nigh impossible revenue problem, the opposition of the provincial leaders to the centralization of power in Peking, and the scarcity of honest, capable leaders.

The economic crisis China faced was the product of a serious trade imbalance, the additional expenses brought on by the internal rebellions and foreign invasions of the nineteenth century, and its antiquated revenue system. The introduction of opium had altered China's previously favorable balance of trade and had produced a silver drain serious enough to upset China's fiscal system.[15] The Taiping, Nien and Moslem rebellions, and the mushrooming revolutionary uprisings of the decade preceding the revolution had forced the imperial government to undertake expensive military campaigns.

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[14]Because of the relation of the imperial government's reform program and performance to the revolution of 1911 this is a hotly debated issue. Feuerwerker concluded that the Manchus did not desire reform, p. 246; so did Hsu, pp. 530-533; Disagreeing are Meribeth Cameron in The Reform Movement in China, 1898-1912 (Stanford University Press, c1931), pp.56-64, 201 and Wright, pp. 24-30. Richard C. Howard, ed., "Chinese Reform Movement: Introduction" in Journal of Asian Studies, November, 1969, vol. XXIX, No. 1, p. 8, suggests that the issue was not whether to reform or not to reform but, rather, what kind of reform to pursue: a program reflecting the traditional Chinese perception of world order or the new perception of the Chinese nationalists.

[15]Franz Michael, The Taiping Rebellion, Vol. 1 (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1966), pp. 14-16.

Imperialism further drained the imperial treasury. The Sino-Japanese War left a military bill of $58,389,000 plus the $168,130,000 indemnity to Japan. The Boxer Protocol saddled China with a huge indemnity of 450 million taels ($330 million) to be paid in foreign rather than Chinese currency over a thirty-nine year period at an annual 4 per cent interest rate.[16] The traditional sources of revenue,--the tribute rice, land taxes, the likin, the salt gabelle, the customs and import duties, and provincial contributions became inadequate for meeting government expenses. The last time the imperial government balanced its budget was in 1887. In 1894 the imperial government's total revenues were estimated at approximately $65,043,649, hardly enough to cover the interest on the foreign loans it had negotiated to pay the expenses of the war with Japan.[17] China's economic problems worsened steadily after the Boxer uprising under the pressure to modernize China and develop its resources.

Regionalism compounded China's economic problems.[18] This phenomenon consisted in the transfer of power from the center to the periphery. It occurred when the central government became corrupt, inefficient, and too weak to look after its own interests, creating thereby a power vacuum into which the provincial authorities moved. The Taiping Rebellion provoked the regionalism of the Ch'ing

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[16]Varg, p. 94; Hsu, pp. 485-486.

[17]Varg, pp. 93-94.

[18]Franz Michael, "Regionalism in Nineteenth-Century China," introduction to Stanley Spector's Li Hung-chang and the Huai Army (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), pp. xxi-xliii, for the material on which the following discussion is based.

period; politically and economically it was the turning point for the Manchu dynasty. Unable to defend itself against the Taipings, the imperial government empowered the Chinese viceroys to raise armies which they, not the imperial government, controlled. It even allowed the viceroys to levy taxes for the support of their armies and campaigns. The provincial governors and governors-general superceded the provincial treasurer who was responsible to Peking for the taxes collected by the local magistrates. These governors remitted to Peking only about twenty per cent of the new revenues and effectively resisted all demands to increase their annual remittances. Its loss of control over the military and revenues seriously reduced the power of the imperial government.

Regionalism in nineteenth-century China was therefore a centrifugal force of great potency that constituted a real threat to the continued existence of the Manchu dynasty. Coupled with imperialism, it could prove fatal to China as well. There is ample evidence supporting such conclusions. Regionalism intensified the antagonism between the Manchus and Chinese, as Chinese eclipsed Manchus in positions of power and authority in the provinces. When Li Hung-chang became governor-general of Chihli and Superintendant of Trade in 1870, the handling of foreign relations shifted from the Tsungli Yamen in Peking to Li's Yamen in Tientsin where it remained for the next quarter century. Li's attempts to preserve traditional China often found the provincial authorities siding with the powers rather than the imperial government, particularly at the end of the century. On the admonition of the powers who had favored the radical reforms of

1898, both Liu Kun-yi and Chang Chih-tung refused to support the Empress Dowager in her attempt to dispose of Emperor Kuang Hsu after the coup d'etat, a fact which greatly embarrassed and angered her.[19] Then in 1900 these provincial authorities refused to support the imperial government when it inaugurated its pro-Boxer policy.[20] This state of affairs severely handicapped the imperial government's post-Boxer reform efforts. It could venture nothing on its own but had to obtain the concurrence of the provincial authorities and the permission of the powers, both more interested in securing their own interests. But, most important, without a strong central authority no effective reform, however strongly urged, was possible. Centrifugal forces by their very nature were incapable of formulating and implementing national policies.

The spectacle of local forces assuming responsibilities belonging properly to the central government undermined popular confidence in the dynasty and contributed to its fall. The imperial government's seeming inability to rise to the exigencies of the situation led the revolutionaries to conclude that they had to sweep the Manchus from power and assume the reins of government.

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[19]Chester Tan, The Boxer Catastrophe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), pp. 56-57.

[20]See the author's unpublished master's thesis, "The Making of the Circular Note: the United States in the Boxer Rebellion" (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1966), pp. 18-20, 24-28. The Chinese viceroys in Central and South China formed an extra-governmental organization, The Southeast Mutual Defense Alliance, and negotiated directly with the powers to prevent the partition of China and preserve their own interests.

The United States diplomatic personnel in China in the early twentieth century formed a similarly low opinion of the leadership within the imperial government. With the notable exceptions of Yuan Shih-k'ai and Tuan-fang, they considered most of China's leaders to be corrupt, poorly trained, inexperienced, incompetent, and unimaginative. But they found this condition to be as true of the revolutionaries as of the imperial authorities. Students of China have offered several explanations for China's failure to produce an adequate leadership. The reasons given range from supposed inherent defects in the prevailing philosophy of Confucius and/or the traditional Confucian institutions, to the sheer magnitude of the problems China faced and the compelling need to respond immediately, given the nature of the imperialist threat.[21]

The external threat confronting China in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was unlike anything China had experienced in its long history.[22] Former invaders had admired the Chinese civilization and often had adopted its Confucian philosophy and institutions

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[21]Michael develops the theme that dynastic decline was the fault of the Confucian imperial system. He found that the problem lay in the system of controls a ruling house had to establish in order to maintain the precarious balance of power between the state and society which produced an inefficient administrative system and a stultifying examination system, "Regionalism" pp. xxi-xliii. Other historians have agreed with Michael's opinion of the examination system but have included other factors. Wright has noted the adverse effect on initiative produced by overcrowded living conditions as well as the lack of time in which to develop leaders, pp. 53-54; Cameron emphasized the scope of China's problems, pp. 74-85.

[22]Linebarger discusses the effect the western impact had on the Chinese perception of world order, pp. 47-52.

even before invading China, as was the case with the Manchus. Those that had not were too weak to control all of China. The nations that threatened China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not similarly weak. Science and technology had given them military strength disproportionate to their numbers. More than fifty years of foreign aggression and internal rebellion had greatly weakened China both physically and psychologically and had produced at the turn of the century a veritable national emergency.

Imperialism played the major role in creating a revolutionary situation in China. It precipitated a crisis within the traditional Confucian civilization and exacerbated that which the Manchu dynasty was experiencing. Dynastic decay by itself was insufficient to produce nationalism. Historically it had invited internal rebellions and external invasions, and it is possible that Manchu decadence would have in time produced a successful anti-Manchu rebellion had it not been for the unprecedented nature of the threat presented by the external invasions which Manchu decadence had permitted. Some Chinese nationalists believed that imperialism doomed their country, their civilization, indeed, their race to extinction. They seriously questioned the ability of the ruling dynasty and the decentralized imperial system to contain the threat. Survival in the face of western imperialism demanded the reorganization of China on the principles of nationalism.

Chinese Nationalism: Ideology and Program

Twentieth-century Chinese nationalism is a complex subject because many features of classical China met the requirements of nationalism, as defined by those who have studied the phenomenon.[23] Yet, traditional China was not a modern nation-state; it was not primarily a political unit. It was a civilization distinguished by its ideographic system of writing, a dynamic system of thought known as Confucianism, and a set of social, economic, political, and diplomatic institutions and procedures that projected a unique perception of world order.[24] Traditional China possessed a cosmic and universalist world view. This was expressed in its hierarchical organization of Chinese society and of the outside world, wherein the emperor and his place of residence, China, occupied a unique position relative to that of other princes and other societies,--at the center of the earth serving as the link between heaven and earth.[25] China's geographic position and its historical experience reinforced Chinese assumptions of the superiority and centrality of China's civilization.[26] The term "barbarian," which designated all non-Chinese, and the tribute system, developed to regulate relations with barbarians in accordance with the

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[23]Boyd C. Shafer, Faces of Nationalism (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), pp. 20, 22, 267.

[24]Benjamin I. Schwartz, "The Chinese Perception of World Order, Past and Present" in The Chinese World Order, ed. by John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 276-288.

[25]Wolfgang Franke, China and the West, trans. by R. A. Wilson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 22-27.

[26]Ibid.

Chinese perception of world order, reflected Chinese ethnocentrism and complicated China's foreign relations in the nineteenth century.[27] Traditional China did not possess genuine nationalism; its outlook is perhaps best rendered by the terms "culturalism" and "transnationalism."[28]

Imperialism challenged the Chinese outlook and provoked the appearance of nationalism in China. But imperialism alone did not determine the content of Chinese nationalism. Early Chinese nationalism took its shape from the interaction between the forces of imperialism and the internal crisis. From the beginning Chinese nationalism was complex, many-faceted. Not only was it anti-imperialist; it was also anti-Manchu and anti-dynastic.

Even though Chinese nationalism began as a defensive reaction to the threat of imperialism, it was a positive ideology. China's semi-colonial status determined the highest value in the nationalist ideology: the "survival of the Chinese people with their own civilization."[29] Thus, the first premise of Chinese nationalism was the

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[27]John K. Fairbank, "A Preliminary Framework" in The Chinese World Order, pp. 1-19.

[28]These are terms advanced by Franke and Schwartz respectively and accepted by students of China, for example, John E. Schrecker in Imperialism and Nationalism, in comparing twentieth-century China with traditional China.

[29]Linebarger, pp. 61, 85.

regeneration of China the race-nation.[30] It was primarily a commitment to restoring China to its former position of hegemony in Eastern Asia by revivifying through modernization, not destroying, the traditional order.[31] Political and economic modernization would create a united, sovereign, wealthy, and strong Chinese race-nation which would take its place in the world as an equal of the other nation-states and make its own unique contribution to the advancement of civilization. All other aspects of Chinese nationalism, its anti-imperialism, anti-Manchuism, anti-dynasticism, flowed automatically from this first principle.

Only a relative few in early twentieth-century China possessed the feeling of nationalism. The young students, usually children of the gentry who in their daily living and education had come into contact with western ideas, became the spearhead of nationalism. The United States consular reports of the decade preceding the revolution suggested that the gentry class itself as well as many Chinese merchants were also becoming nationalistic. At times the American diplomatic officers even suspected the provincial officials of harboring patriotic sentiments.[32] Yet, these groups constituted only a small part of China's total population.

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[30]According to Linebarger China the race-nation always came first with Sun Yat-sen. Hao Chang in Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907, 64 Harvard East Asian Series (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), presents the leader of the nationalist reformers as concerned more with China the nation-state, with the emphasis on the state aspect, pp. 238-271.

[31]Linebarger added that this fact did not deny its revolutionary character; for, despite his conservatism Sun Yat-sen did give Confucianism some strange new twists, pp. 82-88.

[32]See below, pp. 132-135.

The educated elite of China saw in nationalism an instrument for saving China.[33] They proposed an ambitious program which they felt confident would resolve the crisis that had enveloped China. The nationalist program entailed political and economic modernization. It demanded a foreign policy reorientation. Military reforms were important items on the agenda. The program also included reform of basic social institutions such as the educational system and the family. One has only to consider the nationalist programs to determine the content of nationalism. In the end nationalism would reorient not only the Chinese civilization but also the Chinese man.

Modernization of the political system was the major concern of Chinese nationalists in this first phase of the revolution because they viewed all other reforms as dependent on a modern political order. Both reformers and revolutionaries concluded that political modernization required the creation of a modern nation-state, the centralization of power in a central government based on law or some kind of constitutional arrangement. For Chinese nationalists had attributed the strength of the western nations to their political system of representative government and the equality of the individual before the law.[34] In advocating a constitutional government for China, the nationalists

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[33]According to Shafer nationalism in the twentieth-century is first used, and consciously so, as a tool to achieve certain defined objectives, such as political modernization, but especially industrialization, pp. 11-12, 21, 273.

[34]Robert Scalapino, "Prelude to Marxism: The Chinese Student Movement in Japan, 1900-1910" in Approaches to Modern Chinese History, ed. by Albert Feuerworker, et. al. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 196-198, 206.

maintained that they were not introducing democracy into China, but, rather, were attempting to make Chinese democracy act in the interests of the race-nation instead of the individual by giving it a modern form. Sun Yat-sen's major complaint against the old order was that it suffered from an excess of democracy. He characterized the Chinese as "loose grains of sand."[35] The traditional decentralized order had given the individual much freedom, but it no longer served China's best interests in the modern world of industrialized nation-states. Western societies had devised a legal system to protect individual liberty and restrict the power of government. Although sharply curtailed, western governments still exercised more power than Confudianism had permitted the imperial government, and within a constitutionally-defined sphere western governments had achieved a terrific concentration of political power.[36]

Interest in a constitutional government increased markedly with the defeat of Russia (1904-1905) by Japan, an oriental nation which had adopted a constitutional form of government and had achieved modernization. While Chinese nationalists desired to follow the Japanese course of action, they disagreed on the form a constitutional government should take, an issue that figured prominently in the struggle for power that preceded the revolution. The reformers, led by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, vacillated on the issue but as the revolution drew

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[35]Linebarger, pp. 59-60.

[36]Ibid., pp. 37, 53. Chinese nationalists, both reformers and revolutionaries, agreed that China's political system was too decentralized.

nearer seemed to desire a constitutional monarchy patterned after that of Japan rather than England.[37] The revolutionaries under Sun Yat-sen's leadership considered a republic absolutely essential to the realization of nationalist objectives. Sun explained his position: in traditional China the people were sovereign, but the right of revolution bestowed by the Mandate of Heaven was a murderous, destructive process which opened China to foreign invasion. Some kind of electoral process would better achieve an expression of the popular will and effect an orderly transfer of power.[38]

Whether referring to the reformers or revolutionaries, the political modernization programs of the Chinese nationalists were revolutionary, although with significant differences. Neither group was hostile to Confucianism per se, but only to the imperial system, a political order which both had concluded no longer served China's needs and therefore should be abolished. The revolutionaries were primarily anti-dynastic and demanded the removal of the Manchus. In their opinion the Manchus, an alien dynasty and ethnic group if not an

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[37]According to Hao Chang, Liang was primarily concerned with "reason of state," or China's survival in an age of imperialism. "Enlightened absolutism," such as represented by Frederick the Great, seemed to him the best political form for China, but how to guarantee that the despot would govern in an enlightened manner was a problem Liang never solved. Consequently, Liang remained committed to some form of constitutional monarchism, pp. 255-258.

[38]Linebarger, pp. 171-175. Sun was more sanguine than Liang regarding popular participation in government. The republican government advocated by Sun was not to be a slavish imitation of the West. Sun maintained that China's form of representative government had to be based on Chinese democracy. He remained convinced that his Four Rights and Five Power Constitution were original contributions to political theory, Linebarger, pp. 214-227.

alien race, were a living symbol of China's subjugation by the imperialist powers and therefore intolerable. The reformers wanted to retain the Manchus but curtail their power with a constitution. The reformers considered the revolutionaries' racism as dangerous to national unity because China was after all multi-ethnic in composition.[39]

Chinese nationalists realized the need to modernize China's economy. Sun Yat-sen's desire to introduce western physical science into China constituted a departure from Confucianism, and, perhaps, differentiated the revolutionaries' economic program from that of the reformers.[40] Liang Ch'i-ch'ao pointed out that agriculture dominated the economies even of the industrial nations and pressured the central government to initiate agricultural reform. For Sun Yat-sen industrialization was a positive blessing. He actively promoted the development of science, technology, and industry because he saw here the source of the wealth and power of the western nations. In Sun's opinion China would have to industrialize if it were to become strong and be able to maintain its independence. Survival of the Chinese race depended on the creation of a strong nation-state. Industrialization became the way to realize the highest value of the nationalist ideology. These nationalists wanted a central government that would promote industrialization, establish its authority over the modern sector of the economy that had begun to develop under the western impact, and recover the

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[39]Chang, pp. 260-262.

[40]Linebarger, pp. 78-82; Feuerwerker has analyzed the economic programs of the reformers in chapter two, pp. 33-39.

Chinese domestic market. Modernization of the economy was intimately involved with the "rights recovery" movement of the decade, the anti-imperialist aspect of Chinese nationalism.

Chinese nationalism demanded a new posture in foreign affairs, the assertion of sovereign rights on every front.[41] The remarkable nature of the nationalists' foreign policy reorientation becomes apparent when one compares it with the foreign policy of the so-called "self-strengthening" movement that had dominated the second half of the nineteenth century.[42] The self-strengtheners sought to conserve Confucian China, to preserve the existing government and territory. The Chinese perception of world order exerted the dominating influence in the nineteenth century.[43] Because the self-strengtheners, represented by viceroy Li Hung-chang, did not possess a modern concept of China as a sovereign state among other sovereign states, there was no concern for the preservation and strengthening of national rights, no attempt to have China accorded equal status with the other nations. The self-strengthening policy attempted to minimize the foreign impact by controlling foreigners' activities so that they did not endanger the government and territory. In this they were quite successful until 1895. The self-strengtheners were also passivists. They attempted to avoid violence at all times, not only because war represented diplomatic

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[41]Wright, pp. 3-18.

[42]Schrecker has analyzed the foreign policy of the self-strengtheners in his second and concluding chapters, pp. 43-58, 249-259.

[43]Schwartz, p. 285.

failure but also because in its weak physical condition China could lose everything to the aggressors. Having concluded that only a policy of accomodation and diplomacy could maintain China intact, self-strengtheners had debated heatedly only whether to protect China by balancing one barbarian against another or by making an alliance with one of them.

Chinese nationalists refused to balance one barbarian against another. New China would take on all of them.[44] They determined not only to resist further foreign encroachments against Chinese territory but also to win back the territory China had lost during the nineteenth century. Even more than that, Chinese nationalists intended to recover all China's sovereign rights. They attacked all western investments in China, would recover all China's railroads, and would redeem China by paying off the national debt. Nationalism also challenged the unequal treaties and demanded that China be allowed to establish consulates abroad to protect overseas Chinese. Chinese nationalists possessed a modern concept of sovereignty.[45] They considered China an autonomous nation and viewed all foreign activity of the past half-century as a violation of Chinese sovereignty. In the early years of the twentieth century they were militantly anti-imperialist. They determined to compel the foreign nations, by force if necessary, to recognize and treat China as a sovereign state.

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[44]Wright, pp. 4-18.

[45]Schrecker, pp. 45-48; Schwartz, pp. 284-286.

Educational reform was probably the most potent force in creating the new China and the new Chinese man.[46] A modern, industrialized nation-state such as envisioned by Chinese nationalists necessitated drastic changes in the traditional education system. Representative government demanded an educated populace. A modern curriculum was essential to developing the skills on which an industrial society depended. Involvement in international affairs as sought by the nationalist foreign policy necessitated the study of foreign languages, comparative political philosophies, and so forth. The nationalists wanted to retain only those aspects of tradition that would contribute to the creation of a new China. The modern education system would also develop nationalism. Chinese nationalism required Chinese to shift their allegiances. The new Chinese would be loyal and action-oriented not to the dynasty or the family and their interests but rather to the nation-state, composed of 400 million Chinese, and its goals.

Reform Versus Revolution

No one has questioned the existence of a revolutionary situation in early twentieth-century China. Observers have pointed out, however, that a revolutionary situation does not inevitably terminate in a violent political upheaval such as occurred in China in 1911, and that often a revolution is not the best way to realize revolutionary objectives. Reform was an alternative solution to the crisis in China, a

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[46]Scalapino, pp. 201-203, 206-207, 209-210, 212; Linebarger, pp. 173-175.

most promising one according to recent studies of the Manchu reform efforts. The failure of the revolution to achieve much of a positive character has raised the question of the wisdom and necessity of the revolution and reminded us that Chinese nationalists argued violently the same issue. Whether China's salvation lay in reform or revolution was the primary question after the Boxer Rebellion. From this struggle for the power to implement the nationalist program came the revolution of 1911. Imperialism was the catalytic agent in this reaction: its presence applied constant pressure on a government attempting to stave off revolution through reform; imperialism created a sense of urgency that forced Chinese nationalists away from gradual reform toward a radical solution of China's problems.

Until the settlement of the Boxer Rebellion, the contest for the political power to reorganize China was between the revolutionary Revive China Society (Hsing Chung Hui), founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1895 and the Emperor Protection Society (Pao Huang Hui) of the constitutional monarchical reformers led by K'ang Yu-wei and his disciple, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao. Sun wrote in his autobiography that he had decided to overthrow the imperial government as early as 1885. When Li Hung-chang, governor-general of Chihli, refused to consider his reform proposals in 1894, Sun turned to revolution as a means of achieving his objective.[47] After the failure of their radical reform program in 1898, K'ang and Liang joined Sun in exile in Japan and founded their

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[47]Chien-nung Li, The Political History of China, 1849-1928, ed. and trans. by Ssu-yu Teng and Jeremy Ingalls (Princeton, Toronto, New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), p. 145.

society for the purpose of destroying the reactionary Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi and restoring Emperor Kuang Hsu to power. They expected the Emperor to reinstate their reform program and establish a constitutional monarchical government for China.

By the end of 1900 the Revive China Society had sponsored two abortive revolutionary uprisings. Revolution failed in this period for several reasons.[48] Sun's nationalism fell outside the mainstream of Chinese nationalism of this period. Chinese nationalism between the Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japanese War was primarily anti-imperialist and only secondarily anti-Manchu, while Sun's nationalism was predominantly anti-Manchu and hardly anti-imperialist at all. He hoped for assistance, at the least benevolent neutrality, from the powers during the anti-Manchu revolution. Revolution also failed because the revolutionary spirit was not sufficiently widespread and strong. Not until 1905 did Sun's nationalism coincide with the mainstream nationalism, and not until 1911 did his theory of "responsive revolution" materialize.

In the early years of the twentieth century the reform program of the constitutional monarchists exerted the dominating influence on mainland Chinese, on Chinese studying abroad, and on the overseas Chinese community on which both reformers and revolutionaries depended for financial support. A major reason for the popularity of the reform program was its radical tone. Despite the fact that he was a reformer,

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[48]Harold Z. Schiffrin, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen" in China in Revolution, discusses this theme, pp. 454, 467.

Liang's journalism greatly forwarded the revolutionary movement. Actually, Liang equivocated regarding the merits of revolution. At times he seemed to favor it, writing on one occasion "if the nation is doomed, it would be better to have a revolution with the hope that the nation may be saved from destruction."[49] Because Liang so often spoke disparagingly of the Manchu leadership, many accused him of only masquerading as a reformer. Even Liang's mentor and titular head of the reform group, K'ang Yu-wei, flirted openly with revolution in this period.[50] The similarity in their respective approaches led to attempts to unite the two groups, but K'ang rejected an alliance with the revolutionaries, citing the incompatibility of their respective objectives.[51]

From 1900 to 1905 the reformers and revolutionaries competed at the organizational level, in membership and fund-raising drives, using the entire world as their arena. In this fund-raising drive, the reformers were more successful than the revolutionaries. But, in 1905 Sun began to attract the students away from the constitutional reformers. Most influential in this realignment of student loyalties was Liang's new-found respect for foreign power and his subsequent abandonment of militant anti-imperialism.[52] His student followers therefore rearranged

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[49]Li, pp. 189-190, 206.

[50]Ernest P. Young, "The Reformer As Conspirator: Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the 1911 Revolution" in Approaches to Modern Chinese History, pp. 239-241.

[51]Joseph R. Levenson, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 60.

[52]Schiffrin, pp. 454-458.

their priorities, substituting anti-Manchuism for their anti-imperialism. But it was Sun Yat-sen, not Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, who spoke in terms of an anti-Manchu revolution. Sun assured the potential student supporters that by conducting an orderly anti-Manchu revolution they could keep the powers neutral.

At this point the competition between the reformers and the revolutionaries intensified. The differences between the two groups appeared fundamental and irreconcilable.[53] Sun was anti-Manchu, Liang was not. They disagreed on what political order would best serve China's interests, with Liang favoring the Japanese constitutional system and Sun insisting on a republic. Liang was pessimistic while Sun was optimistic regarding popular participation in government. Liang believed the Manchus capable of regeneration and felt they could serve as a vehicle for political reform; Sun did not. Liang feared foreigners would intervene in the event of a revolution; Sun expected their support. Liang favored gradual reform from the top; Sun promoted upheaval from below.

These differences between the reformers and revolutionaries were important, but in the end they did not preclude cooperation to overthrow the Manchu dynasty and establish a republic. After all, both were Chinese nationalists and therefore primarily concerned with the survival of China. In the short run, however, the contest between

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[53]Ta-ling Lee, Foundations of the Chinese Revolution, 1905-1912 (Center of Asian Studies: St. John's University Press, 1970), discusses the differences between the constitutional monarchical reformers and the revolutionaries, pp. 72-99; See also Gasster, pp. 72-81, and Schiffrin, pp. 79-80, 462-465.

the two was significant. It forced both groups to accelerate their activities and expanded the gap between what they thought was possible and what the objective reality would allow. This in turn produced the "radicalism of impotence" which Michael Gasster has found characterized the revolutionaries.[54] That "Great Leap" mentality of the revolutionaries was also a characteristic of the reformers and was perhaps their unconscious contribution to revolution.[55]

Studies of the past decade have perhaps exaggerated the significance of the differences between the revolutionaries and reformers and, conversely, underestimated the importance of the differences between the Chinese constitutional reformers and the Manchu reformers. These recent works view the Manchu officialdom as concerned with much more than the preservation of the dynasty. The picture they have drawn is that of a rejuvenated Manchu dynasty, animated by an anti-imperialist, centralizing nationalism, not only willing but also capable of formulating and implementing a positive foreign policy and domestic reform program.[56]

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[54]Gasster, p. 92.

[55]Wright, pp. 60-61.

[56]Revisionist studies have appeared during the past decade to challenge earlier, negative evaluations of the Confucian institutions and of the imperial government's performance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Michael Gasster's theme is that China's traditional institutions were suited or could be adapted to the modern world, pp. 81-90. John Schrecker has concluded in Imperialism and Nationalism that the imperial government had successfully contained Germany in Shantung Province by 1900. According to Mary C. Wright the imperial government sought not only to contain imperialism but also to recover China's lost territories, to reclaim its sovereign rights,

The United States Consular and Legation reports of the decade preceding the revolution presented quite a different picture of the imperial government, of its reform programs, and of the relationship between the Chinese and Manchu reformers. They revealed the imperial government's foreign policy, and the policies of the powers as well, to be at odds with that desired by the Chinese nationalists, both reformers and revolutionaries. The drive for concessions continued, often successfully, and foreigners insisted that the imperial government uphold the treaty system. The imperial government continued to extract money from the provinces to meet the indemnity payments. To centralize power in Peking and develop China's resources the imperial government negotiated foreign loans which increased the tax burden. Chinese peasants and gentry may have felt that China was continuing to lose ground to the imperialists, and that the imperial government was to blame. The Hukuang Loan Agreement of May, 1911, which tipped the scales toward revolution, is a good example. To proceed with its nationalization of the railroads policy, the near-bankrupt Court borrowed from the foreign banking group. This was a course of action that rising Chinese nationalism, even if expressed in terms of provincial interests, would find difficult if not impossible to tolerate.

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and to organize a modern, centralized nation-state, objectives toward which, in her opinion, it had moved with considerable success before its collapse in 1912, pp. 4-19, 24-29. Many of the revisionists have concluded that the Manchu dynasty was not too debilitated to serve China and therefore have cast around for other causes of the 1911 revolution. One revisionist, P'eng-yüan Chang, disagreed with these evaluations of the Manchu program and leadership, "The Constitutionalists," in China In Revolution, pp. 143, 154.

To Chinese the loan agreement may well have smacked of more imperialism with the central government collaborating with, not resisting, the hated foreigners.

The diplomatic despatches concerning the reform movement suggested not a two-way but a three-way struggle for power. The contest was between the reformers and revolutionaries on the one hand and on the other hand between the Manchu and Chinese reformers within the administrative system. In general the diplomats considered the Manchu reforms conservative, those advocated by the Chinese officials progressive. They pictured the two groups as engaged in a bitter struggle, particularly after the deaths in late 1908 of the Emperor and Empress Dowager, over who would dominate the reform movement. The reports expressed an awareness of the origin, nature and implications of the division within the reform group. They therefore answered the burning question of day concerning the probability of an imminent revolution in China in the affirmative. But hardly anyone was willing to accept so pessimistic a conclusion.

China at the turn of the century was in a period of transition from a traditional, pre-capitalist, agrarian civilization to a modern, capitalist, industrial society. The western impact of the nineteenth century forced modernization on China, but a once brilliant now debilitated Manchu dynasty proved unable to cope with the crises. These two forces, imperialism and internal decay, unleashed a revolutionary nationalism which precipitated a three-way struggle for power among

conservative officials, reformers, and revolutionaries. The imperialist threat resolved that contest. According to Mary C. Wright in her study of the nature of the changes that had occurred in the decade preceding the revolution, the foreign influence on Chinese politics was pervasive; it forced a reform-oriented nationalism into a radical, that is revolutionary, conclusion, but because the revolution threatened foreign interests the powers prevented it from running its full course.[57]

The United States was one of the foreign powers which felt that it had a vital stake in twentieth-century China. Events of this period therefore concerned Americans, particularly those involved in missionary and commercial activities and especially the foreign service personnel who were responsible for them. The primary objective of the United States China policy was to protect the lives and property interests of its nationals. Until 1895 this was relatively easy as the economic objectives of the United States were identical to those of the other foreign powers, with all interested chiefly in trading freely throughout China. The treaty system developed in the nineteenth century expressed that "open door" objective. But, around 1895 the foreign powers altered their objectives. Controlling and developing China's resources supplanted trade in importance. A conflict of interests developed between the other powers and the United States whose chief concern continued to be the China market and, therefore, the preservation of the nineteenth-century treaty system. To achieve that objective the United States abandoned its 'hitchhiking' policy and announced to

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[57]Wright, pp. 54-57.

a hostile world that it desired an Open Door policy in China. The Open Door Notes of 1899 sought to neutralize the forces threatening to partition China so that America, which could not take a port, would not find the door to the vast China market closed to its citizens. When the Boxer uprising of 1900 created a situation that again threatened China with partition, the United States responded with the Circular Note which committed America to seeking a means "to guarantee the territorial and administrative integrity of the Chinese Empire."

Despite its exalted rhetoric, the Circular Note had not altered the United States commitment. America did not intend to defend China against aggression. It did hope to strengthen China's imperial government so that it could uphold the treaty system, ends which would have been contradictory anywhere except in imperial China. The United States also sought to limit those activities of the other powers that threatened American interests. American methods remained those established in the nineteenth century: unilateral action whenever possible; concerted action if necessary; but no entangling alliances.

The United States policy commitments in China at the turn of the century were minimal. Yet, the Open Door Policy, like the treaty system it sought to preserve, was an anachronism shortly after its formulation, and this for at least two reasons. First, with the possible exception of Japan and Russia, the other powers did not desire to partition China after perhaps 1900 and certainly not after 1905. Economic control of China was far more practical, effective, less expensive and bothersome than would be the occupation and policing of

China that its partition would entail. Second, the Open Door policy and the treaty system on which it rested were solutions to a problem which after the Boxer uprising was rapidly disappearing. Chinese nationalism was altering the circumstances which had evoked the nineteenth-century unequal treaties. A united, strong, and sovereign China would open and close its own doors to whomever it pleased.

Evidence of Chinese nationalism was everywhere,--in the anti-foreignism of the Boxers, in the attacks on the foreign and native missionaries and Christians, in the rights recovery objectives of the nationalist foreign policy which the United States experienced first-hand in the form of the anti-American boycott, in the programs for economic, military, educational, and political reform, in the revolutionary activity of the decade. But did United States diplomats perceive this activity for what it was? How did they assess the objectives and strength of Chinese nationalism? These are factors which would play a decisive role in determining the United States response to twentieth-century China's revolutionary nationalism and in setting the tone for future Sino-American relations.

CHAPTER II

1900: THE YEAR OF THE BOXERS

The year of 1900 was indeed a "watershed",[1] not only in China's history but also in the history of Sino-American relations. The Boxer summer had as great an impact on the foreign powers as on China, particularly the United States which moved from passive to active participation, including military involvement, in Chinese politics. The uprising, which climaxed in a dramatic twelfth-hour allied military mission to Peking to rescue their besieged nationals, had revived the threat to partition China that the Open Door Notes of the preceding fall sought to prevent. Because it had publicly repudiated territorial objectives, the United States was of all the nations in China the only one in a position to act positively to resolve the crisis without arousing the fears of China and the other powers. And act it did, even though American diplomats did not fully understand the nature and meaning of the uprising.

Secretary of State John Hay and William W. Rockhill, his friend and advisor, moved cautiously during the Boxer disburbance to advance the objective of an American-defined-and-dominated balance of power in

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[1]Wright, "Introduction," p. 1.

East Asia.[2] Their attempts to influence the other powers to respect China's integrity achieved a high degree of success, however short-lived. From the crisis came the multilateral and conditional June 26 Agreement to respect the autonomy of the Yangtze Valley which the United States attempted to expand to cover the entire empire in its July Third Circular. For almost two months the United States and the other powers adhered to the limited objective of protecting the lives and property of their nationals rather than seeking territorial aggrandizement.[3] Yet, American attempts to make the Circular the basis of the Boxer peace settlement failed, and it remained a unilateral declaration that committed the United States to nothing more than seeking "a solution which may bring about permanent safety and peace to China, (and) preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity."[4] After the immediate crisis had passed and the United States withdrew its troops from Peking, American influence on the powers, admittedly never dominating, began to wane.

Nevertheless, the United States' response in 1900 was a wide departure from the passivity that had characterized its nineteenth-century China policy.[5] Its participation in the Boxer crisis marked

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[2]Tyler Dennett, John Hay: From Poetry to Politics (New York: Kennikat Press, Inc., c1933), Chapter XXV, pp. 297-307; Marilyn B. Young, The Rhetoric of Empire (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 130-131, also chapter 7, pp. 137-171.

[3]Dennett, p. 307.

[4]Hay to Herdliska, 3 July 1900, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1900 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 294. Hereafter cited as USFR.

[5]Young, p. 170.

the highpoint of American influence in early twentieth-century China.[6] Several factors led the United States to accept the leading role in resolving the crisis. The steps taken in 1899 had prepared America psychologically for a more active role in China. The force of circumstances and personalities did the rest. The exigencies of the situation in China, the international power configuration, Admiral Kempff's decision to abstain from the allied attack on the Taku forts, the able diplomacy of the American Consul General at Shanghai, John Goodnow, and the far-sighted policy of leading Chinese statesmen facilitated America's success.[7] America's readiness to involve itself coincided with the equally vital decision of leading Chinese authorities to allow it. Chinese viceroys in Central and South China had recognized an identity of interests in China's and America's aversion to the partition of China. After taking charge of China's foreign policy, they deliberately directed it toward the United States, encouraging it to play the leading role.

The Boxer uprising surprised and shocked the world with its suddenness and the heinous character of the attacks against the foreigners. For two suspense-filled months the world waited for news of the fate of the diplomats, missionaries, and their families living in Peking and the North China interior. Everyone feared that the Boxers had massacred the entire foreign community. The violent anti-foreignism that swept the northern provinces of Chihli, Shantung,

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[6]Dennett, p. 306; Young, pp. 163-164.

[7]The author's M.A. thesis, pp. 44-65.

and Shansi and threatened to engulf the entire country in the spring and summer of 1900 caught Americans, indeed all the foreigners, completely unprepared. The powers had settled, somewhat uncomfortably, into the tenuous modus vivendi that followed the threatened partition of 1898. The United States was attempting to persuade the other powers to respect China's integrity and trying to convince the Manchu government to do its part to maintain the status quo by honoring the treaties and reforming its anachronistic institutions.[8] Various missionary organizations in America were arousing the public's interest with their glowing reports of the progress in China during 1899 and predictions of more of the same for the coming years.[9] All seemed possessed by an ostrich-like unconcern for the rapidly developing Boxer movement.

In retrospect, there was little reason for such general unpreparedness, or even for the astonishment with which foreigners greeted the Boxer uprising. One has only to read the index to the United States diplomatic records, or to scan randomly the contents, to become aware of the frequency and widespread character of native attacks against foreigners. The Boxer uprising capped a decade of such incidents and differed from earlier ones only in the unparalleled destruction of property and loss of lives, both native and foreign. The important point was, however, that the Boxer uprising was not an isolated event but, rather, a part of the discontent prevalent in China at the turn

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[8]Young, pp. 138-142.

[9]Ibid.

of the century. These uprisings had their anti-dynastic aspect as well, and all were therefore evidence of the deep and pervasive unrest in China produced by the decline of its traditional institutions and the intrusion of the West into what was a self-contained civilization.[10]

Whether the United States perceived the nature of the forces operating behind the anti-foreign outbursts and grasped the intricacies of the political situation in China was crucial to the development of an effective policy. For its understanding of China and the actual handling of situations there, the State Department depended greatly on the American consular personnel. The Department established the policy guidelines, but allowed the consular personnel much latitude in implementing policy. It could hardly have done otherwise in a world not yet reduced in size by television, communications satellites, and the C5-A. Consequently, the United States at the turn of the century had policy goals but no policy toward China. Secretary Hay said as much when he defined the objectives of American diplomacy for the Minister to China, Edwin H. Conger: "We have no policy in China except to protect with energy American interests and especially American citizens and the Legation."[11] The only restrictions Hay put on the diplomats was that in protecting American interests they should "act independently . . . where practicable, and concurrently with representative of other Powers if necessary."[12] Above all, there must be no

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[10]See above, pp. 2-7, 13-14.

[11]Hay to Conger, 10 June 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 143.

[12]Hay to Conger, 18 January 1900, USFR, 1900, pp. 89-90.

alliances committing the United States to future action.[13]

Secretary Hay had therefore established a broad framework within which American diplomatic personnel could operate, leaving the actual determination of policy during the Boxer crisis to Minister Conger and Consul General John Goodnow. When evaluating America's policy toward China at this time, it is therefore necessary to look immediately toward the diplomats at the scene of the action. In the final analysis the nature and quality of America's response depended on their understanding of the situation.

To evaluate the American consular officers' response to the Boxer uprising, it is necessary to understand the nature of the movement. This is not an easy task; for the Boxer society, or I-ho Ch'uan (Boxers of Right and Harmony), had a complicated historical development. Historians have differed radically as regards its origins, nature, and objectives. Their diverse conclusions parallel the confusion and contradiction of facts conveyed in the consular reports. The debate in 1900, and thereafter, centered primarily on two issues: 1. whether the society was an authorized militia group or an illegal secret brotherhood; 2. whether it was primarily and essentially anti-Christian, anti-foreign, or anti-dynastic. These distinctions were a matter of importance on which the proper interpretation of and response to the movement depended.

Until Victor Purcell's definitive work,[14] studies of the Boxer

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[13]Hay to Conger, 8 June 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 143.

[14]Victor Purcell, The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

society generally took the position represented by either Lao Nai-hsuan or George Nye Steiger[15] and therefore reflect their biases and contradictions. A Chinese magistrate in Chihli province, Lao Nai-hsuan's pamphlet "Study on the Origin of the Boxer Sect," published in 1899, was the first such study and became the basis of most subsequent interpretations of the movement. Lao emphasized the anti-dynastic aspect of the organization, concluding that the Boxers were a heretical and rebellious sect intimately associated with the secret societies.[16] Its organization, rules, ritual, and a Taoist element that took the form of physical and spiritual exercises known as "boxing", which gave the society its name, identified the I-ho Ch'uan as a secret society.[17]

In outlining its genesis, historians have described it as a conglomeration of secret sects, including the Red Fist Society, the Eight Diagram Sect, and the Big Sword Society, which related ultimately to the heretical White Lotus Society. Founded in 1133 by the monk Mao Tzu-yuan, the White Lotus Society emerged as a distinct political organization in 1349 when it associated with the "Red Turban" Rebellion to overthrow the Mongol Yuan dynasty.[18] After that it maintained an obscure existence, practicing its magical rites in secret and making

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[15]George Nye Steiger, The Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927).

[16]Chester Tan, The Boxer Catastrophe (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 30.

[17]Tan, pp. 38-39; Purcell, pp. 162-163.

[18]Purcell, p. 148.

only sporadic appearances in the subsequent years, until it re-emerged in the late nineteenth century as the I-ho Ch'uan.

Foreign diplomats did not record the existence of the Boxer society until early 1899,[19] although it had appeared in the provinces of Shantung and Chihli in 1896 and had already come to the Court's attention by the summer of 1898.[20] In July 1898 Chang Ju-mei, then Governor of Shantung, had informed the Throne of the existence of a society whose members were practicing "boxing" in self-defense against the Christians. After further investigation, Chang had identified the organization as the secret I-ho Ch'uan (Boxer) society.[21] The missionaries were naturally the first foreigners to observe the Boxers. Perhaps the earliest recorded observation of the sect was that of the French Jesuit P. Remy Isore in a letter dated 25 October 1898.[22] On 13 January 1899 Dr. H. D. Porter, an American missionary in Shantung, wrote the Secretary of the American Board about the Boxers which he also identified as a secret society. In a letter the following day Dr. Porter linked the sect to the I-ho Ch'uan in the earliest recorded use of the term by foreigners. Minister Conger kept the State Department appraised of anti-foreign activities, and he, too, accepted

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[19]Purcell, p. 180.

[20]Tan, pp. 45, 52; Jerome Ch'en, Yuan Shih-k'ai (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 64, places the date as early as 1898.

[21]Purcell, pp. 194, 196.

[22]Steiger has investigated this issue of the foreign awareness of the Boxers, pp. 131-133.

the designation of the Boxers as a secret society. But he did not explain its meaning or consider the policy implications of this fact.[23]

To appreciate fully the characterization of the I-ho Ch'uan as a secret society, it is necessary to understand the role such societies have played in Chinese history. Secret sects were an inherent part of Chinese society and were the Chinese peasants' traditional means of direct political action. Moved by economic, political, and social disorder, the peasants prepared in secret for open rebellion to bring about a change of dynasty.[24]

Robert M. McWade was the only American consul to note the anti-dynastic character of the Boxers. This was remarkable because McWade had just commenced his duties as consul at Canton on 25 May 1900 and had not had much time to develop an understanding of the situation. Yet, when he reported that Boxer emissaries had entered the Canton district to stir up anti-foreign activity, he identified the group as a secret society and noted that both officials and private citizens feared the Boxers. For, not only were they anti-foreign; they were also revolutionary, that is, anti-dynastic.[25]

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[23]Conger to Hay, 7 December 1899, USFR, 1899, p. 77.

[24]Franz Michael has examined the role the secret societies have played in anti-dynastic rebellions, The Taiping Rebellion, pp. 12-13. As Mary C. Wright has pointed out, there are enormous gaps in our knowledge of the activities, organization, and role of the secret societies in the life of the Chinese peasant, "Introduction: The Rising Tide of Change," p. 47.

[25]McWade to Assistant Secretary of State, 26 June 1900, U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Canton. Hereafter cited as USCD-Canton.

Perhaps the other consuls assumed the anti-dynastic aspect of the movement and felt no need to direct the attention of the Department to its policy implications. Certainly the Department was, or should have been, aware of the nature of the secret societies. For, during the riots at Wuhu in 1891 Minister Charles Denby had informed it of their dual character. Attributing the riots to the secret societies, Denby noted ". . . they are uniformly hostile to foreigners [and] . . . a terror no less to the officials. . . . their original aims are political and [they] look to the overthrow of this dynasty and the putting of a Chinese on the throne. . . ."[26] That American consuls had concluded that such facts were common knowledge and that it was therefore unnecessary to reiterate them is possible but hardly probable. For the consular despatches and American policy expressed no appreciation of the anti-dynastic aspect of the society's character. With the noted exception of McWade, American diplomatic personnel in China adopted the position toward the Boxer movement that historian George Nye Steiger later developed.

Steiger's interpretation of the Boxer movement was the polar opposite of Lao's.[27] He denied its anti-dynastic character. In his opinion it was exclusively anti-foreign and supported by the Throne. Steiger based his interpretation on the meaning of the phrase "I-ho Ch'uan" which, however, he rendered "I-ho Tuan." The term 'tuan' means

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[26]Denby to Blaine, 22 May 1891, USFR, 1891, pp. 395-396.

[27]See Steiger, Chapter VII, pp. 128-146, for the material on which this discussion is based.

militia, and according to Steiger the Boxers were a volunteer militia group recruited in response to the Empress Dowager's decree of 5 November 1898 ordering the reorganization of the army on a decentralized basis. He concluded that the Boxer society was neither heretical nor revolutionary but, rather, a legitimate, loyal organ of the Manchu government. It fed on the widespread anti-foreign sentiment that Steiger attributed to foreigners' activities, particularly the obnoxious behavior of the missionaries. Stieger blamed the Boxer crisis itself directly on the policy of the powers, asserting that diplomatic pressure and military activity turned a potential anti-foreign uprising into a reality.[28]

What conclusions, then, should one reach as regards the origin, nature, and objectives of the Boxers? Actually, both studies reveal important aspects of its character. For, as Purcell has demonstrated, the movement was both anti-dynastic and anti-foreign.[29] Steiger's greatest contributions to understanding the movement were, perhaps, his conception of the role played by the powers in precipitating it and his insight that interpretations of it corresponded to the interests of specific political groups within the imperial government.

Subsequent research has confirmed the existence of violent controversy among officials over policy orientation toward the Boxers and the foreigners, a contest which reflected a power struggle between

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[28]Steiger, pp. 233-234.

[29]Purcell, pp. 17, 265-266.

the central and provincial governments, between Manchus and Chinese.[30] Conservatives favored expelling all foreigners from China by force and viewed the Boxers as a potential instrument. On the other side, moderate officials feared the consequences of Boxer fanaticism and advised the Court to suppress the society.

Placed in its proper context, the Boxer movement threatened the interests both of the foreign nations and of the Manchu dynasty. Moreover, Manchu and Chinese officials recognized the society for what it was. It played an important role in the struggle for power between the moderate and conservative factions in the central and provincial governments. While moderate officials repudiated the Boxers, the conservatives utilized the society to obtain political power by molding it into a movement to "cherish the dynasty; exterminate the foreigners."[31] Their opportunity to strike an alliance with the Boxers came in autumn of 1899. A clash between government troops and Boxers at P'ingyuan ended in a disaster for the Boxers and led the society to alter its "destroy the Ch'ing; restore the Ming" objective. Believing it to be their only chance for success, the surviving Boxers pushed the anti-dynastic White Lotus faction to the background and adopted a pro-Manchu policy. They pledged their loyalty to the government and proclaimed their sole object to be the destruction of the foreigners and Christianity. Their plot to destroy

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[30]Schrecker discusses this issue in his second chapter, "The Chinese Response," pp. 43-58.

[31]H. F. MacNair and D. F. Lach, Modern Far Eastern International Relations (2nd ed.; Toronto: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1955), p. 242.

the dynasty became a secret known only to a few principal leaders.[32]

By 1900 the Boxer movement had become primarily, if not essentially, anti-foreign. Boxer hostility to Christianity, the foreign missionaries, and their Chinese converts, was part of the general anti-foreign sentiment harbored by Chinese. This development has given the uprising, and the numerous anti-foreign riots that preceeded it, a new dimension. The Boxer uprising became an expression of and an important force in the development of Chinese nationalism. But neither the American consular personnel in China nor the diplomats in Washington regarded the Boxer uprising as an expression of nationalism.

In considering the cause of the Boxer uprising, L. S. Wilcox, the Consul at Hankow, distinguished between underlying and immediate factors: Behind the trouble was the "Chinese dislike of the foreigner, because he is a foreigner."[33] Yet, Wilcox did not interpret Chinese anti-foreignism as evidence of Chinese nationalism. For he remarked that Chinese disliked their own nationals from other provinces as much as they disliked Europeans. Wilcox noted that Chinese vented their antagonism mainly toward the missionary, particularly the Catholic, and he suggested this was because the missionaries disregarded local laws and customs and interfered in disputes involving their converts. Here, then, was the fuel to propel an anti-foreign uprising. As to

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[32]Purcell, p. 210.

[33]L. S. Wilcox to David J. Hill, 4 October 1900, U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Hankow, Hereafter cited as USCD-Hankow. The following analysis is based on this despatch.

what ignited it, Wilcox cited two agents: 1) the officials; 2) the inadequate policy of the powers. He traced official support of the Boxers to the coup d'etat of fall 1898, that had destroyed the radical reform movement, and the policy subsequently initiated by the Empress Dowager. Yet, ultimately Wilcox blamed the uprising on the "weak policy of the Legations in dealing with the Tsungli Yamen." In Wilcox's opinion the only thing Chinese understood and respected was a "club", thereby implying that a tough policy on the part of the powers could have prevented the Boxer uprising.

A fire in 1904 destroyed the American consulate at Amoy in Fukien and with it most of the consular records, making it difficult to assess Consul Anson Burlingame Johnson's understanding of the Boxer movement. Yet, on the basis of one of the remaining reports it is possible to make some, admittedly tentative, conclusions.[34] Although in this particular report Johnson did not specifically consider the Boxer disturbance but, rather, concentrated on the existence of anti-foreignism in his district, it is still possible to apply his observations to the uprising. For Johnson remarked that his conversations with other consuls had verified many of his conclusions. On the evidence presented in this report, Johnson only partially understood the situation in China, and his understanding was more superficial than that of Consul Wilcox. Johnson denied the existence of opposition among Chinese to things foreign. On the contrary, he found Chinese,

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[34]A. B. Johnson to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 August 1900, U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Amoy. Hereafter cited as USCD-Amoy. The following analysis is based on this report.

at least the gentry, anxious to open mines and build railroads, even welcoming foreign assistance. In Johnson's opinion the Chinese were not anti-foreign per se, nor even anti-Christian. He translated Chinese anti-foreignism into hatred for the missionary, for the same reasons Wilcox had cited: "It is well-known here that the ill-feeling toward the foreigners in this province is entirely confined to the missionaries. . . . As near as I have been able to ascertain this is not on account of the introduction of a new religion, so much as on account of the . . . meddling of missionaries in secular matters."[35] To improve the situation in China, Johnson prescribed opening more cities and ports to foreign trade and restricting missionary activities to the spiritual realm.

Consuls McWade, Wilcox, and Johnson all inveighed against the missionary activities with good reason.[36] As noted earlier, the Western impact had created a multi-faceted crisis within China. Perhaps the most disturbing of the western influences was the Christian ideology and the activities of the Christian missionaries who constituted the

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[35]Ibid.

[36]McWade to State Department, 31 May 1900, USCD-Canton; Wilcox to Hill, 4 October 1900, USCD-Hankow; Johnson to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 August 1900, USCD-Amoy.

greatest proportion of the foreign population in China.[37] Christianity demanded total allegiance to God; it had ruled ancestor worship idolatrous and attacked the position of the Emperor. The missionaries prohibited their Chinese converts from participating in and paying taxes to support the community festivals and ceremonies. They often interfered in disputes involving their converts, forcing the officials to favor native Christians. Missionaries distinguished themselves in numerous other ways. Besides maintaining their own customs, dress, food, and manners, they lived apart from the people in their own compounds which often occupied the best land. The missionaries performed many valuable services for the Chinese, but this did not invalidate the fact that they and Christianity also disrupted the public order. They threatened the vital family institution and the position of the officials. Officials who lost control over the taxes and public affairs lost the respect of the people and invited the censure of the Court. Non-Christian Chinese regarded their Christian neighbors as tax evaders and viewed the missionaries with suspicion. Missionary aggressiveness which utilized its governmental representatives to force open the Empire for evangelization led Chinese to suspect that the missionaries were really political agents of the

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[37]Paul A. Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 33-41, discusses this issue; Paul A. Cohen discusses the nature of the foreign missionary activities and the relationship between them and the increase in Chinese anti-foreignism at all levels after 1860. He then notes the effect that these two forces had in decreasing the authority of the imperial government, China and Christianity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1963), pp. 63-107, 127-145, 262-273.

foreign government.

While the Boxers held Minister Conger incommunicado in Peking, the responsibility for the conduct of American relations with China devolved on the Consul General at Shanghai. Given the important role played by the United States during these tense months, John Goodnow's perception of events was particularly significant. Postponing a scheduled and long overdue leave of absence, Goodnow was on duty during the months preceding and following the summer crisis and therefore had an overview of the entire movement.

With the increase in Boxer activities in the North, Goodnow began to watch the political situation in Central and South China. A report in late April contained a clipping from the NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS which he felt accurately represented the opinions of the foreign community.[38] The article predicted that a great conflagration would result from the present disturbances which it blamed on the officials. Significantly, the author had divided China into two parts, labelling one the "China of the mandarins" and the other the "China of the Chinese people." Contradicting Consul Johnson's opinion, the author found that officials hated foreigners and all things foreign. They were behind all the anti-foreign activities. On the other hand, he characterized the Chinese people as loving foreigners and all foreign things. He noted particularly that the Chinese reformers, whom he labelled "progressives," were friendly to foreigners and that an identity

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[38]Goodnow to Cridler, 28 April 1900, U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate General, Shanghai. Hereafter cited as USDC-Shanghai.

of interests existed between the two groups. Like Consul Wilcox, the author traced the present troubles to the failure of the radical reform movement of 1898 and the dethronement of Emperor Kuang Hsu. The author blamed this on the powers, whom he apparently believed omnipotent, writing, "a protest from us at the time of the coup d'etat would probably have changed the whole course of events."[39] The author also criticized the practice of holding local officials responsible for anti-foreign activities. He suggested a root-and-branch solution to China's problems,--get rid of the Manchu dynasty: "When the water in the cistern is polluted, it is not sufficient to plug a tap in this room or that: it should be cut off at the main."[40]

Consul General Goodnow presented this newspaper article to the Department as authored by an anonymous foreign resident of Hankow. Chinese reformers could easily have written it, for its viewpoint harmonized with theirs. The issue is insignificant; as Goodnow noted, regardless of its origin, the article reflected the mind of the foreign community. What was in the foreign mind was far more important. Foreigners viewed the Manchu government with contempt, but no consul openly advocated its overthrow. Yet, they were not adverse to reorganizing the government along lines beneficial to both China and the powers. Goodnow sent the Department a plan developed by the missionary Dr. Timothy Richards which he felt merited the Department's

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

consideration.[41] Richards thought that since China now lacked a central government the powers should establish a Joint Cabinet, composed of one-half foreigners and one-half Chinese, to rule China. The majority of the foreigners in China apparently believed that anti-foreignism began and ended with the ruling class.

Two weeks before the siege of the Peking Legations began, Goodnow reconfirmed the absence of anti-foreign sentiment in Kiang-su and Chekiang, noting that "the people are pro-foreign and are kind and courteous and polite in every way to foreigners."[42] The reason he gave was indicative of Goodnow's understanding, or his lack of it, regarding the origin of the Boxer troubles. Unlike Chinese in North China, the people in his area were prosperous because crops were abundant and new machines had not yet produced widespread unemployment. The implication was that northern inhabitants were not really anti-foreign either, but that foreigners were merely the scapegoats for superficial and remediable grievances.

After the Boxer crisis had passed and Goodnow had had time to reflect on matters, he wrote a lengthy report, sending a copy to Senator Cushman K. Davis, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in which he elaborated on but did not substantially modify his earlier opinions regarding the cause and nature of the uprising.[43]

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[41]Goodnow to Hay, 18 July 1900, USCD-Shanghai.

[42]Goodnow to Cridler, 8 June 1900, USCD-Shanghai. The following analysis is based on this report.

[43]Goodnow to Davis, 29 September 1900, USCD-Shanghai; Goodnow to Cridler, 7 August 1900, USCD-Shanghai. The following discussion is based on these two despatches.

A rebellion of the magnitude of the Boxer uprising rarely stemmed from a single cause, and Goodnow noted the missionary role. But he considered it minor, particularly so in the case of American missionaries. In Goodnow's opinion economic factors were chiefly responsible. He again cited the disturbing influence of new machines to which he added the methods and greed of the foreign merchants and concessions hunters. Although he spoke of the episode as a "popular and official" uprising, Goodnow never thought of the Chinese people as anything more than the tools of the ruling classes. In Goodnow's opinion that group had instigated the Boxer uprising. It was to these Court politicians that Goodnow attributed the slogan "China for the Chinese." But Goodnow appeared unimpressed with the slogan; for he labelled it a "political catchword."[44] It was many months later before he began to recognize the nationalistic implications of Chinese activities.

Minister Conger likewise failed to grasp the full meaning of the Boxer movement. Like the consuls, he also attributed the rebellion to the forces of reaction and believed that the Manchu government was sympathetic to the Boxers. "There can be no doubt," Conger wrote Hay, "that it receives its first impetus from the influential advisors of the Empress Dowager, Kang-i and Hsu T'ung, who are known to be malignantly hostile to all foreigners or foreign ideas."[45]

Most Americans failed to perceive the nature of the forces operating behind the Boxer uprising and to grasp the intricacies of

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[44]Goodnow to Davis, ibid.

[45]Conger to Hay, 8 May 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 120.

the political situation in China. The consular despatches revealed that lack of understanding, as well as an absence of unanimity among the consular personnel regarding the causes, nature, and objectives of the movement. Only Robert McWade at Canton had commented on its anti-dynastic, that is, revolutionary nature. The remaining consuls considered it exclusively anti-foreign with its primary objective the expulsion of all foreigners from China. But they disagreed on the extent and cause of the anti-foreignism, and no one regarded it as nationalistic in any sense. Consuls Wilcox, Johnson, and McWade blamed it on the missionaries. While McWade and Johnson limited it to the lower strata of society, Wilcox believed that anti-foreignism permeated all levels of society and that officials in high government positions had instigated the uprising. In Consul General Goodnow's opinion, economic factors, not the missionaries, played the major role in creating hostility toward foreigners which he believed was real only among the officials. Both Goodnow and Minister Conger concluded that leading officials had engineered the Boxer movement.

Since the State Department depended heavily on the consular personnel for much of its understanding of China and the development of policy, American policy reflected the inadequate assessment of the field personnel. The consular personnel and State Department regarded the uprising as they had earlier anti-foreign riots, as an isolated incident with clearly recognizable and remediable causes. In their despatches the consuls expressed a sense of omnipotence concerning the ability of their government to control the situation. With both the American Minister and the Consul General believing that the ruling

classes had instigated the uprising, American policy would probably reflect that attitude. Because American diplomats had misjudged the Boxer movement, the United States' response, indeed the entire foreign reaction, to the movement in its infancy actually worsened the situation.

American policy, in fact the policy of all the powers, in the early months of 1900 did indeed arise from the conviction that the ruling classes were responsible for the anti-foreign sentiment and activities and the belief that the imperial government could control the situation if it so desired. Assistant Secretary of State W. W. Rockhill, who minimized the importance of the movement, expressed this attitude most succinctly:

> I cannot believe that the "Boxer Movement" will be very longlived or cause any serious complications. The day the Chinese authorities choose to put an end to it they can easily do so--I think they have now realized that they must act, and they will.[46]

This was the same assumption that underlay American policy in the previous decade. In 1896 Minister Denby had written Secretary of State Richard Olney:

> Anti-foreign riots are not sudden local uprisings of ignorant and malicious persons as has sometimes been claimed, but all the proof shows that anti-foreign rioting, pillage, and massacre are often arranged beforehand, without much, if any, effort at concealment, and it is difficult to avoid the belief that local officials are cognizant of and at least tacitly approve of the felonious designs which are concocted within their immediate jurisdictions. . . .[47]

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[46]Quoted by Young, p. 142.

[47]Enclosure in Olney to Denby, 25 November 1896, approving Denby's draft to the Tsungli Yamen, USFR, 1896, pp. 61-64.

Denby strongly believed the central government could quell such disturbances; for, he noted the alacrity with which it responded to uprisings against its authority: "Incipient conspiracies are unearthed and instantly suppressed. . . . the utmost vigilance, forethought, and strength are shown in dealing with the offenders."[48] That the Department had reached the same conclusions was apparent in its instructions to the Legation. Acting Secretary Rockhill wrote Chargé Charles Denby, Jr.:

> It can not be expected that the uprisings of irresponsible and ignorant mobs can be definitely prevented in China any more than in any other country, but it is confidently believed that a formal and categorical recognition on the part of the Chinese Government of the residential rights of American citizens in the Empire and of their determination to hold responsible and punish local officials upon the occurrence of a riot must certainly produce a far-reaching and beneficial effect.[49]

By making the local officials responsible for the activities within their districts and by holding the imperial government strictly accountable for the actions of the local officials, the United States hoped to prevent anti-foreign riots.

Minister Conger was therefore true to the spirit, if not the procedure, of established policy when he joined the other powers on 21 January 1900 in issuing an identic note to the Tsungli Yamen protesting the Boxer violations of the treaties.[50] The United States' policy throughout the Boxer uprising was a moderate one. Diplomacy

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Rockhill to Charles Denby, Jr., 28 July 1896, USFR, 1896, pp. 57-58.

[50]See above, pp. 39-40.

overshadowed the military as the prime instrument for securing American interests, particularly in the second phase.[51] Yet, there were instances of American military pressure on the imperial government. Before the siege of the Legations, the United States partially invoked the old gunboat policy. Even though America did not take part in the allied attack on the forts at Taku, it participated in and, in fact, helped instigate, Admiral Seymour's expedition to Peking.

As the situation worsened, Conger increasingly resorted to military pressure to coerce what appeared to him to be a recalcitrant imperial government into complying with American demands to suppress the Boxers. In late January Conger suggested that the United States appear with British and German war ships along the China coast "in order to emphasize our demands and to frighten the Chinese into compliance with them."[52] By 9 March Conger felt that the situation warranted a naval demonstration by the combined powers in the North China waters.[53] In late spring Conger joined the other powers in a complete implementation of the gunboat policy which culminated in full scale hostilities between the Boxers and the foreign soldiers and led to the siege of the Legations. On 9 June what appeared as a crisis situation provoked an impulsive response from Conger and the British Minister Sir Claude MacDonald. Without consulting the other ministers, the two telegraphed Tientsin and requested that an expedition be sent to Peking immediately.

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[51]Dennett, p. 307.

[52]Conger to Hay, 29 January 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 94.

[53]Conger to Hay, 9 March 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 102.

The crisis had passed by the next day and they rescinded the order, but it was too late. Admiral Seymour had left for Peking with an international force of approximately 2,400 soldiers, 100 of which were American marines.[54]

Allied military activity against the Boxers had the opposite effect of what the powers had expected. It pushed China over the precipice into an uprising that threatened to annihilate foreigners, to destroy foreign investments in China, and to end in the partition of the Chinese Empire. The uprising was evidence that foreign assumptions regarding the political situation in China were erroneous. They had overestimated the efficacy of military measures and the capability of the imperial government to control the situation because they had underestimated the extent and force of popular antipathy toward the foreigner and anyone who appeared allied with him.

For the Chinese, allied military activity had raised the spector of the partition of China. It galvanized popular support in North China behind the Boxers and strengthened the position of the conservatives within the government. They succeeded finally in inducing the government to adopt a pro-Boxer policy.[55] Even though the Court conservatives had assumed leadership of the Boxer movement in the fall of 1899, the government had not at that time adopted a pro-Boxer policy. It had walked the tightrope between the demands of the people, who were becoming increasingly intolerant of foreign activities, and those of

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[54]Steiger, pp. 280-281; Young, p. 146.

[55]For an account of this struggle see the author's M.A. thesis, pp. 14-28.

the foreign governments, which seemed oblivious to popular sentiment.

The increased strength of the Boxers and the foreign military activity put the imperial government in a bind. Aware of the political objectives of the secret societies, it risked destruction if it ignored popular opinion. When the powers attacked the government forts at Taku on 17 June, the Court considered that they had declared war on China. The Boxer triumph over Admiral Seymour on 18 June resolved the debate within the government in favor of enlisting the Boxers against the foreigners. The Boxer victory had raised a hope that the uprising might achieve its objective. The Manchu dynasty reasoned that in supporting the Boxers it could kill two birds with one stone: it could rid the Empire of the hated foreigner; it could neutralize anti-Manchu sentiment. After prolonged and bitter agonizing, the Court endorsed the Boxers. On 22 June 1900, with the blessing of the imperial government, the Boxers began the siege and bombardment of the Peking Legations.

The political situation in China need not have degenerated into a mass uprising against foreigners. Governor Yüan Shih-k'ai had successfully suppressed the Boxers in Shantung province, and they were not particularly effective elsewhere until allied military maneuvers, following so closely on the heels of the scramble for concessions, convinced Chinese and the imperial government that the powers really intended to partition China.

The powers might not have over-reacted had they understood the political situation in China; that is, had they perceived the true nature of the Boxer society, the depth of popular hostility towards

foreigners, and the implications of the power struggle within the imperial government. For they would have realized the magnitude of the problems the imperial government faced. It could not openly suppress the Boxers as that course of action would only increase their anti-dynastic fervor.

Events of the preceding months had clearly revealed the predicament of the imperial government. It had to satisfy both the conservatives and the moderates within the government. When the government replaced Yü-hsien, the pro-Boxer governor of Shantung, with reform-minded Yüan Shih-k'ai, it pleased the powers, who had demanded it, as well as the moderate officials; but it angered the conservatives. To pacify the conservatives, the government did not degrade Yü-hsien, but instead reappointed him governor of Shansi and designated Yüan only "acting" governor. This infuriated the powers and upset the moderates.

American consular personnel had informed the Department of the conflict over policy among officials which they had dated to the radical reform movement of 1898. Yet, America, indeed all the powers, failed to apply this knowledge to the situation at hand. Conger never could decide whether the imperial government was encouraging or discouraging the Boxers. The powers therefore failed to develop a policy based on the realities of the political situation in China, and their actions served to strengthen the anti-foreign sentiment and the hand of the conservatives at Court. It was the Boxer crisis of late June that led the United States to redirect its policy toward strengthening the position of moderates within the government. The situation in China demanded it and the voluntary cooperation of moderate Chinese officials

contributed to its success.[56]

The Boxer uprising presented a two-fold threat to American interests in China. On the one hand, the Boxers themselves threatened immediately the lives and property interests of Americans. On the other hand, it jeopardized the recently established Open Door policy. For it created a chaotic situation that demanded foreign military intervention which could easily end in the partition of China which the United States opposed. Should partition result it was unlikely that the United States would share in the spoils.

With the siege of the Legations the first stage of the American involvement in the Boxer uprising ended and the second began. In late June the United States embarked on an independent course of action. It assumed the lead in promoting a united front and in maintaining a policy of concerted action by the powers during the Boxer crisis. During the crisis the United States followed two courses of action. In the North it cooperated with the other powers in military operations to rescue their respective nationals besieged in Peking. In the South it employed diplomacy as an instrument to secure American interests. America's policy led to a Sino-American rapproachement that culminated on 3 July 1900 in the Circular Note which completed America's Open Door policy and marked the zenith of American influence during the Boxer uprising.[57]

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[56]Dennett, pp. 305-306.

[57]For an account of the events leading up to the Circular Note see the author's M.A. thesis, pp. 44-65.

Whether America understood the intricacies of the Boxer movement mattered little once the uprising had reached crisis proportions. Crucial to the development of an effective policy during the siege was America's understanding of the immediate situation and its relation to the international power configuration. The key figure during this phase of the uprising was John Goodnow who for all practical purposes was the American Minister to China during the Boxer crisis. His position as Consul General at Shanghai placed him second in authority among the American consular personnel in China, and while the Boxers besieged the Legations Goodnow performed Conger's duties. The important position he occupied during the crisis offered Goodnow an opportunity to play an important role in formulating American policy. Despite his other undeniably reprehensible activities for which the Department later dismissed him,[58] Goodnow served his government well during the Boxer crisis. Goodnow's understanding of the situation that had developed in late June was vital to American policy. His grasp of the power struggle emerging at Shanghai, of the forces operating in it, and of their effect on America's position in China were of immediate relevance to the decisions he made and the course of action the United States pursued.

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[58]In 1904 Assistant Secretary of State, H. H. D. Pierce, responded to complaints against the consular service with a tour of the various posts. His investigation uncovered irregularities which led to the dishonorable discharge both of John Goodnow and of Robert McWade. Among the charges levelled against the two was their violation of America's immigration policy for personal profit. Jessie Miller has considered this issue in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "China in American Policy and Opinion, 1906-1909" (Clark University, 1940).

John Goodnow may have understood neither the crisis within the Chinese civilization nor the meaning of the Boxer uprising, but he had thoroughly grasped the nature of the danger it presented to the recently established Open Door policy concerning which he had already developed definite opinions. In fact, Goodnow's reaction to events in China stemmed primarily from his personal opinions and feelings regarding the Open Door policy. Excepting William Rockhill, Alfred Hippisley, and John Hay, a more ardent devotee of the Open Door would have been difficult to find among the diplomatic personnel. His enthusiasm for the policy certainly exceeded that of Minister Conger who had urged the United States to enter the railway and territorial concessions competition.[59] Goodnow firmly believed that the future of American trade in China depended on the maintenance of the Open Door policy.[60]

Goodnow's enthusiasm for the Open Door derived from his conviction that the China trade was vital to the well-being of America's economy and society. So convinced of this was he that he wrote a lengthy paper for the American Association of China that stands as a definitive expression of the American China market dream. In it he linked the Open Door policy and the projected Isthmian Canal to the American China trade which for Goodnow almost assumed the proportions of a panacea for all of America's ills. Noting that cotton piece

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[59]Conger to Hay, quoted by A. Whitney Griswold, The Far Eastern Policy of the United States (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, ©1938), p. 59. Hereafter cited Far Eastern Policy.

[60]Goodnow to Hill, 23 December 1899, USCD-Shanghai.

goods constituted America's most important single export and that 70 per cent came from the southern states, Goodnow speculated about the consequences of losing the China trade. Either the southern mill would cease operating or they would have to compete with the other mills for the domestic market and in the process would glut the economy. Regarding the China trade, Goodnow therefore concluded:

> It is everything. The prosperity of the cotton mill business in South Carolina depends . . . upon the China trade. . . . The coal is there--the labour is there, and I believe that in the increase of mines and manufactures in the South is the solution of the labour and racial problems which have so long vexed that section and us all. If only our tranquility at home is to be considered we must safeguard these interests. The conclusion then, is not only the 'open door' in China or as President McKinley puts it 'the maintenance of our vested interests and an equal and untrammeled right with all others in China;' but also implies the shortest and best route . . . to this essential market.[61]

Goodnow remarked that America had captured the cotton trade in North China and could keep it, provided the ports remained open and free of discrimination. But he noted that this trade constituted very little of the China trade, and he reminded the Association of "the enormous demand of the Yangtze Valley and Southern China . . . ."[62] Goodnow firmly believed America could also penetrate the British sphere of influence in the Yangtze Valley through the Open Door.

Goodnow's faith in the Open Door policy made it impossible for him to treat lightly the Russian and British maneuvers in the Yangtze Valley in mid-June which threatened to erupt into an international

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

conflict that could only lead to the partition of China.[63] His response to this crisis revealed that Goodnow understood well the international situation at the turn of the century. A Russian tea boat with approximately 150 Russian soldiers aboard had approached Hankow, but England had forced it to retreat. Goodnow requested the Navy Department to despatch two American cruisers to the Shanghai area, asserting that it would help the situation, "not make trouble."[64] At the time an unsufficient number of British ships patrolled the river, but increasing them was unthinkable. For both Chinese authorities and the other powers were jealous of what appeared to be England's claim to the Yangtze Valley. Moreover, should any one of the powers attempt to isolate the Yangtze Valley, the others would follow and claim their share of the spoils.[65] In Goodnow's opinion, only the United States with its formal disavowal of territorial objectives could act in the Yangtze Valley without creating an international crisis.

The Russian-British maneuvers in mid-June set off a chain reaction that led to the multilateral June 26 Agreement, the prelude to the Circular Note. America and China recognized in their mutual aversion to the partition of China a basis on which to cooperate to neutralize the effects of the rebellion and preserve China's integrity.

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[63]Goodnow to Hay, 24 June 1900, USCD-Shanghai.

[64]Goodnow to Hay, 17 July 1900, USCD-Shanghai.

[65]Ibid.

The Russian threat led the English consul at Hankow to propose to Viceroy Chang Chih-tung that England send warships into the interior to protect the Yangtze Valley. Chang refused, maintaining that he and Viceroy Liu K'un-yi could provide adequate protection. The episode thoroughly alarmed Chang and the moderate officials who met to consider what to do. These men had formed the Southeast Mutual Defense Alliance to protest the conservatives' pro-Boxer policy.[66] After the crisis developed, they maintained their coalition and worked to preserve the Southeast from the consequences of the Boxer disturbance.

The Southeastern Alliance had other objectives as well. It hoped to win the powers to the view that the Boxer uprising was really the work of a few criminals who had captured the Empress Dowager and Emperor. Ideally, the Chinese viceroys hoped to convince the powers to allow them to suppress the Boxers. If they failed to achieve that objective, they would attempt to confine foreign military operations to the North and to obtain a pledge from the powers to withdraw as soon as they had freed their nationals. The prime objective of the Southeastern Alliance was to preserve China's integrity. To achieve it, the members agreed they would have to stabilize relations with the powers and relieve the foreign nations' anxieties concerning the lives and property of their respective nationals in the Southeast.[67]

Members of the Southeastern Alliance concluded that cooperation with the United States offered them the best chance for

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[66]The author's M.A. thesis, pp. 20-21.

[67]Ibid., pp. 46-54.

success. America, they noted, had repudiated territorial designs and had not participated in the attacks at Taku.[68] Although personal considerations underlay Admiral Kempff's decision not to attack a government with which his nation was not at war, the act proved providential.[69] At first disapproving, Hay soon realized that Kempff's action provided the principle on which America could limit allied military operations to "police action" and hopefully prevent the partition of China.[70] He was therefore ready to cooperate when the Southern viceroys directed China's Minister to the United States, Wu Ting-fang, to assure the United States that they would protect the Yangtze Valley and to request that America therefore refrain from sending warships into the area and convince the other powers to do likewise.[71]

John Goodnow on the scene in Shanghai was also receptive to the friendly overtures of the Southeastern Alliance. His belief in the importance of the China trade and the necessity of maintaining the Open Door policy, his understanding of the international power configuration, and, finally, his fear,--fear for his own life and the lives of all foreigners in South China, predisposed Goodnow to favor an active American policy during the Boxer crisis. Only the United States, he realized, could act without creating suspicion. Goodnow

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[68]Ibid., p. 48.

[69]Young, pp. 151-152.

[70]Dennett, p. 300.

[71]The author's M.A. thesis, pp. 48-49.

understood that foreign military activity in the Yangtze Valley would unite all China against the foreigners.[72] When Russian-British hostilities worsened, he cooperated with the Southern viceroys in arranging a meeting of members of the Southeastern Alliance and the Diplomatic Corps in Shanghai. This conference produced the multilateral June 26 Agreement between China and the powers whereby the powers agreed to respect the integrity of the Yangtze Valley, conditional on the Southern viceroys' ability to protect the lives and property interests of all foreigners residing there.

Goodnow informed Hay of the agreement the same day and Hay's post facto authorization to consult with the viceroys, instead of the central government, and take measures for the protection of American interests in effect recognized Goodnow's "fait accompli."[73] Under Goodnow's direction the United States had moved beyond its original position and entered into a multilateral agreement for the preservation of the Yangtze Valley. Events in China would soon lead it to make a unilateral declaration regarding the disposition of the entire Chinese Empire.

As the situation in the North deteriorated, distrust between the foreign community and the Southern viceroys increased. The foreigners had just learned of the murder of the German minister, and they feared Boxer successes would induce the viceroys to abandon the Agreement. The viceroys feared that a prolonged crisis in the North

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[72] Ibid., p. 42.

[73] Ibid., p. 56.

would lead the foreign nations to change their mind and intervene. Russia, they noted, had already revealed its designs on Manchuria. On the pretext of protecting its nationals Russia had taken control of the customs house at Newchwang. Both sides therefore recognized the need to reaffirm the June 26 Agreement.[74]

Under the direction of Goodnow the United States took the initiative. The viceroys' response to the Agreement had convinced Goodnow of their sincerity. Consequently, on 1 July Goodnow reassured Chang and Liu that the United States would not attack the Central and Southern provinces as long as they maintained order and protected the foreigners. The other powers followed suit. Hay honored Goodnow's promise by making it official policy and by informing the other powers of America's purposes. Consequently, Goodnow could inform the viceroys that "all nations are acting together."[75] American initiative had stabilized a volatile situation in Southeastern China.

Encouraged by the policy the United States had pursued throughout the crisis to date, particularly within the last few days, the Southern viceroys attempted to achieve their ultimate objective, an extension of the Agreement to cover the entire empire, through a direct appeal to the United States. On 3 July Minister Wu notified Secretary Hay of the viceroys' desire to reach a "clear understanding" between China and the powers. That same day Goodnow forwarded a dramatic personal appeal from Liu K'un-yi urging President McKinley to accept the leading role

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[74] Ibid., pp. 57-60.

[75] Ibid., p. 62.

in the Boxer drama because China's only hope in its moment of crisis was the United States, if it were willing to abandon "selfish schemes" and make a settlement.[76] In the afternoon of 3 July Hay issued the Circular Note.

It is tempting to credit the completion of America's Open Door policy to the efforts of the Chinese viceroys but that would distort the picture. While important, their efforts were not decisive. What was decisive was America's willingness and the fact that this course of action represented the United States policy goals toward China. In a conversation with Secretary Hay on 1 July 1900 John Bassett Moore had argued for the United States adopting as its "guiding principle . . . the preservation of the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire and to endeavor to secure the express assent of the Powers to it."[77] Rockhill had wanted a statement on the integrity of the empire included in the notes of 1899, but all concerned had felt that it was premature.[78] Moreover, Secretary Hay had acted on the principle contained in the Circular at least once before its issuance. On 22 March 1900 when instructing Minister Conger to inform the imperial government of the importance of suppressing the Boxers, he also ordered him

> To impress upon it that this [American] Government, by the recent assurances which it has obtained from the various great Powers holding leased territory or areas of influence in China, concerning

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[76]Ibid., pp. 62-64.

[77]Quoted by Varg in The Making of the Myth, p. 25.

[78]Young, pp. 130-131.

> freedom of trade in said regions and the maintenance therein of China's rights of sovereignty, has obtained thereby a renewed assurance of the policy of the Treaty Powers not to interfere with the integrity of the Chinese Empire.[79]

Early July was the propitious moment for publicizing America's concern for China's integrity. The Boxer crisis gave it real meaning. In addition, there existed a chance that the crisis would induce the other powers to adopt it as a policy goal. That hope never materialized and it remained a declaration of America's policy regarding the Chinese Empire.

Throughout the Boxer crisis the United States had followed a moderate policy toward China and would continue to do so, despite the demands of China-based missionaries and the desires of some American consuls that it adopt a hard-line attitude and policy.[80] America's policy goals dictated a moderate policy. Enjoying its full treaty rights and expanding American trade and influence remained the primary United States' objectives in China. But the international power

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[79]Hay to Conger, 22 March 1900, USFR, 1900, p. 111. Emphasis mine.

[80]Conger was not alone in desiring a tough policy. Wilcox wanted such a policy, as did McWade and consul Rounseville Wildman at Hongkong who hoped his country would "take a firm stand in dealing with China." In Wildman's opinion "China . . . [was] rotten from end to end, and . . . growing worse every day . . . ." The Powers must not allow the Empress Dowager to resume control. "By international agreement the Powers are now in a position to establish a well-balanced Board of Control having for its object the reconstruction of the whole Imperial fabric of China upon a new basis, . . ." (Rounseville Wildman to David J. Hill, 4 September 1900, U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Hongkong. Hereafter cited USCD-Hongkong.)

configuration that developed after the Sino-Japanese war necessitated the addition of a new policy goal and the adoption of a new approach. The United States now favored a balance of power in East Asia in order to prevent any one power from dominating and depriving America of its treaty rights. It also had to abandon its policy of "inactive cooperation" with the other powers whose objectives now conflicted with America's and instead become actively involved in China.[81]

The United States could attain its goals only if China remained intact. The State Department realized that maintaining China's integrity depended ultimately on removing the "dangerous sources of international irritation"[82] that would lead to invervention and possibly the partition of the empire. China would have to modernize. Inducing the imperial government to undertake administrative reforms was in America's opinion the "solution" that would bring "permanent safety and peace to China, and preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity" and, incidentally, maintain China as an "open market for the commerce of the world, . . ."[83] Since achieving its objectives in China demanded working with, not against the imperial government, Hay could not allow Conger's and the other consuls' desires for revenge to dominate America's China policy.

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[81]Young, pp. 130-131, 228.

[82]A subordinate clause contained only in the Open Door Note to England, 6 September 1900, quoted by Young, p. 131.

[83]Ibid. Hay also had to consider domestic politics and because of adverse American public opinion was not free to pursue a bolder course.

That a modernized China might reject the role the powers had assigned it occurred to no one. In early spring of 1901 John Goodnow was paying more attention to the implications of the increasingly powerful public opinion developing among the middle classes.[84] By late summer of 1902 he had written: "There is no question in my mind but that in a very few years the middle class public opinion," which he attributed to the patriotism being developed by the newspapers and new methods of communications, "will be a factor with which we must all reckon as we do in other countries."[85] But in the fall of 1900 no such thoughts existed to dampen the optimism with which he and other Americans contemplated the future of the Open Door policy. In Goodnow's opinion its objectives were attainable if the United States gets a clear understanding of its interests and the situation, and keeps the leadership of the Nations in this matter, determinedly and wisely, and on the lines of its policy as manifested to the first of September . . . ."[86]

American diplomats never considered that China might be the one to obstruct a dominating American role in Chinese politics. In 1900 they considered Chinese devoid of any national spirit, utterly lacking in patriotism. This was the result of their failure to understand completely the origin, nature, and objectives of the Boxer movement. They had attributed it to reactionary officials and viewed it as

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[84]Goodnow to Cridler, 25 March 1901, USCD-Shanghai.

[85]Goodnow to H. H. D. Pierce, 1 August 1902, USCD-Shanghai.

[86]Goodnow to Senator Davis, 19 September 1900, USCD-Shanghai.

backward looking. In some respects this was correct but not entirely so, and the issue therefore requires further consideration.

Accounts of the Boxer uprising have varied greatly with regard to the problem of what motivated the Boxers. A noted Chinese-American historian, Jerome Ch'en, has accepted C. F. Remer's interpretation of the uprising as "the first popular expression of Chinese nationalism."[87] Chinese communist historians have interpreted it as part of the peoples' war against imperialism. In his study of the I'ho Ch'uan, Robert Sheeks viewed it and other spontaneous outbursts against foreigners as the "stirrings of nationalism."[88] Yet, other interpretations have argued against such an understanding.[89] A leading example is the conclusion of Marius B. Jansen that ". . . it is far more accurate to regard it as the last spastic gasp of an anachronistic xenophobia."[90]

Interpretations of Boxer anti-foreignism depend ultimately on the interpreter's concept of nationalism. Nationalism is a complex sentiment, one that escapes precise definition.[91] It is correct that

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[87]Jerome Ch'en, Yuan Shih-k'ai (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 64.

[88]Robert B. Sheeks, "A Re-examination of the I'ho Ch'uan and its Role in the Boxer Movement," vol. 1, Papers on China (Harvard University Center for East Asian Studies, 1948), p. 111.

[89]Lloyd Eastman, "The Kwantung Anti-Foreign Disturbance During the Sino-French War," vol. 13, Papers on China, 1959, p. 23; Edward J. M. Rhoads, "Nationalism And Xenophobia In Kwantung (1905-1906): The Canton Anti-American Boycott And The Lienchow Anti-Missionary Uprising," vol. 16, Papers on China, 1962, pp. 183-184.

[90]Quoted by Rhoads, p. 184.

[91]See above, pp. 15-17.

modern nationalism, defined as a collective consciousness of and loyalty to the nation-state, understood as the supreme and all-inclusive group, was absent in traditional China. The sentiment expressed by Chinese during the Boxer rebellion is perhaps best rendered by the term 'culturalism.' Yet, it is a grievous oversight to ignore the element of nationalism inherent to culturalism. And it is erroneous to regard nationalism as an exclusively western phenomenon which emerges in underdeveloped countries once they decide to modernize.[92] When Chinese attempted to reject the West, as they did in so many non-violent as well as violent ways during the nineteenth century, they did so on the basis of the value judgment that China had, indeed was, the best of all possible civilizations. The conservatives who presented themselves as leaders of the Boxer movement in the late 1890's may have lacked the concept of sovereignty essential to modern nationalism, but as John Schrecker has written ". . . the spirit and even the content of Chinese nationalism may have owed . . . much to extreme and militant culturalism . . . . For a militant commitment to Chinese culture, existing in perfection within China, needs only a subtle substitution of goals to become a fervent devotion to Chinese sovereignty."[93]

The Boxer uprising taught America, indeed all the powers, a valuable lesson. They learned, what earlier they may have suspected, that they could not partition China proper without risking severe losses in lives and property. The Boxer horrors haunted foreigners

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[92]Shafer, pp. 8-9, 13, 262, 265, 267.

[93]Schrecker, p. 57.

whenever anti-foreign activity occurred, and consequently the uprising influenced policy toward China in the subsequent years. An interesting sidelight which became important during the revolution of 1911 was the impression Yüan Shih-k'ai made on the powers. They credited him both with containing the Boxers in Shantung and with preventing them from destroying the Peking Legations. It is no exaggeration that Yüan became America's favorite Chinese. The Boxer summer had made a permanent impression on the Western mind.

The Boxer episode had an even greater impact on China. The spectacle of the allied march from Tientsin to Peking and the occupation and pillage of the imperial city horrified Chinese and awakened in them an awareness of how precarious was their continued existence. Instead of destroying their morale, however, it aroused in a sufficient number of Chinese a sense of national pride and a determination to take charge of China's destiny. In the wake of the Boxer defeat came a second revolutionary attempt at Canton, aimed at destroying the Manchu dynasty, which Sun Yat-sen had again instigated. Others, both Manchu and Chinese, rejected revolution and instead began to find merit in the idea of reforming China's traditional institutions.

CHAPTER III

THE POST-BOXER REFORM MOVEMENT: THE FIRST PHASE, 1901-1905

The allied occupation and pillage of Peking during the Boxer Summer of 1900 and the ignominious flight of China's rulers traumatized the imperial house. Rumors abounded that the Manchu dynasty had lost its Mandate of Heaven and that the foreign powers were about to partition China. From exile in Sian a chastized Empress Dowager proclaimed her conversion to reform. With this announcement the imperial government launched a twelfth-hour modernization program which it hoped would save the dynasty and China from destruction.

China's post-Boxer reform movement developed in several stages over the ten-year period and was exceedingly complex in nature. What distinguished the 1901-1905 phase of the movement from others was its rate and emphasis. In its early years the reform movement was limited in objective and phlegmatic in temperament. Until 1905 the imperial government concentrated almost exclusively on modernizing the education system, the army, and the navy, making only a slight attempt at improving the financial and administrative systems. The movement's tempo increased noticeably in 1904, but not entirely at the volition of the imperial government. At this time its objectives began expanding to include a foreign policy reorientation.

The United States Legation and Consular reports revealed the American diplomats' understanding of the nature of the imperial government's post-Boxer reform program and of the political situation in China at the time the measures were being instituted. It was during the first phase of the modernization movement that American diplomats became aware of the existence of Chinese nationalism, and their reports offered revealing insights into its complex nature. The diplomats also noted the implications of Chinese nationalism for the future of the imperial government's reform movement and the United States China policy. According to the despatches, the gentry in South China, not the imperial government, had initiated the demand for foreign policy reorientation. The diplomatic reports indicated that the imperial government was in danger of losing control of the reform movement and they offered an explanation for this turn of events. The diplomats' evaluation of the movement in these years suggested that the imperial government was applying its nineteenth-century reform formula to twentieth-century China's problems. The problems may not have changed significantly in nature, but the setting in which they existed was in the process of being altered considerably. The despatches revealed that a new kind of nationalism was challenging the traditional conservative outlook.

Skepticism greeted the Empress Dowager's reform proclamation. Recent history was responsible for that response. T'zu-hsi's antagonism toward the radical reformers and her support of the Boxers

had conditioned many to view the ruling house as unenlightened.[1] Yet, despite the ruthless suppression of the radical reformers in 1898, neither the Empress Dowager nor her so-called 'reactionary' supporters at court opposed reform. The imperial government had initiated the rejuvenation programs that had followed the Taiping Rebellion, and even though its subsequent support of the programs was lackadaisical the imperial government was sincere in its desire for reform.[2] This was true of the decade that preceded the revolution as well, as the considerable amount of reform activity on the part of the imperial government testified. The primary questions with regard to reform were how much and what kind to pursue. The answers given depended on what kind of society one desired China to be. Therefore, the chief difficulty in evaluating the imperial government's post-Boxer modernization efforts has been the problem of determining its motives and/or objectives, a problem one should approach with caution.[3]

The imperial government's primary reform goals were two: the survival of the dynasty and the survival of China. To achieve

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[1]Cameron, Reform Movement, p. 62.

[2]Mary C. Wright has dealt with this complex issue in The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

[3]There is no concensus of opinion concerning the nature of the imperial government's twentieth-century reform program. In her pioneer study Meribeth Cameron found that it was in essence an endorsement of the radical reform program of 1898. Richard C. Howard disagreed, considering it a return to the earlier 'self-strengthening' movement, the guiding principles of which Mary C. Wright illustrated in ibid., "Introduction" in "The Chinese Reform Movement of the 1890's: A Symposium," Journal of Asian Studies, XXIX, November, 1969, p. 8.

these objectives the imperial government endorsed measures which it thought would enable it to reëstablish its authority in the provinces. Only then would it be in a position to increase its revenues and resolve the financial crisis that had enveloped China after the Sino-Japanese War and that grew more serious each day. The imperial government felt that it could achieve these objectives if it modernized the education system, the army, and the navy and if it centralized control of these vital institutions in Peking.[4] These reforms, the imperial government hoped, would give the Throne the services of an efficient, creative, moral, and loyal officialdom. At any rate, these were the objectives stated by the Throne in its reform proclamation of 8 January 1901: "The things we chiefly need are a constant supply of men of talent, a sound basis of national finance, and an efficient army. . . ."[5]

The content of the imperial government's reform program in the years immediately following the Boxer uprising therefore suggested it was conservative in character, intimated that by the survival of China the imperial government meant 'traditional' China. Moreover, just as vital to understanding the nature of the movement as were the reforms the Throne initiated were those it did not consider. If with the educational and military improvement measures the imperial government succeeded in reëstablishing its authority, reform need go no farther. There need be no adventuresome administrative and

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[4]Cameron, pp. 68-69, 89-90.

[5]Quoted by Cameron, p. 58.

political experimentation, no second, third, or fourth phases of reform.

The reform edict had located the root of China's troubles in its administrative system which it described as weighted down by tradition, hamstrung by inefficiency, and clogged with corruption.[6] Then, in the traditional manner, the imperial government immediately launched a talent search for 'superior' men to formulate and implement the required policies.[7] Tests were devised to determine proficiency in western studies, and edicts liberalized the civil examinations by abolishing the eight-legged essay that had tripped so many aspiring officials. With these measures the imperial government hoped to utilize the skills of those who had received western educations. But the imperial government, it should be noted, retained the civil examinations. Not until 1904 did it decide to abolish them and even then the imperial government planned to phase out the examinations gradually. The ruling house also appointed officials with reputations as reformers. Among these was Chang Po-hsi who received the important position of President of the Board of Censors, a powerful government organ which disciplined officials and determined which memorials would reach the Throne. The appointment was calculated to win the support of both the Chinese and the foreign powers. For Chang was Chinese and known among foreigners as a man of "moderately

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[6]Cameron, pp. 57-69.

[7]Cameron is the source for details regarding the government's early twentieth-century reform efforts.

liberal ideas" and "pro-foreign" as well.[8]

Between 1901 and 1904 the imperial government established a national education system that included a university at Peking, a college in each province, a middle school in every prefecture and department, and elementary schools in every district.[9] It ordered the provincial officials to install a modern curriculum, which meant the establishment of courses of study in the political science and the history both of China and of the foreign nations and in the natural sciences. But it retained the traditional Confucian studies and ordered the public schools to venerate Confucius, measures amenable to various interpretations.

The imperial government's attempts to control the education system were in keeping with the conservative nature of its nationalism. To minimize foreign influence the imperial government ordered the dismissal of all foreign missionary members of the public school faculties.[10] Chang Po-hsi who became Chancellor of the University of Peking in 1902 and who in the opinion of Canton Consul Robert McWade was "pro-foreign with a decided leaning toward our nation and its representatives, . . ."[11] then removed the university's American president, W. A. P. Martin. The imperial government also refused to recognize the private missionary schools or to accept their graduates

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[8]McWade to Hill, 30 January 1901. USCD-Canton.

[9]Cameron, pp. 65-71.

[10]Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[11]Ibid., p. 69; McWade to Hill, 30 January 1901. USCD-Canton.

until these schools conformed to the government's national education policy, which entailed the veneration of Confucious.[12]

Military reform interested the Empress Dowager for two reasons. A modern army, loyal to the Throne, would be able to protect China from the imperialist nations and the dynasty from the Chinese revolutionary nationalists. Edicts during 1901 and 1902 ordered the modernization of the provincial armies, the liberalization of the military examinations, and the establishment of military schools. During 1902 Yüan Shih-k'ai, then Viceroy of Chihli province, proposed comprehensive schemes for military modernization and for centralizing in Peking the control of the autonomous provincial armies. For some unknown reason the Throne rejected the proposal at this time.[13] Yet, it should be noted that at least one provincial official, a Chinese, was committed to reform, was unopposed to the centralization of power, and was willing to cooperate with the ruling house to strengthen China. When in Autumn of 1904 the imperial government endorsed Yüan's proposals, it put a Manchu in charge of the program.

The Throne also attempted other much-needed reforms in this period.[14] It ordered the establishment of a police force on the Japanese model. To ease the increasingly strained relations between the Manchus and Chinese, an edict in 1902 removed the 250 year

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[12]Cameron, pp. 84-85.

[13]Ibid., pp. 89-90.

[14]Ibid., pp. 62-64.

prohibition against intermarriage between the two peoples. Another encouraged the Chinese to abolish the crippling practice of binding the feet of their female children. Attempts at economic reform and centralization included the nationalization of the telegraph and steamship companies and the establishment in 1903 of a Board of Commerce. The only attempt at administrative reform in this period was an edict on 28 February 1902 eleminating sinecures. Another edict abolishing the eunuch system was stillborn.

In 1904, quite independent of the imperial government and, one might add, to its consternation, reform acquired a new objective. Chinese in South and Central China began to demand foreign policy reform, a reorientation of China's foreign policy to recover China's sovereign rights. American diplomats reported that the gentry at Huchow were contesting the missionaries' land titles and that the officials were obstructing the foreigners' treaty right to purchase land. The gentry in Hunan were attempting to cancel the American Canton-Hankow railroad concession. In Chekiang the gentry were obstructing the American attempts to acquire a railroad concession. Foreigners construed the rights recovery activities as deliberate violations of the treaties. The movement therefore placed the imperial government in an embarrassing and difficult position with the foreign nations.

Of all the foreign nations in China the United States was probably the most genuinely interested in the success of the post-Boxer reform movement. The United States' concern for the preservation of the 'open door' in China and its experience with the Boxer uprising in 1900 had prompted a policy reorientation.[15] The new policy found the United States supporting moderate officials within the central administration and actively encouraging the imperial government to undertake a program of massive, gradual reform. America viewed reform as an instrument for securing the territorial and administrative integrity of the Chinese Empire,--or for obstructing the objectives of the other powers. Reform would strengthen China and thereby remove the sources of irritation which produced uprisings and invited the foreign intervention that always threatened to end in the partition of the empire.

That China desparately needed to reform was obvious to American consular officers reporting on the situation in China during the Boxer uprising. Consul General Rounseville Wildman wrote emotionally from Hong Kong of the "fiction" of a central governing authority in China:

> . . . After the outrages at Peking and all over Northern China, the powers can no longer delude themselves with the fiction that China is 'Governed,' in the loosest use of the word, by the so called Central Authority in Peking. China is rotten from end to end, and has been growing worse every day during my last three years on this coast. Chinese pirates boldly ply their trade up to the very wharves of Canton, and Governors and Viceroys both accept and pay tribute to them. Baron Von Kettler said a short time before his murder 'It is utterly useless either to

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[15]See above, pp. 72-73.

> expect the Chinese Government to do anything effective, or to take any action ourselves--such as bringing up guards--based on the belief that the Government can remain stable, or on the desire to assist in propping up its crumbling structure.'[16]

Consul Robert McWade at Canton detailed some of China's ills. He commented negatively on the integrity of Chinese officials:

> . . . It is confidently asserted in business circles and I have not heard of a single attempt at denial of the accuracy of the assertion--that 'they can't speak or act the truth and this characteristic should always be bourne in mind when dealing with them.'[17]

McWade placed the responsibility for the unrest following the Boxer uprising squarely on the shoulders of the local officials who, he charged, refused to deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment and who continued the 'squeeze.' McWade concluded that therefore "the merchants, manufacturers, farmers, and tradesmen generally are more than disgusted and consequently only too easy converts to the alleged propaganda of Sun Yat-sen and Kang Yu-wei."[18]

The United States consular officers responded to the imperial government's reform program in the early years of the twentieth century in diverse ways. His vision colored by his Boxer experiences, Shanghai Consul General John Goodnow viewed the imperial government's reform activity with deep suspicion. He regarded the nationalization of the Telegraph Company and of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company as a reactionary measure, an attempt to control the news

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[16]Wildman to Hill, 4 September 1900. USCD-HongKong.

[17]McWade to Hill, 5 August 1900. USCD-Canton.

[18]McWade to Hill, 8 November 1900. USCD-Canton.

entering and leaving China. Goodnow feared that in the event of another anti-foreign uprising the central government would deny the powers the use of the telegraph.[19] The Chinese merchant Sheng Hsuan-huai who had lost control of both companies due to the new policy encouraged this line of thinking. Sheng reported that the imperial government intended to punish those who had worked with the powers in 1900 and to consolidate power in Peking for another attempt to expel the barbarians.[20]

There was no evidence of paranoia in the reports of Consul McWade who instead appeared enthusiastic about reform. In 1902 he reported that educational reform in Kwantung was progressing favorably.[21] The previous year he had noted that the viceroy of the two Kwangs was reform-minded but had received no encouragement from the central government.[22] Now, however, Kwantung had a new college with a modern curriculum that included, along with the traditional studies, courses in government, history, geography, Chinese and foreign languages, elementary mathematics, physics, agriculture and mining, and physical education.[23] The following year McWade reported that the central government was apparently sincere in its attempts to reform China. For it had reversed its policy and had replaced the

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[19]Goodnow to Pierce, 14 February 1903. USCD-Shanghai.

[20]Ibid.

[21]McWade to Hill, 16 July 1902. USCD-Canton.

[22]McWade to Hill, 10 May 1901. USCD-Canton.

[23]McWade to Hill, 16 July 1902. USCD-Canton.

old and feeble Viceroy Tak Sou with the young, vigorous Shun Chan-yuen who was a native of Kwangsi, a "terror to all officials who fail to do their duty or who are guilty of 'squeezing,' and a strong advocate of 'Western' civilizing methods of education . . . and intensely patriotic."[24]

Minister Edwin Conger was pessimistic regarding the future of the imperial government's reforms. He suggested that the Chinese were asserting the superiority of their own institutions and deprecating western knowledge with reforms which assumed that a few months was sufficient time to acquire the essentials of modern science. In Conger's opinion "this cheap estimate of any knowledge which the West can give them has vitiated all the educational reforms that have been projected by the Chinese in the past."[25] Conger criticized the appointment of Chang Po-hsi to the position of Chancellor of the University of Peking because Chang's education was thoroughly Chinese and he lacked the knowledge of western science and educational methods which Conger felt his position required.[26] The dismissal of W. A. P. Martin and other foreigners on the university faculty led Conger to make a gloomy prediction regarding the educational reform program:

> . . . ; and so long as the Chinese show an entire unwillingness to trust the entire management of their schools for a time to

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[24]McWade to Loomis, 21 April 1903. USCD-Canton.

[25]Conger to Hay, 16 January 1902. USFR, 1902, p. 181.

[26]Ibid.

> capable foreign educators they will fail, as they have in the past, to make these schools anything more than a sham.[27]

In Conger's opinion American participation in China's post-Boxer reform movement was essential to its success.

E. T. Williams, Chinese Secretary to the American Legation during much of the post-Boxer reform movement, has greatly influenced interpretations of the movement. For that reason his evaluation and attitude toward the movement merit close consideration. It was Williams who may have inadvertantly given the reform movement its unwarranted 'radical' reputation. Williams wrote of the Boxer uprising:

> It failed of its purpose; but the attempt made shook the state to its foundations, and the walls of conservatism fell with a crash. Since that time there has been an unwavering determination on the part of the government to modernize all its institutions.[28]

A correct understanding of Williams' remarks depended on two considerations: 1) what he meant by the term "conservatism;" 2) what to him constituted 'modernization.'

By Chinese "conservatism" Williams meant the reactionary and anti-foreign attitude and policy of the imperial government and the Chinese people that he prevailed after the radical reform movement of 1898 and that had produced the Boxer uprising.[29] He therefore viewed the Empress Dowager, who had suppressed the reformers and who was now in power, as anti-reform. Consequently, Williams interpreted

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Williams to Rockhill, 22 December 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 26 December 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 197-198. Emphasis mine.

[29] Ibid.

any attempt at reform by T'zu-hsi and her supporters as an abandonment of conservatism. The term as employed by Williams clearly did not refer to the nature of the reform movement.

Williams' assessment of the role Japan was playing in China's reform movement revealed what he believed the 'modernization' of China's institutions entailed and what in his opinion was the objective or nature of China's post-Boxer reform movement. Williams heartily approved of the Japanese influence for practical and ideological reasons: Practically speaking, "Her schools are easily accessible and her teachers can be brought to China at small expense and engaged at much smaller salaries than Europeans or Americans."[30] Ideological factors outweighed the practical, however, and here Williams revealed his understanding of the nature of the reform movement.

> Even more important, however, is the spiritual kinship of the two nations. The Japanese understand the Chinese. They have but recently passed through the great change to which China is being subjected. . . . Their own social, political, and religious institutions are similar to those of China. They can, therefore, enter into close sympathy with the Chinese, wear Chinese dress, live upon Chinese food, dwell in Chinese houses, adapt themselves easily and heartily to the Chinese environment, and avoid giving offense to Chinese prejudices. Their thorough understanding of the old and the new will enable them to graft the modern system upon the rootstock of the ancient without destroying the latter. The transformation will thus be natural and the continuity with the past preserved. All that is of value in the ancient institutions of China will be conserved, though they will be modified to meet the requirements of modern conditions.[31]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

It would be difficult to find a more faithful rendering of the nineteenth-century conservative reform formula: "Chinese learning as the basis; Western learning for practical use."[32] Likewise, Williams revealed his understanding of the nature of the post-Boxer reform movement in its early years and his favorable disposition toward its objectives.

Considered collectively, the consular reports indicated that the imperial government failed to make substantial progress with its reform program during the initial years. Consul William Martin at Hankow suggested that its attempts to secure men of ability had failed miserably. For Martin in 1906 described China's government and officials in the same manner as had Wildman and McWade almost six years earlier:

> I regard it today as absolutely degenerate, existing only for the benefit of the official class. . . . from the highest to the lowest it is graft; that is the most important thought they all have, how much can I squeeze out of this office. The people are never considered.[33]

E. T. Williams was more charitable in his assessment of the reform programs. Unlike Martin, Williams considered the imperial government sincere in its reform efforts and concluded that its achievements were reasonable, given the monumental problems it faced.[34] The most telling indictment against the imperial government's reform efforts

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[32]Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism, p. 1.

[33]Martin to Bacon, 7 March 1906. USCD-Hankow.

[34]Williams to Rockhill, 22 December 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 26 December 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 198-199.

before 1905 appeared in the relative infrequency of the consular reports on reform, suggesting that in general the government's reform activities in this early period were unimpressive. In amount and length the consular reports on the reform movement between 1901 and 1905 were a mere trickle as compared to the veritable flood of reports that inundated the Department from 1906 until the revolution.

The consular reports offered several explanations for China's inability to reform successfully. Consuls McWade, F. D. Cheshire, S. L. Gracey and his son W. T. Gracey, and Vice Consul P. S. Heintzleman blamed the failure to achieve reform on the opposition from the officials and the people which they attributed to varying reasons. McWade reported that the silk merchants and gentry in the Canton area, where the entire production process was manual, wanted to use foreign machinery and designs but that the people "view with extreme disfavor any and all attempts to introduce machinery, labor-saving or otherwise."[35] Heintzleman described the people as "ignorant and conservative and as such opposed to reformers and foreigners alike."[36] Both Martin and S. L. Gracey revealed that the officials and the literati felt threatened by the reforms. "All these changes," wrote Gracey, "pressed at Peking, and most reluctantly accepted by the Throne, are obnoxious. They interfere with personal 'graft' and their own peculiar methods of collecting revenue,

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[35]McWade to Hill, 4 January 1901. USCD-Canton.

[36]Heintzleman to Bacon, 6 December 1905. USCD-Canton.

imposing taxes, and paying officials."[37] The literati, expectant officials whose education was in the Confucian classics and who had passed the old style examinations and were anxiously awaiting an official position, were opposing the educational reforms, reported Martin, because "lately their hopes [of an official appointment] have received a fresh eclipse for western learning is to be required in all public examinations in the future."[38]

Such reports suggested that the people and officials were reactionary in their attitudes and motivated solely by self-interest. Yet, the consuls offered other, more reasonable, explanations for their intransigence. Consul Martin also attributed popular opposition to reform to the peoples' belief that the new taxes the officials had levied to pay for reform were really just another squeeze.[39] F. D. Cheshire blamed the opposition on the inept methods the government had employed in implementing the reforms. The edicts which had ordered the abolishment of the examinations and the establishment of schools for western studies had contained no financial provisions for effecting the reforms. Consequently, the local officials had, to the horror of the people, siezed many of the local temples, razed them, and constructed western-style school buildings

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[37]Gracey to Bacon, 6 December 1905. U.S. Department of State. Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Fuchow. Hereinafter cited USCD-Fuchow.

[38]Martin to Bacon, 7 March 1906. USCD-Hankow.

[39]Ibid.

in their places.[40] Vice Consul Wilbur T. Gracey suggested that the Chinese officials in the provinces opposed army reform which would centralize power in Peking because they feared centralization would benefit the Manchus only. According to the native newspaper in Shanghai, the purpose of Tieh-liang's 1904 mission was threefold: first, to curtail the power of the provincial authorities by depriving them of their control of the revenues and the armies; secondly, that accomplished, to repress further the Chinese people; thirdly, to prepare for war with Japan which the imperial government believed favored the Chinese over the Manchus.[41]

The inept policy of the imperial government had placed the Manchu, Tieh-liang, in charge of collecting money to pay the costs of the army reforms. Had the imperial government appointed Yüan Shih-k'ai to that position, it would perhaps have neutralized Chinese opposition to the reforms. Instead, the imperial government antagonized the local and provincial officials who interpreted the reforms as an attempt to enhance the power of the Manchu dynasty at the expense of the Chinese.

The consuls agreed on the effects the reforms were having throughout the country. They were stimulating anti-dynastic and anti-foreign sentiments. W. T. Gracey regarded the opposition to

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[40]Reverend H. O. T. Burkewell to Cheshire, 3 January 1906, inclosure E in confidential, Cheshire to Bacon, 6 January 1906. USCD-Canton.

[41]Confidential, Gracey to Pierce, 7 November 1904. U.S. Department of State. Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate, Nanking. Hereinafter cited USCD-Nanking.

Tieh-liang's activities as an indication of the ". . . growing distrust between the Manchus and the subject race . . . ," a situation he considered fraught with the threat of another Boxer-like uprising.[42] For the consuls reported that the people and provincial officials were blaming the reforms and the taxes they had generated on the foreigners, and, the consular reports suggested, they were rising against the imperial government not because of its failure to reform but because of its inability to resist foreign demands for reform.[43] Samuel L. Gracey described the situation most expressively:

> They always have, and do now, resent the coming into the country of these meddlesome foreigners, who demoralize their 'old customs,' methods of doing business, administering their government Etc; all of which have hitherto worked to their satisfaction, and which they still regard as infinitely superior to anything the benighted foreigner has to suggest as a substitute.[44]

The consular reports indicated that popular opposition and official reluctance to reform in the early twentieth century stemmed from many factors, and that the absence of nationalism was not among them. Rather, it was the particular nature of Chinese nationalism in this period that mitigated against reform. The consular reports revealed the existence of a strong sense of nationalism of the strain defined by John Schrecker, that was a "militant culturalism," an

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Cheshire to Bacon, 6 January 1906. USCD-Canton; Lay to Bacon, 5 March 1906. USCD-Canton; Heintzleman to Bacon, 6 December 1905. USCD-Canton; Martin to Bacon, 7 March 1906. USCD-Hankow; Goodnow to Pierce, 14 February 1903. USCD-Shanghai.

[44] Gracey to Bacon, 7 December 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

inward-looking nationalism that found China's civilization vastly superior to all others and that therefore refused to entertain any suggestions of reform, that considered them, as S. L. Gracey wrote, ". . . an impertinance, and resented as such."[45]

But Chinese attitudes toward reform were changing because the nature of Chinese nationalism was changing. The Chinese were becoming more receptive to the idea of reform, even radical reform. According to the consular despatches, nationalism was responsible. The diplomatic reports of 1904 and thereafter revealed that Chinese nationalism was becoming more complex in character. Modern, nation-state nationalism was challenging China's traditional "culturalism." The rights recovery movement, spearheaded by the Chinese gentry class, both reflected the alteration in the nature of Chinese nationalism and further stimulated the development of modern nationalism. The consular despatches revealed that modern Chinese nationalism posed problems both for the imperial government's reform ideology and program and for the United States China policy, its assumptions and objectives.

The consular reports testified that the Chinese were becoming patriotic and that modern Chinese nationalism harbored ill-feelings toward foreign interests in China. Frederick D. Cloud, Vice Consul at Hangchow in 1904, reported that a dispute had erupted between the

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[45]Schrecker, p. 57; Gracey to Bacon, 7 December 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

Southern Methodist Mission and the local gentry.[46] The mission society had purchased a large tract of land which the gentry maintained was temple property and therefore unsaleable. They had refused to sanction the sale and were demanding that the local officials recover the land titles. The Consular Court had upheld the mission's treaty right to purchase the land, but the gentry had repudiated its promise to accept the Court's ruling. Cloud reported that the Huchow land case was having an adverse effect on the American-owned China Investment and Development Company's attempts to acquire a railroad concession in the coastal province of Chekiang. In retaliation at the Court's ruling, the gentry were effectively resisting Mr. Bash's attempt to gain railroad privileges. Cloud personally felt that since the mission had won its case it could easily afford to yield some of its extensive holdings and thereby permit the gentry to save face and serve American railroad interests as well as its own missionary objectives. Cloud initially had attributed the gentry's opposition to the mission's land holdings and to the American railroad concession to its nationalism. But by 1905 he was wondering if Japanese influence rather than patriotism was responsible. Yet, whether inspired by nationalism or not, the Huchow land controversy certainly stimulated its development.

No one doubted that nationalism was responsible for Chinese attempts to cancel foreign railroad concessions in Hunan and Kwantung.

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[46]The following consular reports tell the story of the dispute: Cloud to Conger, 16 March 1905; Cloud to Rockhill, 17 November 1905; Cloud to Loomis, 15 June 1905. USCD-Hankow; Rodgers to Bacon, 31 March 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

In Autumn of 1904 Vice Consul F. D. Cheshire reported that the gentry of Hunan were leading the merchants and people in the agitation demanding the repurchase of the American Canton-Hankow railroad concession. The Chinese desired to construct the railroad with Chinese capital to be raised not by taxation but by popular subscription.[47] Canton Consul General Julius Lay deplored the rights recovery movement because he believed it would retard China's railroad development. In Lay's opinion the people did not understand what the enterprise entailed and therefore would be unable to wait patiently the many years required before their shares would produce revenue.[48] Just as Minister Conger had felt that foreign participation was essential to the success of China's educational reform, so, too, did Lay believe that the development of China's resources required foreign participation.

Shanghai Consul General James L. Rodgers also acknowledged the existence of modern Chinese nationalism and identified it as the animating force in the rights recovery movement. Rodgers reported that the Chinese gentry in Kiangsu were discussing cancelling the British Shanghai-Nanking railroad concession and taking over the line on the ground that the "Chinese out of patriotism, cannot patronize the road if it is under the practical domination of

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[47]Cheshire to Loomis, 20 October and 26 October 1904. USCD-Canton.

[48]Lay to Bacon, 5 November 1906. USCD-Canton.

foreign interests."[49]

Chinese nationalism, at least in its new form which the rights recovery movement was expressing, was challenging the basic assumptions that underlay the United States Open Door policy. The United States expected to participate in strengthening China to withstand the dual threat of rebellion and partition. Indeed, the United States assumed that American participation was essential to the success of China's reform programs on which the entire future of the 'open door' rested.

The imperial government's reform program, despite its conservative nature, likewise challenged the assumptions and objectives of American interest groups, particularly those of the missionary educators. In March of 1904 the imperial government also threatened the interests of American financiers by imposing restrictions on foreign mining activities which Minister Conger protested, arguing that they violated Article VII of the 1903 commercial treaty between the United States and China. The article had required China to "recast its present mining regulations in such a way as, while promoting the interests of Chinese subjects and while not injuring in anyway the sovereign rights of China, will offer no impediment to the attraction of foreign capital nor place foreign capitalists at a greater disadvantage than they would be under generally accepted

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[49]Rodgers to Loomis, 17 November 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

foreign regulation."[50] Yet, the threat to foreign interests which the imperial government presented was minor compared to that of the Chinese nationalists. For the treaty system constrained the imperial government. Its refusal to honor the treaties would bring foreign intervention and all would be lost. The extra-governmental position, or non-official status, of the Chinese nationalists allowed them a much greater degree of freedom in their activities.

It was the understanding of the American diplomats that the rights recovery movement also threatened the imperial government. Vice Consul Cheshire reported that during the meetings on the Canton-Hankow railway issue the "Chinese Government was berated in no measured terms and charged with relinquishing its authority and partitioning the country without the slightest emotion of any kind."[51] Here was a direct assault on the nature and objectives of the imperial government's reform program. The rights recovery movement suggested that in the opinion of some Chinese the imperial government's reform program was too restricted in its objectives, that China's regeneration required more extensive, perhaps radical, reform measures. Chinese nationalists were demanding more of the imperial government in the area of foreign policy. The rights recovery movement challenged the imperial government's traditional diplomatic objectives and procedures. The imperial government had committed itself to working

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[50]Quoted in Minister Rockhill to Prince Ch'ing, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 24 November 1905. USFR, 1905, p. 234.

[51]Cheshire to Loomis, 26 October 1904. USCD-Canton.

within the framework of the treaty system. It had realized long ago that the treaties offered China a way to restrict the activities of the foreign nations which were too strong to repel and whose demands China therefore had to accomodate.[52] But Chinese nationalists were demanding that China take control of its own destiny and were challenging the treaty system which they considered an affront to Chinese sovereignty.[53] Somehow the imperial government would have to accomodate its reform ideology and objectives to these increasingly vocal demands and expanding objectives of Chinese nationalism.

The United States Legation and Consular reports concerning reform in China between 1901 and 1905 revealed the diplomats' understanding of the nature and objectives of the imperial government's reform program and of the conflict situation in which the reforms were being instituted. The diplomatic reports suggested that the imperial government's reform ideology and objectives were basically conservative in nature and that this approach was supported by the conservative nationalism, or "militant culturalism," of the majority of the Chinese people. But in 1904 and 1905 the diplomats perceived that an astounding change was occurring in the nature of Chinese nationalism. An inward-looking nationalism was yielding to nationalism in its modern, nation-state form. The consular despatches suggested that the Chinese gentry class which had initiated the rights recovery movement was responsible for the development of

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[52]Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism, pp. 13-14.

[53]Schrecker, pp. 46-48.

modern Chinese nationalism. Given the important position the gentry occupied as the keystone in the imperial system, its challenge to the imperial government's reform ideology and program pressaged trouble ahead for the ruling dynasty.

The consular despatches also revealed the diplomats' attitude toward reform in China. The American diplomats favored reform, in fact endorsed it with enthusiasm, as long as it was conducted on terms favorable to American interests in China. The diplomats opposed any reforms that challenged United States policy assumptions and objectives, whether attempted by the imperial government or the Chinese nationalists. The diplomatic reports suggested that the Chinese nationalists constituted the more serious threat, not only to American interests but to those of the imperial government as well. How serious a threat modern Chinese nationalism posed both for the imperial government and the United States policy in China became apparent in 1905 when the Chinese nationalists launched the boycott against the United States.

Foreign intervention in the Boxer uprising had taught the Chinese a valuable lesson. They realized the need to find a non-violent instrument for expressing their nationalism, one which, hopefully, would also keep the powers from again uniting against China. They found just such an instrument in the economic boycott applied against one nation at a time.

CHAPTER IV

CHINA CLOSES THE DOOR: THE ANTI-AMERICAN BOYCOTT, 1905-1906

In late July 1905 China instituted a boycott against America that lasted until Spring 1906, with rumors of its revival persisting into 1907. The boycott surprised the United States. For years America had glowed with pride over its virtuous China policy. The United States had congratulated itself that it was the only nation among the big powers that had refused to appropriate Chinese territory. And had not America attempted to prevent the other powers from taking undue advantage of China during the Boxer uprising? Americans also believed their missionaries and merchants to be less meddlesome, less greedy, and, therefore, less obnoxious to the Chinese than those of other nations. To such virtues America had attributed the remarkably amicable relations existing between the United States and China. Closer scrutiny would have revealed the shaky foundations on which this view rested, but distinguishing between fact and fiction did not interest America. And should America's confidence in its actions falter, there were the numerous expressions of gratitude from Chinese officials to restore it. Certainly a sense of friendship betrayed partially explained America's reaction to the boycott. But, perhaps

more to the point was America's feeling that a boycott was totally uncharacteristic of the submissive, unpatriotic Chinese.

The rising spirit of Chinese nationalism inspired the boycott. Its anti-American character derived from conditions prevailing in both China and the United States at the time. America had failed to reconcile its domestic social and economic policies with its foreign policy. Consequently, the United States China policy contained disharmonious elements. On the one hand were the interests of American merchants, manufacturers, and missionaries, as reflected in the principles and objectives of the Open Door policy. On the other side stood the demands of American labor as revealed in America's determination to exclude Chinese laborers, skilled and unskilled, from the United States and the manner in which it implemented this exclusion policy. Not only did the United States immigration policy collide with its Open Door policy; it also crashed head on with Chinese nationalism which since China's defeat by Japan in 1894 had been steadily increasing in scope and strength.

This was the situation that produced the anti-American boycott of 1905-1906 and constituted one of the most serious threats Sino-American friendship and the Open Door had yet faced. China set the stage for the drama to be enacted when, according to treaty provisions, the imperial government notified the government of the United States in Summer 1904 that China would not renew its treaty with America until the latter modified its immigration policy. The United States provided the issue when Congress refused to meet these demands of Chinese nationalism. For Chinese the boycott was primarily a weapon

with which they hoped to coerce the United States to amend its discriminatory exclusion policy.[1] Yet, the consular despatches suggested that the boycotters had other important objectives. For Chinese merchants there was foremost the desire for profit. Chinese nationalists viewed the boycott primarily as an instrument for developing Chinese nationalism.[2]

Once the boycott began the State Department's immediate problem was determining a course of action compatible with the objectives of America's China policy. As in 1900, the Department depended greatly on its diplomatic personnel in China for its understanding of the situation. How the foreign service personnel assessed the movement would affect that great variable in foreign policy,--the methods of implementation.

As during the Boxer uprising, consular opinions and recommendations regarding the boycott movement varied. In general, consuls with less experience and knowledge of Chinese affairs were more alarmist in their reports and favored a more militant policy than the seasoned diplomatic personnel. But Minister William W. Rockhill's opinions usually prevailed, and the United States policy during the incident was a moderate one. Admittedly, the Department at times appeared ready to lapse into the old gunboat policy, and

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[1]Minister Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 6 July 1905. USFR, p. 206.

[2]The "nationalizing of public opinion" is an indispensable element of modernity and this political goal was the primary objective of the boycotters according to Akira Iriye, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The Case of Late Ch'ing China," in Approaches to Modern Chinese History, pp. 218, 223-224.

there were instances of military pressure on Chinese officials, particularly after the Lienchow Massacre of November, 1905, and the riot in the International City of Shanghai the following December. Nevertheless, diplomacy overshadowed the military as the United States worked to resolve this unprecedented crisis in Sino-American relations.

Knowledge of the position the boycott has occupied in Chinese history will facilitate understanding the problems America faced and aid in evaluating its response to the anti-American boycott.[3] A product of the Confucian philosophy on which traditional China's civilization rested, the boycott served two purposes: 1) it was a time-honored weapon of the Chinese people for resisting official oppression; 2) it was also the most powerful instrument groups such as the family and guilds possessed for enforcing the group solidarity on which depended the success of their undertakings. Boycotters sought to attain policy goals by inflicting economic rather than physical injury. A boycott usually took the form of a local or general strike, or in the case of an individual, ostracization until he conformed to group expectations.

Such passive aggression when undertaken by the Chinese peasants for the purpose of forcing a change in government policy was serious business. It was an indication that officials had failed to meet the

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[3]The following discussion is based on C. F. Remer's and W. Palmer's pioneer work, A Study of Chinese Boycotts (Baltimore, 1933), pp. 1-21. Hereinafter cited Chinese Boycotts.

responsibilities imposed on their position by Confucianism, and officials recognized it as such. Attempts to suppress a boycott through violent means constituted evidence of the justice of the cause and served to strengthen the sense of righteousness that animated the movement. Consequently, astute officials ignored a boycott while they moved as unobtrusively as possible to remove its cause, lest accumulated grievances spark a rebellion and lead to the loss of the Mandate of Heaven.

Certain features of Chinese boycotts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries distinguished them from their prototypes. As before, the boycott was an instrument belonging to the people, not the government; but nineteenth- and twentieth-century Chinese aimed it at a new target,--the foreigner. Yet, even an anti-foreign boycott served notice that the government was failing the people, and a boycott could therefore easily assume an anti-dynastic character. Nineteenth-century anti-foreign boycotts were local in nature, usually directed by Chinese merchants against objectionable practices of foreign merchants in a treaty port. In the twentieth century the boycott greatly expanded in nature and scope: it assumed an international character, that is, transcended not only local but also national boundaries; it now challenged the policy and practices not of a select group but of an entire nation; its objectives were national rather than local in character; therefore, it elicited the support not just of the Chinese merchants, but also of the gentry, literati, students, peasants, overseas Chinese communities, and, some suspected, even of the imperial government.

The boycott against America was the first time Chinese utilized that particular form of non-violent coercion as a vehicle for expressing their nationalism and as an instrument for achieving national objectives. The United States policy toward Chinese entering and residing in America had offended China's infant nationalism and was therefore primarily responsible for the boycott. A brief review of the United States immigration policy will reveal the nature of the practices to which the Chinese objected and provide the backdrop against which the boycott occurred.

Chinese had immigrated to the United States on a large scale after the discovery of gold in 1848, settling mainly on the Pacific coast. The local inhabitants initially welcomed and praised them for their industry and frugality. But friendliness yielded to hostility under the competitive force of the Irish immigration and the rapid increase of the Chinese population. Local practices and legislation began to discriminate against Chinese immigrants, with California actually prohibiting their entrance in 1858. The United States Supreme Court ruled such legislation unconstitutional, claiming that immigration regulation belonged to the realm of foreign commerce and was, therefore, the responsibility of the federal government.

The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 established federal policy on the Chinese immigration issue. Post-Civil War, industrializing America needed laborers, particularly in railroad construction. To encourage Chinese workers to migrate to America the federal government negotiated a treaty with China that permitted unrestricted Chinese immigration.

Opposition to this businessman's policy organized quickly. In the Immigration Treaty of 1880 China reluctantly recognized the United States right to regulate the immigration of Chinese laborers. Still, the treaty extended the most-favored-nation rights and privileges to the non-laboring classes of Chinese.

During the ensuing two decades America's exclusion policy took shape. The Restriction Act of 1882 barred skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers for ten years. The Scott Act of 1888 inhibited the return to the United States of Chinese travelling abroad, and the Geary Law of 1892 required the registration of all Chinese living in America. The Treaty of 1894 with China summarized the exclusion policy: it barred skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers for a ten year period but gave the resident laborers the right to travel across the United States; it required all resident Chinese laborers to register within one year or face deportation; it limited Chinese immigration and visitors to America to merchants, travellers, students, teachers, and government officials.

By 1904 the United States had completely repudiated the Burlingame policy. The Law of 1902 reënacted previous exclusion legislation without term and extended the exclusion laws to United States island territories, where existing treaty obligations permitted. In 1904 the imperial government of China, which had consistently protested this discriminatory immigration policy, notified the United States government that China would not renew the Treaty of 1894 unless the United States modified its policy. Congress responded with the Act of 1904 which amended the Law of 1902 by removing the reference

to treaty obligations. With the term laborer broadly defined, excluding Chinese from the United States had become by 1904 a part of America's China policy.

Chinese objected not only to the provisions of the laws but also to the manner in which the immigration authorities enforced them. In fact, as George E. Anderson, the Consul at Amoy in Fukien Province, observed, ". . . there is less resentment against the restrictions of our emigration laws than there is for the treatment accorded Chinese in enforcing such laws at the time of entrance and after such Chinese have properly been entered in American territory. . . ."[4] The burden of proving membership in the exempted classes fell on the Chinese, and he stood trial at both the ports of departure and entry where his fate often rested on the authorities' arbitrary interpretations of the immigration laws. Immigration officials separated Chinese from the other nationals entering the United States and herded them into filthy sheds where they endured humiliating physical examinations and suffered various other indignities. Even the exempted classes experienced such treatment. After being treated so shabbily, several Chinese merchants invited to participate in the 1904 World's Fair at St. Louis angrily refused and returned to China. Resident

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[4]Anderson to the Department of State, "Memorandum on Chinese Exclusion Legislation," 10 October 1905. USCD-Amoy. Hereinafter cited "Memorandum."

Chinese suffered other abuses, one of the most infamous occurring in Boston in October, 1902.[5]

The extension of the exclusion laws to the United States island territories was another sore spot with the Chinese. The Laws of 1902 and 1904 particularly angered the inhabitants of South China and the coastal cities who had found Hawaii and the Philippines both attractive and convenient lands of opportunity. "The feeling in Amoy over the exclusion treaty situation is exceedingly bitter. . . ," noted Consul Anderson. "The commercial relations between Amoy and the Philippines have always been very close and Chinese merchants going to Manila have had great trouble, in many cases being treated outrageously."[6]

Corruption within the foreign service complicated administering the immigration laws. American consular personnel issued the certificates which permitted Chinese to embark for America. Occasionally, as in the cases of Consuls General John Goodnow at Shanghai and Robert M. McWade at Canton, the consular officers issued certificates to non-exempt Chinese for substantial fees which they pocketed.[7] The inadequate salaries paid the consular personnel may have explained their actions, but, as Samuel Gracey, the American

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[5]Federal officers looking for Chinese illegally residing in the United States raided the Chinese section of Boston, arrested and detained overnight under deplorable conditions approximately 200 Chinese. Jessie A. Miller, "China in American Policy and Opinion, 1906-1909," pp. 44-45.

[6]Anderson to the Department of State, 25 July 1905. USCD-Amoy.

[7]See above, p. 63.

Baptist missionary who served as Consul at Fuchow, wrote, it did not condone their behavior.[8] This illicit activity certainly contributed to the ill-feeling and tension existing between the United States and China. Many Chinese wasted their life savings on fraudulent certificates in order to come to America only to be jailed upon their arrival and eventually returned, bankrupt, to China.

Energized by the activities of both the reformers and revolutionaries, twentieth-century China was becoming increasingly intolerant of anything that ignored its interests and offended its sensibilities. The imperial government had on many occasions issued formal protests against the United States immigration policy which had singled out Chinese for discriminatory treatment. Chinese nationalist writers warned that China would strike back one day.

Then, on 10 May 1905 a large group of Shanghai merchants met to consider the feasibility of a boycott against America to protest its immigration policy. They suggested a total boycott: it would include American manufactures, American transport vessels, American owned or operated schools; Chinese would also refuse to work for any American firm, business or government, as well as American families. The Shanghai merchants approved the boycott proposal but postponed its inception to 20 July 1905, perhaps to allow the United States

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[8]Gracey to H. H. D. Pierce, confidential, 4 November 1904. USCD-Fuchow.

sufficient time to meet China's demands for a modification of America's immigration policy.[9] The merchant guilds of Canton, Peking, Fukien, and Soochow endorsed the actions of the Shanghai merchants as did Chinese students and overseas Chinese communities, particularly those in America.

American commercial interests responded immediately to the boycott threat with letters and petitions to the State Department pleading for an amendment of the United States immigration policy that would satisfy Chinese demands.[10] Although the press initially treated the boycott proposal lightly, it considered the Chinese actions justified and even recognized the incompatibility between the United States Open Door policy and its immigration policy.[11] The executive branch of the government hurriedly investigated the issue and found merit in China's position. President Theodore Roosevelt used Secretary of War William H. Taft as an instrument for revealing the executive's position which the President hoped Congress would translate into federal policy. In a speech on 15 June 1905 Taft supported the exclusion of all Chinese labor but endorsed a guarantee of the most-favored-nation rights and privileges to all the exempt classes and resident Chinese. President Roosevelt intervened personally, ordering immigration officials to treat Chinese entering America on the same basis as other foreigners, except in cases of

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[9]Miller, p. 51.

[10]Miller, pp. 53-57.

[11]Miller, pp. 57-58.

obvious fraud, while the State Department moved to reform the consular service.

Obviously, America in 1905 was more aware of and responsive to Chinese nationalism than it had been five years earlier. But, then, Chinese nationalism had taken giant strides forward after the Boxer Rebellion. Consular reports in those intervening years painted a picture of a turbulent, changing China. Rebellious uprisings existed at all times in some part of the empire. There were also the tactics of passive aggression of which the Chinese were masters. Consuls wrote despairingly of the subtle ways in which Chinese obstructed the objectives of American, indeed all foreign, merchants and missionaries.[12] While he was Consul General at Shanghai, John Goodnow had called the Department's attention to the developing patriotism which he attributed largely to the growth of newspapers and the new methods of communication between the various parts of the Empire.[13] William W. Rockhill, the new American Minister to China, concurred with Goodnow, informing President Roosevelt:

> There is now coming into existence in China a public opinion and a native press; both crude and misinformed, but nevertheless it is a public opinion and the Government knows it and recognizes

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[12]A favorite device of the authorities was to change local officials on the eve of settling an issue which necessitated a new beginning. In addition, people began refusing to sell land, while officials challenged the legality of foreign-held land titles. See above,

[13]Goodnow to Cridler, 25 March 1901; Goodnow to H. H. D. Pierce, 1 August 1902. USCD-Shanghai.

> that it must be counted with. This public opinion and press are at least developing a national spirit in China.[14]

Given the position Rockhill occupied in rationalizing and formulating the Open Door policy and his conception of the role China must play in maintaining it, the American Minister probably welcomed the advent of patriotism in China.[15] Yet, approving the development of Chinese nationalism and acquiescing in its application against American interests were two different matters. Thomas Sammons, the United States Consul General at Newchwang, expressed the dilemma:

> Generally speaking a strong China is advocated but as much can not be reported as reflecting a unanimous foreign public opinion when it is a question of having it 'too strong.' 'A strong China, yes; but not too strong', is the composite verdict.[16]

Two facts complicated the issue for America. One was its image of itself as China's best friend and ally in the competition among the powers to control China. It had led the United States to encourage China to reform which in turn stimulated Chinese nationalism. The second problem was the United States' ethnocentric immigration policy which affronted emerging Chinese nationalism. The United States' main problem in formulating policy was how to encourage the Chinese nationalism that would remove the European threat, however erroneously

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[14]Rockhill to President Roosevelt, 7 July 1905. Roosevelt Papers. Quoted in Miller, p. 15.

[15]See above, pp. 71-73.

[16]Thomas Sammons, "Regeneration and Reorganization in China," Sammons to Colonel John A. Sleicher, editor of Leslies Weekly, via Francis B. Loomis, 21 September 1905. U.S. Department of State, Consular Despatches, U.S. Consulate General, Newchwang. Hereinafter cited USCD-Newchwang.

conceived, and still keep that nationalism friendly to American interests.

The development of an effective policy would depend on the State Department's assessment of the situation in China. Yet, it was the diplomatic personnel in the field who educated the Department in things Chinese. Understanding and evaluating the United States China policy during the anti-American boycott requires, therefore, a consideration of consular opinions regarding the movement. What did the consuls perceive to be the boycott's driving force? What role did they ascribe to the imperial government? What role to the provincial officials? Who supported the movement, and how widespread was that support? In the consuls' opinion, what was the nature of the threat the boycott posed to American interests? Answers given to these and related questions influenced the United States policy toward China throughout 1905 and 1906.

The consuls realized that America's immigration policy was a significant cause of China's anti-American activities. Those who expressed an opinion on the subject were sympathetic to the Chinese viewpoint and, therefore, favored modifying the policy. Consul Samuel L. Gracey confessed:

> . . . I do not share the opinion of many of my nationals, that we would be over run with Chinese laborers if all restrictions were removed. The Chinaman does not like to go far away from the home of his ancestors--He loves his home and his home festivals, religious services, his ancestral worship, and regards it as a great calamity to be buried, . . . remote from his relatives, who would be prevented from offering sacrifices at his grave, upon which his future happiness so greatly depends. I am of the impression that the Artizan class might be . . . admitted. After a residence of nearly nine years among this

> people, I could say very much in their praise, and in favor of their having an equal chance to the advantages, and privileges of our civilization in America. If house servants could be admitted, it would go far toward solving one of the most perplexing domestic questions in our home life. They make the best domestic servants to be found on earth.[17]

Although Chinese would probably have chafed at Gracey's chauvinism and condescendence, they might also have recognized the generous spirit that underlaid his opinions. Consul Anderson's thinking paralleled that of Gracey:

> . . . I do not believe that the removal of all restrictions as to Chinese immigration . . . would result in the flood of coolies generally anticipated. Only the Chinese of the Amoy and Canton districts with a few Foochow Chinese are disposed to emigrate. The northern district Chinese would come to the United States only under exceptional circumstances if at all.[18]

Consequently, in his memorandum to the Department George Anderson had recommended new legislation and a change in the methods of examination and certification of Chinese seeking to enter America.

The existence of contradictory facts made it difficult for the consular personnel to determine who or what group was actually responsible for the boycott. Minister Rockhill scotched reports that the Japanese government was encouraging the anti-American movement: "The conduct of the Japanese Government has been not only friendly throughout, but their foreign office has done all in its power to arrest the movement and control the Japanese controlled papers published in China."[19] The most absurd account of the boycott's

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[17]Gracey to H. H. D. Pierce, 24 March 1903. USCD-Fuchow.

[18]Anderson, "Memorandum."

[19]Rockhill to Root, 17 August 1905. USFR, pp. 212-216.

origin came from an American engaged in business in Tientsin and Shanghai, J. H. Brown. Brown charged that the boycott had originated with former Consul General John Goodnow who sought revenge for his dishonorable discharge from the consular service.[20] Far more serious was the explanation given by F. D. Cheshire, Consul General-at-large, whom the Department had authorized in November, 1905, to investigate the boycott movement at Canton. Cheshire's investigation revealed that the movement had perhaps originated with Chinese in San Francisco under the inspiration and direct guidance of the Chinese Minister to the United States. Apparently the minister felt beleaguered; pressured by both the imperial government and Chinese nationalists to perform, he perhaps hoped that a boycott threat would enhance his bargaining position with the obdurate American Congress.[22] Cheshire's information suggesting the imperial government's complicity in the boycott movement would certainly influence the Department's response to the incident.

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[20]Brown made his accusation against Goodnow in August, 1905, and Rodgers became interested when the Washington Post printed Brown's story and Senator Fuller, Oregon, gained Brown an interview with President Roosevelt. Because the issue threatened to assume outlandish proportions and perhaps distort the meaning of the boycott movement, Rodgers felt it necessary to set the record straight. In Rodgers' opinion, Brown was the vindictive one. Brown hated Goodnow because the latter had closed the "Alhambra," a house of prostitution which Brown owned. Rodgers to Robert Bacon, 6 January 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[21]Telegram from Secretary Root to F. D. Cheshire, 10 November 1905. USCD-Canton.

[22]Confidential despatch from F. D. Cheshire to Bacon, 6 January 1906. USCD-Canton.

Actually, Cheshire's findings corroborated the Department's suspicions regarding the role of the imperial government. During the agitation stage of the movement Minister Rockhill reported that his negotiations with Prince Ch'ing, head of the Foreign Office, ". . . tends to strengthen my belief that the movement was with official approval, if not actually at official suggestion."[23] On 3 June Prince Ch'ing had verbally promised Rockhill to stop the boycott agitation. Because it continued, Rockhill wrote the Prince a note which went unanswered for a week. The American Minister's conclusion came after Prince Ch'ing's reply to his second note:

> My board finds upon investigation, that this movement has not been inaugurated without some reason, for the restrictions against Chinese entering America are too strong and American exclusion laws are extremely inconvenient to the Chinese. . . . but if the restrictions can be lightened by your Government and a treaty drawn up in a friendly manner then this agitation will of its own accord die out.[24]

While the episode did not prove the imperial government was responsible for initiating the movement, it left the Department and Minister Rockhill suspicious of its role and dubious of its intentions to squelch it.

James L. Rodgers, Consul General at Shanghai where the boycott began, had also informed the Department of reports that the boycott had originated in the United States. But Rodgers cited the Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco which stood to profit by

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[23]Rockhill to Root, 6 July 1905. USFR, p. 206.

[24]Prince Ch'ing to Rockhill, 4 July 1905, inclosure 3 in ibid.

sponsoring a trade in Chinese coolie labor.[25] Rodgers also noted other opinions concerning the boycott's origin. Some native Chinese had suggested a power struggle within the imperial court, reminiscent of the Boxer days, with the reactionary faction responsible for the boycott movement.[26] Also credible to Rodgers was the idea that Chinese reformers under the leadership of K'ang Yu-wei had sponsored the movement with the objective of arousing anti-dynastic sentiment and thereby stimulating demands for reform.[27]

The consular personnel never resolved the issue of the origin of the boycott. Yet, whether the consuls felt that it had originated abroad or was an indigenous movement, those at places where the boycott was strongest ascribed the leading role in kicking it off that summer to the Chinese merchants. Indeed, merchant participation, they perceived, was essential to the success of the boycott. Julius G. Lay, the Consul General at Canton where the boycott lasted the longest, found the Canton Chamber of Commerce behind it.[28] Dr. S. K. Lupton, Vice Consul-in-charge at Amoy from 19 August 1905 to 22 January 1906, wrote Minister Rockhill that the concensus of opinion in his district was that the local Chinese Chamber of Commerce was behind the entire

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[25]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[26]Ibid. Consul Gracey suggested the same idea. S. L. Gracey to Loomis, 18 August 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[27]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[28]Lay to Loomis, 26 May 1905. USCD-Canton. Lay had come from a post in Barcelona, Spain, and took over the Canton Consulate General office on 14 February 1905 to direct the reform of the consular service at that port.

movement. Lupton also implicated the imperial government, noting that the group had the support of the Secretary of the Board of Commerce, Wong Ching Muh.[29] From Consul General Rodgers came the most revealing reports concerning the Chinese merchants' role in the boycott. Rodgers' despatches also offered valuable insights into the nature and strength of Chinese nationalism in the early twentieth century.

Rodgers reported that the merchants who met at Shanghai in early May of 1905 viewed the boycott proposal with suspicion. They considered it detrimental to their economic interests and therefore initially refused to endorse it. To enlist merchant participation it was necessary to prove that they would profit by a boycott against America at that time. A few Chinese piece-goods merchants, excited by the economic potential of a boycott, took charge and called in economists who apparently proved the proposition to the satisfaction of a majority of the merchants.[30]

Merchant participation in the anti-American boycott was most intelligible in terms of the effect the Russo-Japanese War was then having on the Chinese market. Anticipating a greatly expanded Manchurian market because of the war, foreign businessmen in China, Americans included, had increased their imports in the early months of 1905. But the Manchurian market had failed to materialize. The

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[29]Lupton to Rockhill, 4 September 1905. USCD-Amoy.

[30]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

unavailability of ships for commercial use, the dangers of blockade-running, and the high insurance rates attending the blockade had mitigated against its expansion.[31] The end result was an overstocked Chinese market and a cessation of trade.[32]

The depressed condition of the market made Summer of 1905 an ideal time for an anti-American boycott. For Chinese merchants it offered an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism without risking economic loss. In fact, the larger merchants could reasonably anticipate huge profits; for, the situation afforded them a chance to corner the market. With business slow due to the war and their warehouses filled to capacity, the foreigners had begun to unload their goods at competitive prices.[33] The Chinese merchants could buy cheaply and hold for the Manchurian market which would open with the restoration of peace, already rumored in the making. A boycott against America until the end of the war would increase the prices of American goods and therefore enrich those Chinese merchants who had large contracts.[34] Postponing the boycott to 20 July was, perhaps, not only to give the United States an opportunity to amend its immigration policy, but also to allow Chinese merchants time to negotiate additional contracts with American agents.[35]

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[31]Rodgers to Loomis, 21 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[32]Rodgers to Loomis, 12 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[33]Rodgers to Bacon, 1 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[34]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[35]Ibid.

For the smaller Chinese merchants, that is the local shopkeepers, the boycott presented a different kind of economic opportunity,--a chance to avoid the economic losses they expected to result from the depressed market conditions. Claiming patriotism, they could repudiate the contracts they had with the Chinese distributors of American goods and thereby at least decrease the amount of goods which because of the war they could not sell and for which they therefore could not pay.[36]

The anti-American boycott--was it for profit or patria? The merchant role raised questions concerning the degree of patriotism and the strength of nationalism in early twentieth-century China. As events demonstrated, profit considerations motivated the Chinese merchants. While they expected economic gain, they actively participated in the boycott movement. They quickly became disenchanted with the whole affair when their elaborate plans failed to materialize. On 5 August 1905 Rodgers telegraphed Secretary of State Elihu Root:

> Chinese Chamber of Commerce Shanghai very anxious to stop boycott. Injuring trade generally. Students responsible for continuance.[37]

Rodgers later explained merchant disaffection. The ardent boycotters had forced them to cancel their pre-boycott contracts with American businessmen. Following suit, native shopkeepers repudiated their contracts and debts with Chinese merchants and returned American goods.

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[36]Rodgers to Bacon, 1 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[37]Rodgers to Root, 5 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

The merchants faced ruin, or so they thought.[38] Consequently, the merchants continued to support the anti-American boycott only reluctantly, that is under duress.[39] When the Manchurian market opened their patriotism evaporated completely.[40] Although the immigration issue remained unresolved, Chinese merchants now pressured the local officials to restrain the boycott.[41]

The consular despatches therefore revealed certain limitations to nationalism in early twentieth-century China. The spirit of nationalism had failed to capture the minds and hearts of all Chinese. This uneven development of nationalism presented problems. With unity of purpose absent, concerted action proved difficult. Because the merchants and students started from different premises, the relationship between them was strained from the beginning, and merchant-student cooperation in the boycott movement was unavoidably brief. Consular awareness of the weakness of nationalism within the Chinese merchant class did not, however, lead the consuls to minimize the strength of nationalism. They were fully aware of the nationalist orientation of the students and of its implications. This was apparent in the consular reports concerning the activities and objectives of

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[38]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai. Settling days went well for the Chinese merchants after all. See below, p. 142.

[39]Lay to Loomis, 16 August 1905. USCD-Canton. Lay reported anonymous letters threatening Chinese merchants with death if they continued to deal in American goods.

[40]Rodgers to Bacon, 31 March 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[41]See below, pp. 138-139.

the students before whom everyone,--merchants, officials, and people, appeared powerless.

Regardless of what group had actually started the boycott, Minister Rockhill believed that the whole idea originated with the nationalist-oriented Chinese students.[42] Reports from the other consuls substantiated the Minister's conclusion. William Martin, the Consul at Hankow, reported that the students from non-official families educated abroad, especially those associated with American educational enterprises, were the ". . . most vehement advocates of the American boycott. . . ."[43] Although Consul Gracey considered the Shanghai merchants responsible for starting the boycott, he found that in Fuchow the students were its backbone.[44] To further confuse the issue, the 10 May meeting at Shanghai to consider the boycott proposal, while dominated by merchants, had also included students and literati. Finally, even if the students had not conceived the boycott, they assumed control of it at an early date and championed the cause long after the Chinese merchants had abandoned it.

The despatches from American consular officers suggested that for the students resolving the immigration issue was but incidental to the far more important objective of awakening China. Consul General Julius G. Lay at Canton reported: "Many of the agitators . . .

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[42]Paul A. Varg, Open Door Diplomat: The Life of W. W. Rockhill (University of Illinois Press, 1952), p. 60. Hereinafter cited Open Door Diplomat.

[43]Martin to Bacon, 7 March 1906. USCD-Hankow.

[44]Gracey to Loomis, 18 August 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

are using the boycott as a cloak for political reasons."[45] Rodgers' reports were quite specific regarding the nature of the students' political objectives. Identifying the students as followers of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, Rodgers noted that initially they had expressed little respect for the boycott idea which they had viewed as for the benefit primarily of the coolie labor class. But when they had recognized its potential as a propaganda instrument, they embraced it, then seized control and manipulated it to serve their cause. For the students the boycott was primarily an instrument for creating nationalism and promoting united action among the Chinese people, for instilling in them confidence in their ability and a desire to control and mold their own destiny. When nationalism had become strong enough to stimulate the people to demand reforms, Rodgers expected the students to abandon the boycott and proceed with their anti-foreign, anti-dynastic reform program.[46] Consul Gracey held a similar opinion, noting the widespread encouragement being given anti-foreign activity ". . . in order that 'China for the Chinese' may become a national and popular sentiment--. . . thus to put a stop to the Foreign concessions, foreign investment and retain

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[45]Lay to Loomis, 28 September 1905. USCD-Canton.

[46]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905; Rodgers to Bacon, 8 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai. In Iriye's opinion, the boycott was important chiefly for the opportunity it gave the people to participate in politics which would politicize them, or "nationalize public opinion," pp. 224-226.

in their own hands the great mineral and other resources of the country."[47]

In its early days, when the merchants appeared as the chief agitators, the boycott failed to alarm the American consular personnel greatly. They refused to take the merchants seriously and confidently predicted the boycott would end as soon as it adversely affected merchant profits. Minister Rockhill assured Secretary Root: "I fancy the movement will stop the day the boycotters begin to lose anything by the movement; until then there will be much talking and agitation."[48] Lay at Canton had reached a similarly optimistic verdict:

> It is the opinion of some that if the boycott is really started American trade may suffer to a certain extent in the beginning, but the fact must not be lost sight of that the Chinaman is a keen trader, and he is loath to miss a chance of turning over a dollar, and he will be in the cheapest and best market everytime in spite of promised unity of action; and I apprehend that the American merchants need not have any great alarm as to the boycott lasting for any considerable length of time: Time alone will tell the result.[49]

Time favored the boycott, particularly in Canton. In the days immediately following the inception of the boycott, the consuls worried primarily about its economic effect. All agreed that it would inflict inestimable damage to America's China trade. Consul General Rodgers noted that the news of the boycott was slowly penetrating and taking root in the interior. The news of its end would travel

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[47]Gracey to Bacon, 20 March 1906. USCD-Fuchow.

[48]Rockhill to Root, 26 July 1905. USFR, p. 211.

[49]Lay to Loomis, 10 July 1905. USCD-Canton.

just as slowly, and by the time former trade conditions had returned the small merchant would have taken his business elsewhere. Rodgers therefore concluded ". . . the great damage the movement has done will be felt by all American firms for months and perhaps years after all is settled at the treaty ports."[50] He estimated the boycott's effect on the total value of all foreign goods at Shanghai alone "conservatively" at twenty-five million dollars gold.[51] A similar condition prevailed at Canton where Lay estimated ". . . American trade is suffering half a million dollars gold, a month, . . . and furthermore it will be difficult to dislodge our competitors who are steadily gaining a firm foothold."[52]

Consular concern with the effects of the boycott increased in intensity as the movement gained momentum and the merchants relinquished control to the students. The political implications of the boycott were spine-chilling, particularly for those who had experienced the Boxer days. Anti-American activity was especially bitter in Fukien Province. Consul Anderson felt that the boycott propaganda seriously threatened the personal safety of Americans in his region.[53] Consul Gracey reported "the Anti-foreign element of the Chinese people are using the Boycott movement . . . to bring out their hatred of

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[50]Rodgers to Loomis, 27 July 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[51]Rodgers to Loomis, 12 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[52]Lay to Loomis, 12 September 1905. USCD-Canton.

[53]Anderson to the Department of State, 25 July 1905. USCD-Amoy.

the foreigner."[54] In a lengthy report on the nature, strength, and implications of the movement, Gracey pooh-poohed those who regarded it as a mere spasm. Regarding the effectiveness of the boycott propaganda, he concluded:

> Although the officials may try to stop such performances, . . . they can not stop the spread of the spirit of hate which has already been sown to the four winds of heaven and no power can recall them. They will find reception in a soil already prepared in the universal dislike of all foreigners, everywhere prevalent. The damage done to American trade, and the unfriendly feeling engendered against Americans especially, can not be estimated, and this is sure to increase for some time to come. . . . No amount of official influence in proclamations can turn this tide back again. . . .[55]

Lay reported that the anti-American movement in the Canton region had quickly acquired a general anti-foreign character, and he feared it would lead to attacks on the missionaries in the interior.[56] Rodgers seconded Lay's observation, adding that it had become anti-dynastic as well.[57]

Other foreign residents of China echoed the opinions of the American consuls. The British NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS wrote that the boycott, now under student control, ". . . from being anti-American, is becoming anti-foreign and anti-dynastic." All agreed with the editor's opinion that ". . . Peking must be made to realise the gravity of the movement, . . . , that the Central Government, through

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[54]Gracey to Loomis, 18 July 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[55]Gracey to Bacon, 29 November 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[56]Lay to Loomis, 22 July 1905; Lay to Loomis, 24 July 1905. USCD-Canton.

[57]Rodgers to Loomis, 21 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

the provincial authorities, must put it down."[58]

From the beginning of the boycott movement the United States had adopted a firm policy in dealing with the imperial government. When he arrived in China in mid-May 1905, Minister Rockhill had attempted to persuade the Shanghai merchants of the folly and lawlessness of their proposed boycott. Upon arriving in Peking he had urged and then pressured the imperial government to suppress the movement before it became uncontrollable. As noted earlier, the failure of the imperial government to respond adequately led Rockhill and the Department to suspect it of duplicity as well as complicity in the movement. Subsequent events in America reinforced their suspicions. J. S. Gardner, an immigration authority and Chinese interpreter saw posted in the Chinese Consulate at San Francisco a proclamation from the imperial government which read ". . . the said boycott this department [Foreign Office] has never at anytime prohibited or obstructed. . . ."[59] Subsequently, Minister Rockhill suggested to the Department that the United States pursue a stronger policy. Within a few days the Department instructed Rockhill to proceed with his plan "to notify the Chinese government that under

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[58]Inclosure 2 in Rodgers to Loomis, 17 August 1905. USCD-Shanghai. Iriye has taken the opposite view, maintaining that the boycotters were supporting the imperial government in its negotiations with the powers. Iriye's position also differs from the traditional interpretation regarding the role boycotts have played in Chinese history, pp. 224-225.

[59]Subinclosure in A. A. Adee to Root, 26 July 1905. USFR, pp. 209-210.

the provision of Article 15 of the treaty of 1858 it will be held responsible for any loss sustained by the American trade on account of any failure on the part of China to stop the present organized movement against the United States. In addition, Rockhill refused to discuss the pending immigration treaty until the boycott had ended. He also demanded that the central government punish taot'ai Tseng Shao-ching, the coordinator of the boycott effort at Shanghai, by depriving him of his rank.[60]

In response the imperial government again notified Rockhill that it had admonished the provincial authorities to suppress the movement with haste. But the boycott continued, increased in strength, and spread throughout the Yangtze Valley, raising the question whether the central government was in fact able to control provincial affairs.

The consuls, too, had attributed the success of the boycott to the failure of the officials to suppress the movement. The officials, they observed, had consistently ignored the imperial edicts. Rodgers reported that ". . . owing to the inactivity and opposition [to the Throne] of the Chinese officials" the boycott agitation had spread from Shanghai up the Yangtze Valley where "posters and placards representing grossly exaggerated American treatment of Chinese are being displayed, and notices published warning the people against Americans."[61] Lay cabled the Department that Ts'en Ch'un-hsuan,

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[60]Adee to Rockhill, 5 August 1905. USFR, p. 212; Varg, Open Door Diplomat, pp. 64-65.

[61]Rodgers to Loomis, 27 July 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

Viceroy of the Liang-Kwang Provinces, had issued an "insufficient Proclamation," and, consequently, "the agitation [was] spreading." The degree of the boycott's success was such, he observed, that a sampan woman had refused a box because it contained American goods, and several Chinese boys had withdrawn from the Christian college because it was an American institution.[62]

Consular explanations of the officials' reaction to the boycott varied. While some consuls considered them too weak to restrain it, others felt that they sympathized with the movement. Consul Gracey noted that boycott placards in the Fuchow region had official sanction.[63] Consul Anderson reported that the officials in Amoy sympathized with the boycott, noting, however, ". . . they have not the physical or moral stamina to oppose it if they were not in sympathy with it.[64] A riot in connection with a crooked lottery led Anderson to conclude "local officials here are powerless, . . . to prevent the most open and continued disorder." Should the boycott develop a popular phase, he warned Minister Rockhill, "there would be no protection for the property of Americans, or indeed for that of foreigners generally."[65] Lay was certain that the officials in Canton were sympathizing with the boycotters. In fact, he considered

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[62]Lay to Root, 16 August 1905. USCD-Canton.

[63]Gracey to Loomis, 18 August 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[64]Anderson to the Department of State, 25 July 1905. USCD-Amoy.

[65]Anderson to Rockhill, 16 August 1905. USCD-Amoy.

Viceroy Ts'en to be "the chief agitator."[66] In the early days of the movement, Lay had reported "the best evidence of . . . [official] connivance . . . [was their] neglect . . . to do the utmost to stop this dangerous boycott. . . ." Lay's cablegram to Secretary Root, ". . . the Viceroy could [suppress] entire movement . . . ,"[68] suggested that Lay believed Viceroy Ts'en to be stronger than Chinese nationalism.

Other members of the diplomatic corps attributed official intransigence to their weakness; they simply were powerless to challenge the popular will. Percival S. Heintzleman, Vice Consul General at Canton, therefore disagreed with his superior officer. Noting that the boycott was thriving in Kwantung Province, Heintzleman reported:

> I was given to understand that at this particular time when there is an undercurrent of feeling and the anti-government party especially in South is exhibiting unusual signs of unrest and of growing discontent with the reigning Dynasty, it is well nigh impossible for the Viceroy to exert more than a mere semblance of power and cater to the inclination of the people, . . .[69]

Although Consul General Rodgers noted the existence of "official sympathy" with the boycott, all his reports conveyed the feeling that the officials could not have restrained the popular movement even had they opposed. In his opinion the central government was

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[66]Lay to Bacon, 3 January 1906. USCD-Canton.

[67]Lay to Loomis, 9 August 1905. USCD-Canton.

[68]Lay to Root, 16 August, 1905. USCD-Canton.

[69]Heintzleman's report to Lay, 28 September 1905, inclosure in Lay to Loomis, 28 September 1905. USCD-Canton.

powerless to control the Yangtze officials who despised its authority. Rodgers warned the Department against retaliatory measures, suggesting that even rumors of such action could provoke a recurrence of the Boxer horror in the outlying districts.[70]

The opinions of Consuls Anderson, Heintzleman, and Rodgers coincided with those of the American Minister. Although he could openly admit it to no one, Rockhill based the United States policy during the anti-American boycott on the premises that the provincial officials actually had little control over the people and that these same authorities were autonomous. The role Rockhill expected the central government to play in preserving China's integrity forced him, however, to maintain the fiction of its sovereignty. Given this situation and the nature of American objectives in China, the methods Rockhill could employ in implementing America's China policy quickly cancelled out to one: diplomatic pressure,--firmly but carefully applied. It was imperative to avoid threats of military intervention. Military pressure could transform the anti-American boycott into a wholesale anti-foreign, anti-dynastic movement that would endanger foreign lives and property and probably topple the Manchu dynasty.

Rockhill's experiences during the Boxer Rebellion had taught him a valuable lesson. Understandably, then, he became almost apoplectic with rage when Consul General Lay panicked in mid-September

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[70]Rodgers to Loomis, 24 August 1905; Rodgers to Loomis, 16 September 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

and requested the Department to send the U.S.S. Monadneck to aid the U.S.S. Callao in protecting the lives and property interests of Americans in Canton.[71] Rockhill immediately cabled Lay: "Make no threats Viceroy in principle. I am strongly opposed calling for the navy when not absolutely necessary, the protection of life and property."[72] Rockhill then severely reprimanded Lay:

> I am astonished that you should cable directly to the Department of State for a war vessel without ascertaining whether this Legation approves of your action. Nothing in either your telegrams or your despatches indicate any more than the likelihood of disturbances, and the presence of the U.S.S. "Callao" seems quite sufficient for all such contingencies as may occur. It is absolutely impossible to imagine that the boycott movement will end abruptly in a day or so, especially in a locality like Canton. . . .[73]

The United States, Rockhill informed Lay, would rely on diplomacy in seeking its objectives. When Viceroy Ts'en excused his lenient approach to the boycott in the Canton consulate district with the statement: "If more hasty measures were to be taken they would stir up revolution, and it would be more difficult than ever to ward off calamity,"[74] Rockhill continued his firm posture toward the imperial government. The Minister notified Prince Ch'ing:

> . . . The Government of the United States cannot for a moment admit that the Emperor's representative in the Liang Kiang

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[71]Lay's telegram to Root, 12 September 1905. USCD-Canton.

[72]Rockhill to Lay, 15 September 1905, inclosure in Lay to Loomis, 28 September 1905. USCD-Canton.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Viceroy Ts'en to Prince Ch'ing, undated. Quoted by Rockhill in Rockhill to Prince Ch'ing, 3 October 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to Root, 4 October 1905. USFR, pp. 229-230.

> Provinces is unable to suppress the agitation, and any delay on his part to do so will inevitably be understood by my government as a flagrant manifestation of hostility by an agent of your government, for whose shortcomings the Imperial Government must be held responsible.[75]

The Department of State either had failed to learn the lesson of the Boxer Rebellion, or it had forgotten it. For, by early 1906 it had lapsed into the "gunboat" policy to support United States diplomatic representations to the imperial government. Several factors conspired to lead the Department to reject Rockhill's approach. The Lienchow Massacre on 1 November 1905, the riot in the International City of Shanghai on 18 December 1905, and an increase in anti-foreign sentiment aroused the fear that a Boxer-type uprising was developing. Although Rockhill pointed out that the massacre at Lienchow was the product of purely local causes, some of the consuls, American businessmen, and missionaries led the Department to suspect that consular predictions that the boycott would lead to just such an outrage had come true. So it was with the Shanghai riot, even though Rockhill and Rodgers both informed the Department that the episode grew out of British attempts to transform the International City of Shanghai into an independent republic on Chinese soil, dominated by England.[76] The Department, advised by former Minister

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[75]Rockhill to Prince Ch'ing, 3 October 1905, inclosure in ibid.

[76]Rodgers to Bacon, 8 January 1906. USCD-Shanghai; Varg, Open Door Diplomat, pp. 66-68. For a different view of the Lienchow massacre see E. J. Rhoads' study "Nationalism and Xenophobia in Kwangtung (1905-06); the Canton Anti-American Boycott and the Lien Chow anti-Missionary Uprising," vol. 16, Papers On China (Harvard University: East Asian Research Center, 1962).

to China Charles Denby, overruled Minister Rockhill and took England's position that the Imperial government was responsible for the riot and the minor losses suffered by American interests.[77] These two incidents plus reports from the consuls during the remainder of 1905 detailing the development of anti-foreign sentiment throughout China aroused the Department's concern. The Department ignored Rockhill's protestations that Chinese anti-foreignism was unlikely to take a violent form. Even Consul General Rodgers failed to support Rockhill adequately. After vacillating between the two positions, Rodgers finally requested the addition of war vessals at Shanghai.[78] The government complied and also sent additional troops to the Philippines and formulated plans for operations against Canton in the event of hostilities with China.[79]

Military operations against China proved unnecessary. By Spring 1906 the worst of the anti-American boycott had passed. Although threats to renew it continued, the boycott in Shanghai had for all practical purposes ceased to be effective in early September, 1905. Rockhill's diplomacy and the Imperial Edict of 31 August probably played a part, but it was doubtful that they were decisive in destroying the movement. Rockhill himself attributed its demise

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[77]Miller, p. 67.

[78]Rodgers' previous despatches suggest that he requested additional vessels not so much because he feared hostilities but also because he firmly believed they would contribute to United States prestige in China and would therefore help promote American trade, one of Rodgers' pet projects.

[79]Miller, p. 67. For American newspaper reaction to military measures, generally hostile, see pp. 68-76.

to the action of the Shanghai merchants, and Consul General Rodgers agreed with the American Minister.[80] Thoroughly alarmed by the prospect of huge losses, the Shanghai merchants had cabled Viceroy Yüan Shih-k'ai in Chihli Province, requesting him to suppress the movement in North China and thereby provide them with an outlet for their goods. Yüan had actually moved against the boycott in its earliest stages and, consequently, attempts of the boycotters to expand the movement beyond the Yangtze Valley had failed. Yüan's actions further enhanced his already favorable reputation with the American consuls. Indicative of consular opinion and prophetic of later developments was Consul General Rodgers' statement: "A strong man is wanted here to do what H. E. Yüan Shih-k'ai has done in the north."[81] When the Manchurian market opened, the Shanghai merchants turned against the boycott, a course of action which perhaps encouraged the imperial edict.

Although the boycott had subsided in Shanghai, it continued unabated in Canton and actually increased its strength in the subsequent months. This development was easy to explain. The majority of Chinese immigrants to America came from the Canton region.

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[80]Varg, Open Door Diplomat, p. 65. Rodgers to Loomis, 6 September 1905. USCD-Shanghai. Rodgers also noted the chastening effect of the recent typhoon and resultant flood which damaged the goods being held in the warehouses. Rodgers commented: ". . . to a suspicious mind such an event as the flood with its great damage and its loss of human lives, is easily connected with the popular cause; and far-fetched as the assumption may seem, it has had a numbing effect on the so-called patriotism which was expressed in the boycott procedures."

[81]Rodgers to Loomis, 17 November 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

Therefore, the United States immigration policy had outraged the Cantonese more than it had the Chinese of other provinces, and the people in Kuantung were able to force the merchants and local officials to respect the boycott.

Two developments finally destroyed the boycott in Canton. Early in 1906 the boycott leadership split into two opposing factions, one willing to accept a modified treaty while the other demanded that Chinese be admitted to America on the same basis as the people of other nations.[82] A dispute between the viceroy and the gentry, the latter supported by the people, regarding railroad construction administered the final blow. Having cancelled the American Canton-Hankow Railroad concession, Viceroy Ts'en proposed to construct the road by taxation. Led by the gentry, the people protested and won the right to build it by popular subscription. Lay doubted regretfully that the project would succeed, but noted "this agitation, . . . has diverted almost entirely the attention of the gentry from the boycott, so that for the present Chinese exclusion is forgotten, . . ."[83] Despite threats to renew it, the anti-American boycott had finally ended.

Considering its major objectives, the boycott was hardly a success. It failed to achieve a substantial change in the United

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[82]Lay to Bacon, 3 January 1906. USCD-Canton.

[83]Lay to Bacon, 5 March 1906. USCD-Canton.

States immigration policy. The Foster Bill which would have excluded specifically only Chinese skilled and unskilled labor, failed to pass. Yet, the most flagrant abuses in administering the policy ended, and there were modifications in the manner in which the authorities enforced the restriction. Non-laboring classes of Chinese found that the officials treated them with much more respect than previously.

The failure of the boycott to effect a change in America's immigration policy was perhaps attributable to its relative ineffectiveness. As C. F. Remer and W. Palmer have noted, the prospects of a boycott's success related directly to the question of its effectiveness as determined by the boycotters' success in reducing imports from the boycotted country.[84] Because China did not keep records of monthly imports, it is difficult to measure the boycott's effectiveness. Only tentative conclusions are possible. Yet, the evidence did indicate a dislocation in America's China trade, at least temporarily. American exports to China in 1905 had doubled over the previous year. The monthly value of American exports had reached U.S. $8 million in April, 1905 but had fallen to U.S. $3.75 million by October, 1905.[85] Whether this decline was due to the boycott remains undeterminable. American consular personnel did not think so. They attributed it chiefly to the effects on the Chinese market of the

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[84]Remer and Palmer, Chinese Boycotts, pp. 23-28.

[85]Ibid.

Russo-Japanese War.[86] Finally, American businessmen failed to suffer the losses everyone had predicted. Nor, for that matter, did the Chinese merchants.[87] A boycott which inflicted little damage could hardly hope to achieve its objectives.

A number of factors probably contributed to the ineffectiveness of the boycott. It had no organizational structure and lacked effective leadership.[88] Only at Amoy and Shanghai did an individual emerge and attempt to coordinate the movement on a national level, but unsuccessfully. No one emerged to take charge at Canton, although Feng Hsia-wei, who had committed suicide on 16 July near the American Consulate in Shanghai, was cannonized the "boycott martyr" and became the focus of loyalty for the Cantonese.

Certainly the uneven development of Chinese nationalism undermined the boycott effort. With their interests tightly tied to foreign interests, merchant support of the movement was weak; the merchants in Newchwang absolutely refused to support the movement. Unmoved by modern nationalism, the imperial government played a passive role. It could hardly have initiated, or energetically supported, an activity which historically had challenged the ruling dynasty. Nor could the central government have actively suppressed

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[86]Rodgers to Bacon, 1 February 1906; Rodgers to Bacon, 8 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[87]Rodgers to Bacon, 23 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[88]For a discussion of this subject see Margaret Field's study, "The Chinese Boycott of 1905," Papers On China, vol. 11 (Harvard University: East Asian Research Center, 1957), section 4:a, b.

the boycott, not without running the risk of transforming it into an anti-dynastic movement. The failure of the boycott to attract widespread support greatly reduced its effectiveness and, therefore, its potential for success. When the Foster Bill came before Congress in 1906, the boycott effort had disintegrated to a point where it no longer threatened American interests.

China's failure to sustain the boycott handicapped the American merchants, manufacturers, and missionaries who hoped to persuade Congress to modify the United States immigration policy. In addition, the China market was more a myth than a reality. Consequently, American business interests were less powerful than the better organized and more influential labor forces who successfully opposed any meaningful modification of the United States immigration policy toward China.[89]

The boycott had served admirably, however, as an instrument for strengthening Chinese nationalism and for developing a sense of solidarity among the Chinese people. American consular despatches were full of comments on the nature and implications of the notable changes that had occurred during the boycott in the attitudes of the Chinese people both toward foreigners and themselves. Many of the foreign contacts on whom Consul General Rodgers depended for news reported ". . . that at no time in the past have they seen the masses of the Chinese so given to comparative independence and a belief in

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[89]Miller, p. 103.

their ability. . . ."[90] Rodgers himself believed that Chinese nationalists would not revive the boycott because it had served its purpose ". . . of teaching the Chinese generally that there can be some unity among the people."[91] Consul Gracey wrote that the boycott affair marked ". . . an awakening of a new China. . . ."[92] After noting the "perfunctory way" in which officials attempted to apprehend robbers of foreigners, Consul General Lay at Canton commented: "Even thieves seem to have become infected with the new spirit of nationalism and apparently do not consider that they run a greater risk in robbing a foreigner than a native. . . ."[93]

All the consuls found the people of 'new China' intolerant of foreign interference in Chinese affairs. Gracey wrote: ". . . Obstructions to foreign operations of all kinds are rife: not only are new concessions being refused, but efforts are being made to cancel concessions already granted. . . ."[94] From William Martin at Hankow came the observation: ". . . there is a different spirit abroad from any ever experienced by foreigners. . . . They [Chinese] have determined if possible to prevent foreigners from having any

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[90]Rodgers to Loomis, 15 November 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[91]Rodgers to Bacon, 8 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[92]Gracey to Bacon, 29 November 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[93]Lay to Bacon, 12 April 1906. USCD-Canton.

[94]Gracey to Bacon, 19 November 1905. USCD-Fuchow. Gracey noted that the Chinese had been greatly encouraged by the cancellation of the American Canton-Hankow Railroad concession.

interest in mining, railways, or anything else. . . ."[95] The foreigners with whom Consul General Rodgers spoke insisted that ". . . dealing with the Chinese in a business way is much more difficult than in the past, . . ."[96] Rodgers detailed for the Department's knowledge the ways in which Chinese were asserting their independence of foreigners. The Chinese officials at Hangchow had broken their agreement to accept Consul F. D. Cloud's decision in the vexacious Huchow Land Case. ". . . The real protest," revealed Rodgers, "is against any foreigner owning land and by hook or crook the Chinese now seem determined to prevent it."[97] There were also the Chinese attempts to maintain their treaty rights as to the Mixed Court.[98] Rodgers noted, too, the discussions between the gentry in Kiangsu and the officials of Shanghai about ousting British capital and cancelling the Shanghai and Nanking Railroad concession. Rodgers viewed the issue as ". . . only another illustration of the prevailing sentiment in China against foreign participation in affairs Chinese."[99]

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[95]Martin to Bacon, 8 February 1906. USCD-Hankow.

[96]Rodgers to Bacon, 10 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[97]Rodgers to Bacon, 31 March 1906. USCD-Shanghai. Earlier Rodgers had noted: "Heretofore there has been no question of the right of Americans to trade at treaty ports; to own land there; and to live there. Now, apparently, such right is being questioned daily." Rodgers to Loomis, 15 November 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[98]Rodgers to Loomis, 9 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai. The Chinese had appointed former American Consul General John Goodnow to assist them in this matter. Goodnow's attempts while Consul General to oppose British objectives in the International City of Shanghai prompted this move by the Chinese.

[99]Rodgers to Loomis, 17 November 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

Incredible though it may appear, considering their observations regarding its effects and implications, the consuls' boycott experience did not lead them to consider modifying the Open Door policy in the light of rising Chinese nationalism. Instead, the consular personnel in China reaffirmed its objectives. The boycott had hardly started to subside in Shanghai before Rodgers was identifying foreign competition as the chief threat to American objectives in China and suggesting ways to counter it. Rodgers' approach to the problem of foreign influence was based, however, on a correct understanding of the nature of the threat it presented. The consular personnel therefore responded to rising Chinese nationalism by advocating business as usual, although for varying reasons.

Some American consuls little feared, even somewhat respected, Chinese nationalism; others little respected and greatly feared it. Consuls Cheshire, Martin, and Gracey were among those who feared but had little respect for the new patriotism. F. D. Cheshire made a gloomy prediction:

> . . . It is not a patriotism which will be content to sit quietly at home and evolve schemes for industrial improvement and development to make China more self-supporting, or to steadily plod at a general elevation of the moral national tone so as to make her people respected. But it is a sort of patriotism which seeks some plausible outlet and excuse for a prejudice and angered ignorance which is continuelly [sic] itching to find expression. . . .[100]

William Martin feared the agitation would not ". . . end until another outbreak spends itself, and a new form of government . . . is

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[100]Confidential report, Cheshire to Bacon, 6 January 1906. USCD-Canton.

established. . . ." Such a movement would be "fraught with carnage and bloodshed. . . ." He therefore suggested that the United States ". . . be in a position to compel with power, ample protection."[101] Samuel Gracey, whose predictions have been noted, thought it "probable that some International steps may be necessary to check this matter [cancelling of concessions]."[102] Those who feared but little respected Chinese nationalism suggested coming to terms with it not by accomodating its objectives as they themselves had defined them but by a determination to resist or suppress it.

Other members of the diplomatic corps seemed to have less fear of the consequences of Chinese nationalism. Consuls Heintzleman and Rodgers fell into this category, as did Minister Rockhill. Although he found South China ". . . seething in discontentment," anti-dynastic sentiment increasing, and anti-foreignism intensifying, Vice Consul General Heintzleman did not think a general uprising was probable.[103] Nor did Consul General Rodgers who believed with Minister Rockhill that the emphasis in 1906 would be on reforming China.[104]

In reality, Rodgers feared the consequences of foreign competition, especially Japanese, more than he feared Chinese

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[101]Martin to Bacon, 8 February 1906. USCD-Hankow.

[102]Gracey to Bacon, 29 November 1905. USCD-Fuchow.

[103]Heintzleman to Bacon, 5 December 1905. USCD-Canton.

[104]Rodgers to Loomis, 8 February 1906. USCD-Shanghai. Rockhill to Root, 26 February 1906. The Department of State Archives. Quoted in Miller, pp. 15-16.

nationalism. While the boycott was subsiding in Shanghai, Rodgers reported that all the foreign nations were doing their best to obtain a stronger foothold in China, and he criticized America's "seeming indifference" and haphazard operations.[105] He suspected the Japanese of using the boycott and the popularity they had gained by the war to improve their position with the Chinese to the detriment of other nations.[106] By January, 1906, Rodgers had concluded not that Chinese nationalism constituted a threat to American objectives but rather that "the Japanese commercial conquest of the Orient is the real bugbear now. . . ."[107] To combat this threat which he had correctly identified as economic in nature, Rodgers advised the United States to adopt the same approach. It should systematize its commercial operations and should establish a commercial department at every important Asiatic consulate or America's future in China would be dim indeed.[108]

Not only did Rodgers not fear Chinese nationalism, but he emerged as positively sympathetic to it:

> . . . There is, in my opinion, much respect to be given to the common sense of the view of an advanced Chinese who said . . . that 'China's attitude towards the world can only be construed now as anti-foreign by those who suffer from her independence.' If this rule is applied generally no one can complain of the spirit although they may suffer from the act.[109]

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[105]Rodgers to Loomis, 14 September 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[106]Rodgers to Bacon, 15 December 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[107]Rodgers to Bacon, 22 January 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[108]Rodgers to Loomis, 14 September 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[109]Rodgers to Bacon, 15 December 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

There was a simple explanation for Rodgers' attitude. Despite the intransigence of the Chinese people and officials, Rodgers considered a political upheaval ". . . entirely improbable. . . . 'China for the Chinese' is indeed the popular cry," he wrote, "but that does not necessarily mean absolute antagonism and antipathy toward those of other races."[110]

Minister Rockhill had also concluded that nationalism need not lead to revolution. While he recognized the anti-foreign aspect of the movement, Rockhill did not think it ". . . of a nature which will lead to open, organized, violent hostility to foreigners."[111] Rockhill revealed the reasons behind his opinion. The imperial government, he noted, had committed itself to a progressive reform program the success of which in Rockhill's opinion depended on maintaining peace with the foreign nations.[112] Moreover, both Rockhill and Rodgers had been carefully observing the nature and objectives of the student nationalist activities over the past months. Their observations led both to conclude that at least in 1906 Chinese patriots would channel their nationalism not into rebellion but into reform. Rodgers, too, but especially Minister Rockhill felt that the United States had nothing to lose and everything to gain from a thoroughgoing reform of China.

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[110]Rodgers to Loomis, 14 September 1905; Rodgers to Bacon, 15 December 1905. USCD-Shanghai.

[111]Rockhill to Root, 2 March 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[112]Rockhill to Root, 26 February 1906. The Department of State Archives. The text of the despatch is quoted in Miller, p. 16.

CHAPTER V

REFORM VERSUS REVOLUTION, 1905-1907

Early in 1906 the United States Minister to China, William W. Rockhill, presented Secretary of State Elihu Root with a succinct, perceptive evaluation of the political situation in China:

> The Chinese Government is now irrevocably committed to a vast scheme of national progressive reform. Its very existence depends on the early adoption of improved methods in the administration and in the material development of the country.[1]

Minister Rockhill thus established for the Department the relationship between the reform and revolutionary movements in twentieth-century China. Should the imperial government fail to achieve substantial reform, and that quickly, revolution seemed inevitable.

Two features of the situation in China in particular had prompted the minister's report: 1) the increasingly threatening anti-dynastic and anti-foreign activities of the Chinese nationalists, whose wrath the United States had recently felt; 2) a sudden burst of reform energy on the part of the imperial government. In mid-summer of 1905 the imperial government expanded its educational reform program and announced ambitious plans for administrative and political reform. In addition, the imperial government hinted at a

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[1]Rockhill to Root, 26 February 1906. The Department of State Archives. Quoted in Miller, "China in American Policy and Opinion, 1906-1909," p. 16. Emphasis mine.

new approach to foreign affairs with measures that suggested an intention to recover China's sovereign rights.

Behind the flurry of activity lay a rapidly developing patriotism. The rising spirit of Chinese nationalism that had animated the anti-American boycott was expressing itself in demands for fundamental institutional reform as well as for reform of China's foreign policy. The pressure had increased noticeably in 1905 as a result of modernized Japan's inspirational victory over Russia. Chinese editorial drawings significantly portrayed defeated Russia as a predatory bear, suggesting that a growing number of Chinese had concluded that China's salvation from the imperialist threat lay in thorough-going modernization of its social, economic, military and political institutions. The big question of the hour was how to achieve such modernization,--by reform or by revolution?

The imperial government's increased interest in reform in 1905 and thereafter reflected its concern with the rapidly developing revolutionary sentiment in the provinces, with China's steadily deteriorating financial condition, and with the implications of these developments for the future of the Manchu dynasty. By 1905 revolution loomed as an attractive solution to China's problems. Such anti-foreign activities as the recent boycott against the United States promoted the revolutionary cause. Extra-governmental and beyond official control, the boycott had cast the imperial government in a bad light in the view of the Chinese people and the powers. It threatened to become a dangerous precedent that could easily degenerate into an anti-dynastic uprising. Consequently, the imperial

government recognized the necessity of expanding its reform program if it were ever going to regain the allegiance of its subjects and reëstablish its authority over the provinces. The centralization of power in Peking was absolutely essential if the imperial government was to undertake the tax and budget reforms on which depended the modernization of China's institutions and the development of China's resources.

Rather than permit political power to go by default to the revolutionaries, the imperial government took the only option open to it and expanded its reform program. It hoped thereby to neutralize the appeal of a revolutionary nationalism. To prevent revolution and perpetuate the Manchu dynasty's control over the administration of China, it was imperative that the imperial government demonstrate that it could provide the leadership and develop the programs that modern Chinese nationalism was demanding.

The American diplomatic personnel in China approved the expansion of the imperial government's reform program that occurred in 1905. For, the United States China policy was predicated on the development of a strong and modern China. The diplomats agreed that Japan's victory over Russia had inspired Chinese nationalism and that the rights recovery movement was the primary indicator of the nature of the changes that were occurring in China as well as the chief vehicle for the expression of modern Chinese nationalism. The diplomats fervently hoped, however, that Chinese nationalism would focus its energy less on rights recovery activities and more on reforming China's anachronistic institutions. They were therefore

enthusiastic at what appeared in 1905 to be a new reform departure.

In their feelings concerning the imperial government's chances of achieving real and permanent reforms, the diplomats vacillated between optimism and pessimism, between hope, frustration, and despair. The diplomatic reports discussed the obstacles to reform that the imperial government faced, and in so doing they offered insights both into the nature of the imperial government's reform movement and the nature and strength of Chinese nationalism in this period. The diplomats noted the provincial officials' opposition to reform but attributed it less to provincialism than to the existence of a Chinese patriotism that feared and distrusted, even hated, the Manchu rulers and that opposed any centralization under the auspices of the ruling house. The diplomats deplored the absence of talented men within the administration as well as the imperial government's inept methods of implementing its reform programs. The diplomatic reports also questioned the imperial government's desire for reform, suggesting that its primary objective was to preserve the Manchu dynasty without relinquishing any of its traditional prerogatives. The despatches therefore suggested that although the imperial government had expanded its reform program following the Russo-Japanese War, it had retained its conservative reform ideology and therefore had failed to identify with modern Chinese nationalism. The despatches also revealed the role that the United States, with the other powers, played in inhibiting the reform movement and in contributing to the development of revolutionary nationalism.

Confronted in the summer of 1905 with the Japanese triumph and the increased activities of the Chinese nationalists, the imperial government announced that it would investigate the subject of a constitutional government for China.[2] It then created a Constitutional Commission, composed of Manchus and Chinese, and ordered it to visit Japan and the principal states of Europe and America to study their forms of representative government and to report to the Throne those features that seemed suitable for China. As the commission prepared to leave Peking by train in September, 1905, a bomb exploded as part of the revolutionary nationalists' attempt to destroy the mission, postponing its departure for several months.[3] The Constitutional Commission departed finally in December, 1905, and returned to China in late summer of 1906.

An edict of 26 August 1906 created a special commission to study the reports of the Constitutional Commission and to make recommendations to the Throne.[4] Soon the Throne issued two important edicts. On 1 September 1906 it announced that it would establish a constitutional government when the people were educated to assume

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[2]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 19 July 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 178-179.

[3]E. T. Williams, "The Reorganization of the Peking Government," inclosure in John Gardner Coolidge to Elihu Root, 16 November 1906. The Department of State Archives. Hereinafter cited "Government Reorganization."

[4]Rockhill to Root, 29 August 1906. The Department of State Archives.

their responsibilities.[5] The second edict committed the Throne to governmental reorganization, and the following day it established a commission to develop programs for reforming the administration of the empire as the first step toward a constitutional government.[6]

At the same time the imperial government indicated its willingness to consider political reform, it accelerated its educational reform program. An edict on 14 July 1905 conferred civil service degrees on fourteen Chinese educated abroad and appointed them to responsible positions.[7] On September 1 the Throne issued an edict encouraging Chinese students to study abroad. Another edict on September 2 abolished the traditional courses of study, including the civil service examinations, and installed a modern educational system in its place.[8]

November of 1906 brought a flood of edicts ordering extensive administrative reforms within the central government.[9] A most significant reform was that which aimed at "one man, one office." It abolished overlapping offices and the practice of appointing two,

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[5]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[6]Ibid.

[7]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 1 August 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 179-180.

[8]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 4 September 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 180-182. For details on the new educational system see Cameron, Reform Movement, pp. 71-87, and E. T. Williams' report to Rockhill, 22 December, 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 26 December 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 197-203.

[9]The following material is contained in Williams, "Government Reorganization."

sometimes three, presidents to each board, whereby a Manchu, a Chinese, and a Mongol watch-dogged one another. Theoretically, it also ordained that an official could occupy only one office at a time. Moreoever, in appointing officials there were to be no distinctions between Manchus and Chinese. The imperial government also established two new councils: 1) a Council to Assist in Government, which was to determine and represent public opinion; 2) a General Auditing Office, which was to achieve economy in government. The economizing objective had political implications; it led the imperial government to incorporate obsolete institutions into related boards, thereby abolishing sinecures. In addition, the imperial government ordered the presidents and vice-presidents of the remaining boards to formulate regulations governing the conduct of business and to dismiss any personnel not absolutely required in accomplishing the work.

The administrative reforms of November, 1906, included two other important innovations.[10] First was the creation of a new Board of Communications to control the postal and telegraph services, the railroads and steamships. The imperial government also established a High Court of Justice as a prelude to the establishment of an independent judicial system. Both measures were in response to the nationalistic rights recovery movement which was demanding that China extend the jurisdiction of Chinese law over foreigners residing in China.

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[10] Ibid.

The imperial government also made attempts during this period to adjust its foreign policy to the demands of the Chinese nationalists. On 27 November 1905 it ordered Chinese to sell their mining lands only to natives of their districts.[11] On 22 October 1906 it issued extensive regulations restricting the mining activities of the foreign powers.[12] After the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the imperial government introduced reforms into Manchuria to reëstablish Chinese sovereignty in that region.[13] For the first time in the history of the Manchu reign the imperial government appointed a Chinese, Chao Erh-hsun, instead of a Manchu, to the position of Tartar General of Manchuria. Chao began to modernize the educational system and the army and to introduce Chinese industry into Manchuria. The American Consul General at Newchwang, Thomas Sammons, reported that the Chinese were planning to build their own railroads and attempting to establish native control of the mining concessions by requiring the foreign companies to establish schools of mining engineering to train Chinese to manage these enterprises.[14] Willard Straight, who had just taken charge of the American Consulate General at Mukden, reported in mid-November

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[11]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 24 November 1905. USFR, 1905, p. 234.

[12]Fletcher to the Secretary of State, 29 November 1907. USFR, 1908, pp. 152-176.

[13]Sammons to Colonel John Sleicher, editor of Leslies Weekly, to be forwarded through Francis B. Loomis, 22 September 1905. USCD-Newchwang.

[14]Ibid.

of 1906 that the Chinese official had introduced radical changes in the collection of internal revenues and was encouraging agricultural development, was building roads, was reorganizing the police force as well as establishing a judiciary system, and was attempting to resist all foreign interference.[15]

Even more radical rights recovery activities were occurring independent of the imperial government in 1906. Changes taking place in Shanghai offered a good example.[16] Since the Shanghai riot of December, 1905, the Chinese there had been insisting on the full measure of China's sovereign rights. Chinese nationalists began to compete with the Shanghai Municipal Council to supervise the growth of Shanghai: there were plans to raze the walls around the native city; there were road improvement and sanitation projects; there were proposals to create a modern volunteer army; there were attempts to gain jurisdiction over the Chinese criminal class in the foreign settlement not to levy squeezes but to "'teach a respect for the law.'"

Also indicative of the nature of the imperial government's reform program during 1906 were the reforms it refused to enact.[17] The imperial government retained several obsolete institutions, namely the Censorate, the Imperial College of Surgeons and the

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[15]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 18 November 1906. U.S. Department of State. Consular Despatches. U.S. Consulate General, Mukden. Hereinafter cited USCD-Mukden.

[16]Rodgers to Bacon, 28 May 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[17]The following material is contained in Williams, "Government Reorganization."

Imperial College of Astronomy. The Throne also refused to consolidate the Council of Customs Affairs with the new Board of Finance, a rights recovery measure which would have involved it in disputes with the foreign powers. Moreover, the imperial government retained most of the old-style officials; no new progressive Chinese nor any with a foreign education received an important position. The Throne also rejected some of the special commission's political reform recommendations. In the opinion of the Throne the time was not ripe for a parliament. But it also rejected the scheme of a cabinet that would have given the president of each board a voice in the government, thereby opening the imperial government to charges either of insincerity or of excessive conservatism.

After decreeing the reorganization of the central administrative system, the imperial government turned to the problem of reorganizing the civil service in the provinces. In early December, 1906, the imperial government unveiled its proposed provincial administrative reforms, the essential features of which were as follows.[18] The Throne proposed dividing each province into three parts; a prefecture, a department, and a district. The reforms intended to make the officials,--the prefect, the department and the district magistrates, independent of one another with each one fully responsible for financial, educational, agricultural, and industrial affairs within his jurisdiction. The proposed reforms would also establish an

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[18]Rockhill to Root, 14 December 1906. The Department of State Archives.

independent judicial system: in each province there would be a High Court of Justice; under it would be a Court of Justice in each prefect, department, and district city; the prefects, departments, and districts were further divided into sections, each with a minor Court. The reform commission also consolidated the official residences of the viceroy, provincial treasurer, and judge into one general office, the Provincial Government Office, with control centralized in the viceroy. The last, but hardly the least, of the provincial reforms called for the establishment of local chambers, with the members popularly elected, which were to discuss local affairs and prepare the people for constitutional government.

The imperial government proposed; the provincial authorities refused to dispose. A wave of reaction swept the country and the imperial government abandoned its provincial reorganization schemes until Spring of 1907. The proposed provincial reorganization measures threatened the autonomy of the provincial authorities. By mid-January, 1907, most of the leading provincial officials had revealed their attitude toward the proposed reforms. Many of them approved the proposals; but the Viceroy of Turkestan, Viceroy Chang Chih-tung, and Wu Chung-hsi, Governor of Kiangsi, strongly opposed reform, giving as their reasons the uneducated condition of the people, insufficient funds, and the absence of trained officials to implement the programs.[19]

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[19]Rockhill to Root, 14 December 1906; NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS, "The Fate of the Reform Movement," 16 January 1907, inclosure in Rockhill to Root, 29 January 1906. The Department of State Archives.

The opposition triumphed. For the moment, anyway, reform in China was dead. An edict on 30 December 1906 deified Confucius and another on 1 January 1907 reinstated the Chinese classics and State literature as the foundation of education.[20] On 13 January 1907 the imperial government issued an edict attacking the progressive Chinese officials Chang po-hsi and Tang Shao-yi, both closely associated with the reforming Viceroy of Chihli, Yüan Shih-k'ai. It therefore hinted at the dismissal from office not only of Yüan but of all reform-minded officials.[21] These retrograde edicts raised questions concerning the imperial government's commitment and/or ability to reform.

The imperial government renewed its attempts at provincial administrative reform in early Spring of 1907. Based on the recommendations contained in a joint memorial of Prince Ch'ing and Sun Chia-nai, the new provincial reforms were limited in scale.[22] The memorial had argued against introducing the changes throughout the empire at once because of the varying local customs, the uneven and low educational level of the people, and the expense they would ential. It had suggested that the imperial government introduce the provincial reforms first into the three Manchurian provinces, where local governments were just being established, and into the

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] "Memorial of the Reorganization of the Provincial Governments of China," translated from the Peking Gazette, 10 July 1907, inclosure in Rockhill to Root, 24 July 1905. The Department of State Archives.

provinces of Chihli and Kiangsi, where relations with foreigners had proved relatively easy and where innovations had already occurred. It should then extend the reforms throughout the empire, moving gradually from the easiest to the more difficult provinces. Subsequent edicts indicated that the Throne had adopted the policy recommended in the memorial.

In April, 1907, the imperial government issued an edict, based on the recommendations of a special commission that it had ordered to investigate conditions in Manchuria, reorganizing the three Manchurain provinces of Fengtien, Kirin, and Heilungchiang into one viceroyalty.[23] Instead of a tartar general, each province would have a governor, with all three governors controlled by a single viceroy.[24] The Throne staffed the new positions with Chinese rather than Manchus, a move calculated, perhaps, to achieve two objectives: on the one hand, it should silence Chinese nationalist accusations that the Manchus discriminated against the Chinese in making official appointments; on the other hand, should the reforms fail, the Chinese could be held responsible. Hsü Shih-chang became the new viceroy replacing Tartar General Chao Erh-hsun whom the Throne had accused of unduly antagonizing the Japanese. Tang Shao-yi, Chu Chia-pao, and Tuan Chih-huei, all proteges of Yüan Shih-k'ai, became governors-designate of Fengtien, Kirin, and Heilungchiang respectively and

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[23]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 7 February 1907. USCD-Mukden.

[24]Ragsdale to Assistant Secretary of State, 22 April 1907. U.S. Department of State. Consular Despatches. U.S. Consulate General, Tientsin. Hereinafter cited USCD-Tientsin.

responsible for introducing reforms into the Manchurian provinces.[25]

The Throne also liberalized the memorial system at this time. It invited the people to memorialize the Throne by proceeding through certain official channels.[26]

Reforming the administrative system in Manchuria would prove a more difficult task than the memorials suggested. For Manchurian reform was more than a domestic issue; it also raised important questions regarding foreign policy. A primary objective of the reforms was the reëstablishment of Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, dominated after the Russo-Japanese War by Russia in the North and in the South by Japan. The natives of Manchuria might readily accept the reforms, but certainly those two powers would oppose any measures that denied them the rights and privileges obtained in the treaties or that threatened to deprive them of the fruits of their military activities. Japan had already forced the imperial government to allow Japanese citizens the rights of "promiscuous residence" and property privileges on the same basis as Chinese citizens.[27] Yet, the imperial government had no choice but to attempt to dislodge Russia and Japan and to obstruct the objectives of the other powers. Chinese nationalism was demanding the recovery of China's sovereign rights, and Chinese nationalists were accusing the imperial

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Rockhill to Root, 18 July 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[27]Sammons to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 December 1906. USCD-Newchwang.

government of being more interested in furthering dynastic concerns than in promoting the interests of China. Manchuria therefore offered the imperial government an opportunity to prove the nationalists wrong, a chance to become the leader of the rights recovery movement and thereby demonstrate that it would and, if successful, could serve Chinese nationalism.

The imperial government issued some of its most exciting reform edicts in the Summer and Autumn of 1907. On 13 August 1907 it established a Commission of Constitutional Reform to assist the Throne in the formulation of a political reform program. In September and October the Throne issued edicts decreeing the formation of a Constitutional Assembly and the immediate establishment of Provincial Deliberative Assemblies.[28] An increase in anti-dynastic activity on the part of Chinese nationalists was responsible for the acceleration of political reform.

In July of 1907 Chinese nationalists had assassinated the reactionary Manchu Governor of Anhwei, En-ming.[29] This event so alarmed the imperial government that it hastily expanded its political reform program and issued edicts aiming at improving the relations between the Manchus and Chinese. Answering Chinese accusations that an undue number of Manchus received official appointments, the imperial

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[28]Rockhill to Root, 18 September 1907; Rockhill to Root, 28 August 1908. The Department of State Archives.

[29]For an account of the assassination of En-ming see W. B. Hull to the Assistant Secretary of State, 29 July 1907. USCD-Hankow.

government ordered that no preference be shown Manchus in civil service appointments.[30] It also elevated Viceroy Chang Chih-tung to a position on the Grand Council.[31] The Throne abolished the Manchu Banner Corps and committed itself to paying the bannermen a fixed retirement pension at the time of disbandment. In addition, Manchuria was opened to colonization by the Chinese.[32] In October of 1907 the imperial government decreed that Chinese and Manchus should observe the same mourning customs, that Chinese officials should be given the same rank as Manchu officials of the same grade, and that punishment for Chinese convicted of crimes should be identical to that meted out to Manchus.[33]

The United States Legation and Consular reports on the post-Boxer reform movement and political situation in China revealed that for American diplomatic personnel in the field 1905 was the watershed year, the dividing line between traditional and modern China. In September of 1905 William Martin, Consul at Hankow, wrote that China was nearer the fork in the road ". . . between things

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[30]Rockhill to Root, 28 September 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[31]Rockhill to Root, 23 September 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[32]Rockhill to Root, 28 September 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[33]Thomas Haskins, "Memorandum," inclosure in Fletcher to Root, 12 October 1907. The Department of State Archives.

ancient and modern, than her best friends ever dreamed she would be at this date."[34] In May, 1906, Shanghai Consul General James L. Rodgers wrote: "There is unification of the Chinese people as it has never existed before in the memory of the present generation at least."[35] Rodgers considered China's new unity responsible for the great changes that had occurred in Shanghai during the past six months. For him the "significant illustration" of a new China lay in the "attitude of official China in the prosecution of national affairs."[36] Chinese officials in Shanghai were demanding the full measure of China's sovereign rights. In Rodgers' opinion "the day of passive acceptance and continuance of time honored methods has passed. . . ."[37]

The consuls' reports left little doubt as to what they thought was responsible for China's sudden metamorphosis. It was Japan's recent victory over Russia and, as observed earlier, China's own experience with the anti-American boycott.[38] Minister Rockhill noted the effect of the Japanese victory:

> . . . speakers [at a boycott meeting] exhorted everyone present to maintain a firm foot to show to the world that in this instance, at any rate, there is a united China. . . . Other speakers showed how little Japan by her unity and determination had beaten her

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[34]Martin to Loomis, 15 September 1905. USCD-Hankow.

[35]Rodgers to Bacon, 28 May 1906. USCD-Shanghai.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]See above, pp. 143-145.

> huge opponent Russia, showing the world what Asiatics are able to do when thoroughly aroused. . . .[39]

Martin, too, emphasized the impact of the Russo-Japanese War:

> The fact that a great modern war has been fought on Chinese territory at the very door of their capital cannot fail to have impressed upon those who have the strengthening and perpetuating of the Chinese Empire under their care, the absolute importance of bringing her, both in Government and business, more in accord with western methods.[40]

Japan offered China a model of successful reform. It served as an example of what a united people with a modernized state could do. The boycott against the United States afforded China an opportunity to test the validity of the Japanese model for China. It worked sufficiently well to accelerate the process of politicizing the Chinese people. By late 1905 nationalism had developed to the point that many of the merchants and gentry, the young students, and even some literati began to demand the modernization of China's ancient institutions, particularly its form of government. Many educated Chinese wanted a modern, constitutional government with the political power divided, checked, and balanced. The students and a new gentry-merchant class wanted a government concerned with and powerful enough to promote their interests. They also desired a role in developing China's domestic and foreign policies. Most important was the objective of reform,--the recovery and maintenance of Chinese sovereignty. The treaty provisions notwithstanding, Chinese nationalists were insisting that China, not the foreign powers, develop

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[39]Rockhill to Root, 26 July 1905. USFR, 1905, p. 211.

[40]Martin to Loomis, 15 September 1905. USCD-Hankow.

China's resources.

Regardless of whether nationalism animated China's rulers, they could ignore its demands only at a great risk to the continued existence of the Manchu dynasty. Minister Rockhill had perceived this reality and had informed Secretary of State Elihu Root that the Manchu dynasty would continue to reign only if the imperial government modernized the administration and developed the resources of the country.[41] In his report of November, 1906, Chinese Secretary E. T. Williams emphasized Rockhill's conclusion. In Williams' opinion the dynasty's life depended on strengthening its hold on the masses of the people.[42]

American diplomats in China responded to the expansion of the imperial government's reform program with enthusiasm. The United States China policy objectives dictated that response. The United States greatly feared revolution. Revolutionary disorder would promote anti-foreign activities and perhaps lead to foreign intervention which could easily end in the partition of the Chinese Empire. The United States had nothing to gain from the partition of China. American diplomats therefore encouraged the strengthening and modernization of China along western lines in order to remove the "sources of irritation" that encouraged internal rebellion and foreign intervention.[43]

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[41]Rockhill to Root, 26 February 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[42]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[43]See above, pp. 72-73.

The expansion of the imperial government's reform program was encouraging to the diplomatic personnel. Minister Rockhill and E. T. Williams noted the depressing effect on the development of a modern education system of the centuries-old civil service examinations based on the Chinese classics.[44] As long as the traditional courses of study remained the chief path to official preferrment, Chinese students would shun the modern schools and China would lack leaders trained to handle the tasks of modernizing China and developing its resources. In Rockhill's opinion the abolition of the civil service examination system was therefore a measure "capable of shaking Chinese society to its very foundations."[45]

American missionary educators in China were critical of the imperial government's refusal to treat the Chinese graduates of the missionary schools on the same basis as the graduates of the public schools. Missionary school graduates were ineligible for the government's study abroad programs and barred from holding any office. The imperial government's price for its recognition of the missionary school graduates was that the missions conform their educational policies to that established by the government, which meant that they would have to venerate Confucius.[46] The imperial government had

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[44]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 1 August 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 179-180; E. T. Williams to Rockhill, 22 December 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 26 December 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 197-203.

[45]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 1 August 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 179-180.

[46]See above, pp. 83-84.

determined to control China's education system; the foreign missions desired to remain autonomous. The missionaries argued that their schools cost the government nothing, that the mission schools were not in competition with the government schools since the missions charged tuition while the public schools were free, and that the mission schools were superior and could therefore furnish the government with leaders trained to perform the very functions that China so desparately needed. In the opinion of the American missionaries the imperial government ought to treat the graduates of the public and the mission schools equally and its refusal to do so was a denial of religious freedom.[47] The missionaries therefore requested Minister Rockhill to defend their position.

Minister Rockhill favored the missionaries' objectives, up to a point. Rockhill desired to improve relations between the missionaries and the imperial government and therefore hoped to see the mission colleges placed on an equal footing with the government institutions.[48] But the Minister suggested to the missionaries that they compromise their objectives. In Rockhill's opinion the imperial government was not ready for so drastic a step as complete religious freedom. But he felt that the missionaries could achieve their goal of equal consideration of their colleges and graduates if the missionaries were

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[47]D. L. Anderson, Soochow, to Minister Rockhill, 20 September 1905; Young J. Allen to Minister Rockhill, 12 December 1905, inclosures 1 and 2 respectively in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 20 March 1906. USFR, 1906, I, pp. 341-344.

[48]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 20 March 1906. USFR, 1906, I, pp. 341-342.

willing to establish courses of study to prepare their students for the new government examinations and submit these programs to government inspection.[49] E. T. Williams shared Rockhill's sentiments and, in fact, thought that the primary purpose of the mission colleges should be to prepare "men and women for the service of the church."[50]

The diplomats were less willing, however, to compromise the mining interests of American investors. On 23 December 1905 Minister Rockhill protested to Prince Ch'ing that the imperial government's order to sell mining lands only to Chinese citizens violated the commercial treaty of 1903 between China and the United States.[51] The diplomats took the same position with regard to the imperial government's revised mining restrictions, consisting of seventy-six regulations and seventy-three sub-regulations, that would become effective in March, 1908.[52] In the opinion of Chargé d'affaires, Henry P. Fletcher, the regulations were illiberal and "if put into operation in their present form, [would] handicap, if not entirely prevent, the employment of foreign capital and foreign participation in the development of China's mineral resources."[53] Sir John Jordan

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[49]Rockhill to Young J. Allen, 3 January 1906, inclosure 3, ibid., pp. 344-345.

[50]Williams to Rockhill, 22 December 1905, inclosure in Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 26 December 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 197, 203.

[51]Rockhill to the Secretary of State, 24 November 1905. USFR, 1905, pp. 234-235.

[52]Fletcher to the Secretary of State, 29 November 1907. USFR, 1908, pp. 152-176.

[53]Ibid.

had already protested to Prince Ch'ing, and Fletcher expected France and Germany to follow suit. After studying the new mining regulations, the Department instructed Fletcher to protest them "on lines followed by the British Minister. . . ."[54] The United States favored the modernization and strengthening of China that modern Chinese nationalism was demanding, but it insisted that China conduct its reform programs on terms favorable to United States interests. The United States, like the other powers, expected to participate in the development of China's mineral resources.

Minister Rockhill hoped that the imperial government would be able to reform China's political system but, noting the mediocrity of the officials the Throne had appointed in August, 1906, to the special commission to study the reports of the returned Constitutional Commission, he doubted that anything worthwhile would be forthcoming.[55] The Minister therefore was pleasantly surprised by the edicts of 1 September 1906 promising a constitutional government when the educational level of the people could support it and pledging the imperial government to undertake administrative reform. But, even though Rockhill found the proposed administrative reform "most gratifying . . . ," he still confessed that he was pessimistic regarding its chances of being carried out or of being permanent. In Rockhill's opinion, the obstacles to reform were the poor caliber of the

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[54]Acting Secretary of State Roger Bacon to Chargé Fletcher, 3 February 1908. USFR, 1908, p. 173.

[55]Rockhill to Root, 29 August 1906. The Department of State Archives.

officials entrusted with the task, a too ambitious timetable for reform, and the conservative character of the gentry and officials.[56]

Events challenged Rockhill's predictions. For, a flood of edicts in November, 1906, ordered extensive administrative reforms within the central government. An invaluable report by E. T. Williams described and evaluated the reforms for the Department. Williams was most impressed with the reform that aimed at "one man, one office" which in Williams' opinion abolished the "useless multiplication of offices."[57] The Chinese Secretary also approved of the economizing measures. For they would "put hundreds of men out of office entirely . . . hangers-on drawing pay . . . , most of whom were supernumeraries."[58]

Both Williams and J. G. Coolidge, Chargé d'affaires in Rockhill's absence, reported widespread criticism of the imperial government's administrative reform program.[59] They noted that foreigners in China as well as young progressive Chinese regarded the central government's reforms as "mere empty verbiage." Foreigners ridiculed the retention of the Censorate, of the Imperial College of Surgeons, and of the Imperial College of Astronomy. They regarded other alterations as changes in name only. Progressive Chinese,

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[56]Rockhill to Root, 4 September 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[57]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.; Collidge to Root, 16 November 1906. The Department of State Archives.

mostly Cantonese, charged that the reforms were meaningless because the Throne had filled the positions with reactionary officials. Williams admitted that most of the old-style officials had remained. Yet, Williams countered that none of the officials was "violently reactionary, and the proportion in any case can not be considered large."[60] He termed unjust the accusation that Manchus had secured too many positions. For, he observed that the government had appointed fourteen Manchus, one Mongol and fifteen Chinese to office, capping the observation with "it must be remembered that after all it is a Manchu dynasty that rules China," a remark the Throne must have found gratifying.[61]

In Williams' opinion, however, the imperial government was still conservative in its reform ideology. The Chinese Secretary had reported a division within the committee to draft reform proposals that cut across race lines, with one group intent on establishing as liberal a government as possible and the other determined to adhere to tradition. Which group the Throne favored was evident in the fact that even though the committee's proposals were compromises the Throne had rejected some of the most important of its suggestions. Most revealing of the Throne's conservatism was its rejection of the proposal to establish a cabinet which would have given the president of each board a voice in the government.[62]

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[60]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[61]Ibid.

[62]Ibid.

Williams' explanation of the Throne's conservatism in refusing to consolidate the Council of Customs Affairs with the new Board of Finance revealed the inhibiting effect that the powers were having on the reform movement: "Perhaps it was felt that so much opposition had been encountered already from the foreign Powers because of interference with the administration of the customs that it was better not to stir up further discussion of the subject."[63]

Williams appeared in late 1906 to have altered his earlier attitude toward the conservative nature of the imperial government's reform ideology and objectives. In 1905 Williams had hoped that in reforming its institutions China would be able "to graft the modern system upon the rootstock of the ancient without destroying the latter."[64] In 1906 the Chinese Secretary concluded that the greatest obstacle to reform in China was its "worship of the past."[65] Williams apparently desired more radical reforms than the imperial government was pursuing.

Yet, all things considered, both Williams and Collidge reacted favorably to the reforms. The Chargé d'affaires wrote: "If they represented the full measure of reform aimed at they would indeed be lamentably deficient, but as the first step on the long road toward giving China an enlightened form of constitutional government they

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[63] Ibid.

[64] See above, pp. 90-93.

[65] Williams, "Government Reorganization."

are far from being unimportant or unwise."[66] Coolidge was echoing Williams' opinion. The Chinese Secretary considered the educational level in China too low to permit popular participation in government. He therefore agreed with the imperial government's decisions to establish the Council to Assist in Government, rather than a parliament, and to retain the Censorate to control the journalists. Williams never doubted the sincerity and patriotic motives of the imperial government and felt that it deserved congratulations rather than condemnation:

> On the whole the Edicts forwarded . . . must be regarded as marking one of the most important epochs in the history of China, and while the sanguine will undoubtedly be disappointed in the results, there seems no reason to doubt that the desire of the Throne and of many patriotic officials for reform is most sincere, and that some measure of improvement will follow. We may hope, at least, that the changes now being inaugurated will prove to be but the beginning of a movement which will bring China into line with the most progressive nations of the world.[67]

In Williams' opinion the reforms of November, 1906, were only a "first installment." As evidence, he noted that the Throne had retained the commission and had directed it to concentrate on reorganizing the civil service in the provinces. Minister Rockhill reported to the Department concerning the essential features of the proposed provincial administrative reforms in mid-December, 1906, reforms that never left the paper on which they were proposed.[68] A

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[66]Coolidge to Root, 16 November 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[67]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[68]Rockhill to Root, 14 December 1906. The Department of State Archives.

wave of reaction swept the country and the government abandoned its provincial reorganization schemes until Summer of 1907.

E. T. Williams had predicted trouble. In his opinion provincial reform was "a greater task than the one just completed. The provincial official comes more closely in touch with the life of the common people and is correspondingly of more importance to them."[69] Minister Rockhill's December report had also noted the lack of cooperation among the viceroys.[70] Then in January, 1907, Rockhill informed the Department that "at the present moment the imperial government is passing through a period of conservatism, and . . . is much less in love with Western innovations than it was six months ago."[71] It had reversed its educational reforms and had attacked the reform-minded officials, including America's favorite, Yüan Shih-k'ai.

The Legation reports in the subsequent months provided insights into the nature of, the reasons for, and the implications of this negative reaction to administrative reorganization. As before, there was no simple explanation for the suspension of the reform movement. Rockhill initially attributed it to a power struggle between liberal and conservative officials.[72] The Minister based the division on geographical rather than racial lines. He found that the

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[69]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[70]Rockhill to Root, 14 December 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[71]Rockhill to Root, 17 January 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[72]Ibid.

southerners favored liberal reforms and that the northerners sought to retain their traditional powers. Rockhill suggested that Yüan's difficulties might stem from a debate over foreign policy. Although humiliated by Japan, Russia was to many Manchu-Chinese officials still surprisingly strong and a more immediate threat to China than Japan. Perhaps Yüan's pro-Japanese tendencies had alarmed those who sought an accomodation with Russia. Although Rockhill regretted both the halt in the reform movement and Yüan's apparent demise, he considered them temporary and even good for China in the long run. For, in his opinion the imperial government was attempting to do too much, too fast.[73]

Consul General James Ragsdale at Tientsin disagreed with Rockhill's optimistic conclusion. The removal from office of progressive Chinese was stimulating political unrest: "Unless some counteracting force intervenes to save the situation, national progress and reform will only exist as past memories by next spring. . . . We may see a repetition of a similar state of affairs to what existed prior to the Boxer outbreak in 1900."[74]

In the following months, however, Minister Rockhill reversed his initial conclusions. A clipping from the NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS which Rockhill had forwarded to the Department was indicative of the Minister's new conclusions. The article cautioned against reducing

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[73]Ibid.

[74]Ragsdale to Assistant Secretary of State, 13 February 1907. USCD-Tientsin.

the reform problems to a struggle between the forces of progress and reaction: "Behind the personalities of the protagonists we may see the old enmity between Manchu and Chinese, while principles of government, such as centralization as against decentralization, are also represented."[75] The Minister's reports between March and July of 1907 confirmed the writer's observations.

Rockhill's evaluation of the proposed administrative reorganization measures revealed a complex, politically explosive situation. The reforms would greatly reduce the power of the department and district magistrates whom the Throne had earlier accused of promoting corruption and oppressing the people.[76] The reforms introduced the concept of official accountability: they would eliminate overlapping functions; they would clearly delineate official responsibilities; they would establish independent courts to administer justice. Rockhill approved. For, in his opinion the main obstacle to reform in China was its incompetent and incorrigible officialdom. Yet, as Rockhill noted, these reforms tended to concentrate power in the hands of the viceroys and governors whom the central government could more easily control.[77] The reforms had attacked vested interests and, consequently, the local officials would probably oppose them.

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[75]"The Situation in China," 21 January 1907, inclosure in Rockhill to Root, 29 January 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[76]Williams, "Government Reorganization."

[77]Rockhill to Root, 28 March 1907. The Department of State Archives.

The Legation reports suggested, however, that behind provincial opposition to the reforms was the imperial government's inept methods of implementing its policies. Minister Rockhill offered an explanation, other than a desire for personal aggrandizement, for the provincial officials' apparent particularism. As portrayed by Rockhill, the imperial government was acting in a manner that could lead Chinese both to question its sincerity regarding reform and to fear that the centralization of power would be detrimental to their interests. First, it had begun to reverse its earlier reforms, a course of action which Rockhill interpreted as "additional evidence of the absolute inability of the Government to adhere for even a short time to the laws and orders it is daily publishing."[78] Most serious in Rockhill's estimation, however, was the government's wholesale dismissal of progressive officials and its appointment of reactionaries, such as the vindictive Ts'en Ch'un-hsuan, the Viceroy at Canton during the anti-American boycott. Rockhill reported that the government's actions were unnerving the public. To the American Minister it indicated "a complete absence of any well-defined policy and showed that the Government is floundering along without any clear purpose or confidence in itself."[79]

The situation in China as of mid-1907 led Rockhill to despair of its ever reforming itself. Although the Minister did not directly

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[78]Rockhill to Root, 7 May 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[79]Rockhill to Root, 20 May 1907. The Department of State Archives.

question the sincerity of the government's desire to reform, his reports revealed that he considered it totally unable to institute permanent reforms:

> Under such conditions it seems impossible that any great reform can be undertaken in China,--let alone carried out; sporadic attempts at reform will continue to be made, without a doubt, and many of them will be partially successful within limited areas governed (as is now this province) by strong, powerful officials; but beyond that I can see absolutely no liklihood of general change.[80]

Consul General Ragsdale emphasized the implications of the imperial government's failure to achieve reform. It was stimulating revolutionary activity throughout China. Many Chinese nationalists had concluded that "the reform fiasco at Peking signifies nothing but a make-believe and no efficient constitutional regime can ever be expected from the Manchu rulers."[81]

But, a wave of optimism dissipated Minister Rockhill's frustration and despair, momentarily anyway. In late July, 1907, Rockhill found new reason to hope that China might be able to achieve reform after all. The imperial government had renewed its attempts at provincial administrative reform. But, on the suggestions of Prince Ch'ing and Sun Chia-nai, it decided on gradual reform beginning with Manchuria and the more malleable provinces of Chihli and Kiangsi.[82] The Throne had also liberalized the memorial system. Rockhill doubted

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[80]Rockhill to Root, 7 May 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[81]Ragsdale to Bacon, 11 May 1907. USCD-Tientsin.

[82]See above, pp. 161-162.

the latter measure would have much practical value, but still the Minister regarded the new departure with optimism: "It shows that the Government's schemes of reform are maturing and taking shape and that they are being carefully planned to give a fair share to popular representation, while greatly strengthening and centralizing the control and power of the state over the provinces.[83]

The imperial government's Manchurian reforms were controversial from the beginning. For they challenged the policy assumptions and objectives of the powers, particularly Russia, Japan, and the United States which at this time was more active in Manchuria than in any part of the Chinese Empire. When in 1905 the imperial government had appointed the Chinese Chao Erh-hsun, instead of a Manchu, to the position of tartar general and had ordered Chao to introduce Chinese industry and modernize the education system, Consul General Thomas Sammons had written the Department: "Important and highly significant, indeed somewhat radical changes are in progress."[84] In Sammons' opinion the reform measures suggested an intention to assert Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria and were the imperial government's response to the challenge presented it by the rights recovery activities of the Chinese gentry and merchants in South China.[85] The tartar general's activities throughout 1906 had dispelled any doubts that may have

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[83]Rockhill to Root, 24 July 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[84]Sammons to Colonel John Sleicher, via Francis B. Loomis, 22 September 1905. USCD-Newchwang.

[85]Ibid.

persisted among foreigners in Manchuria concerning China's intentions to assert its sovereignty over Manchuria.

At this time Japan presented a greater threat to China's integrity than did Russia. Russian merchants were absent from Northern Manchuria and therefore Chinese merchants there were free to conduct their business as usual, whereas Japanese merchants had overrun South Manchuria and were obstructing the business activities of the Chinese in every way possible. The Japanese had simply moved into buildings formerly occupied illegally by Russia. In addition, they were siezing land, were refusing to pay the taxes that local Chinese merchants paid and were demanding the rights of "promiscuous residence" and property on the same basis as Chinese citizens. Japanese demands challenged the Chinese interpretation of the treaties, as least as regarded all Manchurian cities except Newchwang, and would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the Chinese officials to control the foreigners.[86]

In the opinion of Consuls-General Sammons and Straight and of Minister Rockhill in 1906, both Japan's aggressive tactics and China's rights recovery movement threatened American interests in Manchuria. Japan had forbidden foreigners, other than Japanese, to travel in Japanese-occupied Manchuria on the grounds that Japan had not yet pacified the area but would still be held responsible for any loss of life or destruction of property. Japan had also bought all the land suitable for foreign settlement. Japanese goods were being given

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[86] Ibid.; Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 18 November 1906. USCD-Mukden.

preferential transportation rates, and Japan was denying Americans and Europeans both warehouse and docking facilities. In short, Japan was doing everything possible to achieve a dominant position in Manchuria before the termination of the occupation period in Spring, 1907.[87] For its part, China was refusing to fulfill the terms of the commercial treaty of 1903 with the United States, specifically those terms which required China to open the ports of Mukden and Antung to foreign trade and residence, to permit foreigners to lease land in perpetuity, and to encourage foreign investment to develop China's resources.[88]

Yet, the American diplomats disagreed on whether China or Japan constituted the most serious threat to American interests and on how the United States should handle the problem. In 1906 Minister Rockhill seemed to regard China as the greater threat. For, he had written Secretary Root in mid-summer that the United States would experience "no difficulty in having the cordial cooperation of the Japanese" in maintaining the open door in Manchuria. In Rockhill's opinion ". . . the difficulties will all come from the Chinese who are, . . . endeavoring to restrict at the treaty ports named the undoubted rights and privileges we have acquired in Chinese treaty ports, and to assert in this matter as in every other that comes up their 'rights recovery policy.'"[89]

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[87]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, ibid.

[88]Sammons to Rockhill, 15 October 1906. USCD-Newchwang.

[89]Rockhill to Root, 31 July 1906. The Department of State Archives.

Thomas Sammons, however, appeared pro-Chinese in his sentiments. He recognized that nationalism was behind the rights recovery movement and, in fact, even considered its demands as legitimate. Sammons saw no necessary conflict between China's desire to exercise sovereignty over Manchuria and America's insistance on its treaty rights, provided that the United States interpret broadly and generously enforce the terms of the treaty. By that Sammons meant from the Chinese point of view. He noted that Japan, with full British support, would insist on the rights of promiscuous residence and property privileges, but he felt that foreigners should reside on leased territory in international settlements which, however, the foreigners controlled. Yet, Sammons also pointed out that as the Chinese brought their institutions to conform with those of the West the foreigners might have to readjust their attitudes toward China even to the point of abolishing extra-territoriality.[90]

Willard Straight viewed China and Japan as equal threats to the open door. Straight reported that the "Chinese manifest no inclination to acquiesce in the terms which have been suggested as acceptably defining the conditions under which Manchurian cities shall be opened to foreign trade and residence."[91] The Chinese were maintaining that Mukden was a "self-opened" port and that therefore foreign merchants must reside outside the city walls and that

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[90]Sammons to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 December 1906. USCD-Newchwang.

[91]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 18 November 1906. USCD-Mukden.

foreigners could lease but not own land.[92] The Japanese had grabbed the preferred land and were entrenching themselves in advantageous positions before the end of the occupation period.

Straight's prescription for resolving the problem that China's rights recovery movement and Japanese objectives presented to the realization of American objectives contained all the contradications of the United States China policy. In the same breath Straight suggested that the United States both obstruct and support China's rights recovery program. If the United States were to secure equality of opportunity in the face of Chinese intransigence, Straight felt that it "might be necessary to quote as precedents certain privileges which, assumed under the aegis of military occupation, are now enjoyed by the Japanese in defiance of Chinese officials, who are impotent in the face of such aggression."[93] Yet, after detailing Japan's obstructions to the open door Straight suggested ". . . cooperating with China in defining the rights of foreigners in Manchuria to restrict irregular Japanese activity and to relieve the general apprehension of the American and European commercial communities."[94]

China lost the first round in its fight to assert unrestrained sovereignty in Manchuria. In a conversation between Sammons and the Chinese Minister to the United States the latter had indicated that

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

". . . Japan would not be bound by China's policy of attempting to restrict foreigners to Foreign Settlements in Treaty ports. . . ."[95] But, Sammons also noted that the Minister remained confident that China would either expel or absorb the intruders. One might therefore reasonably expect at least another round.

It began in 1907 and took the shape of administrative reorganization of the three Manchurian provinces. This time around both Minister Rockhill and Consul General Straight welcomed the imperial government's reforms, despite their rights recovery objectives. With undisguised surprise both men remarked that Japan was extremely suspicious of and was strongly resisting the imperial government's policy. In fact, Minister Rockhill reported that the Japanese regarded it as "hostile to all foreigners and to all foreign interests."[96] Japan's response bewildered Rockhill because he had found that China's attempts to recover or save valuable rights were generally futile or achieved only at enormous expense.[97] Straight's surprise stemmed from his expectation that the policies of the new Manchurian officials would reflect their sponsor Yüan Shih-k'ai's pro-Japanese sentiments and that consequently the Japanese would warmly welcome the new officials.[98] Yet, the consular reports also

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[95]Sammons to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 December 1906. USCD-Newchwang.

[96]Rockhill to Root, 31 May 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 19 June 1907. USCD-Mukden.

suggested that China might attempt to pit the powers against one another. It would neutralize Russia with the threat of a Sino-Japanese alliance. It would meet the Japanese threat with a policy of procrastination and by encouraging the other powers to invest in Manchuria,[99] a course of action which the rights recovery nationalists would find completely unacceptable.

By Summer of 1907 neither Rockhill nor Straight still regarded China's rights recovery policy as detrimental to American interests. Japan was the greater threat. Terming the Japanese demands on China "unjustifiable," Minister Rockhill wrote Secretary Root: "China's efforts to put her house in order deserve our sympathetic support and I sincerely hope and believe that she will get it and that we will not believe in the reported dangers of the rights recovery policy and anti-foreignism."[100]

Willard Straight believed that the United States could eat its cake and still have it. Straight suggested to the Department that the United States policy toward China should be one of "insisting upon a full recognition by the Chinese authorities of our treaty rights and resisting any curtailment thereof, [and] to welcome and to encourage the consolidation of Chinese authority as constituting the strongest guarantee of the equality of opportunity in Manchuria."[101]

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[99]Sammons to Assistant Secretary of State, 24 December 1906. USCD-Newchwang.

[100]31 May 1907. The Department of State Archives.

[101]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 19 June 1907. USCD-Mukden.

Within a few months Straight would make explicit suggestions regarding how the United States could strengthen Chinese authority in Manchuria in a despatch that contained all the elements of his "dollar diplomacy."

To American consular officials observing China's political scene in the Fall of 1907, it appeared as if the imperial government's Manchurian reform program was travelling the same road as had the other attempts at reform. In late September the Throne recalled Viceroy Hsü Shih-chang, largely at the request of the Viceroy himself and of Yüan Shih-k'ai, who was still influential at Peking. Willard Straight readily apprehended the reasons behind the action.[102] He attributed it neither to governmental insincerity, inability, or official intransigence but rather to the Manchurian circumstances. The imperial government had assigned Viceroy Hsu and the other Chinese officials in Manchuria a Sisyphean task. They were to conciliate the Japanese and dissipate the animosity generated by Chao Erh-hsun while at the same time contain Japanese demands within the limits set by Chinese nationalism in order to prevent an anti-dynastic outbreak in South and Central China. Viceroy Hsu's predicament illustrated the impossible position the imperial government occupied in its last years. It had to serve two masters, imperialism and modern Chinese nationalism. In the end it succeeded in satisfying neither.

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[102]Straight to Assistant Secretary of State, 28 September 1907. USCD-Mukden.

But meanwhile, Willard Straight believed that he had found the solution both to China's and to the United States' Japanese problem. American capital should unite with European capital to challenge that of Japan. He therefore hoped the Department would find it expedient to interest American capitalists to establish banks, acquire mines, and build railroads in Manchuria. For in this manner Americans could exercise great influence, ". . . an influence that would be beneficial to China and profitable to themselves."[103] Straight explained how it would work:

> By identifying us more closely with the development of the country the possession of such interests would greatly increase our business. By entering the field now, moreover, and by allying ourselves, at the outset, with the officials who, now in control in Manchuria, represent the most progressive and, at the present time, most influential party in China, we would aid them in this trying time, and later from Manchuria as a starting point, still cooperating with these officials, whose power seems likely to increase rather than wane, might extend our influence and activity to other portions of the Empire.[104]

Through "dollar diplomacy," as the cooperative policy became known, the United States would help China keep open the door to equal economic opportunity in Manchuria and at the same time contribute to the maintenance of China's territorial and administrative integrity; the grateful Chinese would reciprocate by facilitating the entry of American capital into China proper. For the dollar diplomats Manchuria became the threshold to all China.

Straight's proposals disregarded both the international power

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[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

configuration and Chinese nationalism. His reports revealed what factors had led him to formulate such a policy and had made him so confident of its success. Several forces converged to influence Straight's thinking: Chinese officials in Manchuria, using tactics similar to those employed by the Southeastern Mutual Defense Alliance in 1900, had assured Straight that they would welcome American capital into Manchuria because it did not carry with it the threat of political domination;[105] a European syndicate which included French and English businessmen, whose Manchurian interests their governments had already declined to promote, assured Straight of their one hundred per cent cooperation in a policy to obstruct Japan;[106] the final ingredient was perhaps Straight's own nationalism and naïveté which predisposed him to receive the Chinese and European overtures and to ignore blithely the lack of support from the major European governments as well as the problem presented by the rising spirit of Chinese nationalism which was demanding that China, not the powers, develop China's resources. All Straight's policy needed was official endorsement. That President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Root, who had written off both Korea and Manchuria to Japan, refused to give. But their successors William Howard Taft and Philander C. Knox would wholeheartedly endorse the policy with, as recorded elsewhere, disasterous results to United States prestige

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[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

and influence and for China's security, menaced anew in 1910 by the Russo-Japanese Alliance.[107]

Despite the optimism with which Rockhill and Straight regarded the prospects of the United States cooperating with the imperial government in the development of Manchuria, all was not well with the imperial government's reform program in 1907. The assassination of the Manchu Governor of Anhwei emphasized the existence of widespread dissatisfaction with the ruling dynasty and its policies. The imperial government had responded with edicts designed to reduce the tension between the Manchus and Chinese and by appointing the well-known Chang Chih-tung to the Grand Council. Minister Rockhill approved the Throne's efforts to reduce the ethnic tensions, but he was critical of Chang's appointment. He noted that Chang Chih-tung was pro-Japanese and "imbued with the superiority of old Chinese education and modes of thought."[108] In Rockhill's opinion the cause of modern education in China, with America exercising influence, would suffer with the elevation of conservative officials to office.

The imperial government's lack of progress in reforming China's political system was also discouraging to Minister Rockhill. He reported that the Throne had acted upon a suggestion of Yüan Shih-k'ai and had sent the Constitutional Commission abroad for further study of representative forms of government. Rockhill noted

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[107]Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, pp. 133-175.

[108]Rockhill to Root, 23 September 1907. The Department of State Archives.

that the imperial government sent men of "no known ability or prominence" and he therefore concluded:

> I take it that these comparatively useless measures are simply decided upon so that the country may have patience while the government is trying to form an opinion on the question of representative government in general and the comparative value of the different methods followed in the countries which have adopted it.[109]

The imperial government had promised a constitutional government for China, had decreed the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly and the immediate convocation of Provincial Deliberate Assemblies, but in the opinion of Minister Rockhill it still had not developed a coherent political reform policy as of Fall, 1907. Rockhill pictured the Throne as extremely nervous, "being swept away in the stream of memorials and deluge of recommendations for reforming the administration and strengthening the State. . . . The Government seems to be catching at every straw thrown it by the men it still considers as having some strength and clear-sightedness."[110]

According to the United States Legation and Consular reports between 1905 and 1907, the imperial government had initially responded with vigor to the threat to the dynasty's and China's existence by greatly expanding its reform program. The imperial government had promised its subjects a constitutional form of government and in preparation had expanded its educational reform program and had

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[110] Ibid.

undertaken extensive administrative reforms within the central and provincial governments. The imperial government had also attempted to stem the imperialist tide in Manchuria and to regain some of China's sovereign rights. The imperial government hoped that with this response the dynasty would become identified with modern Chinese nationalism.

The diplomatic reports revealed that the imperial government had failed to achieve substantial reform and, therefore, to identify with Chinese nationalism. The reports suggested reasons for the failure of reform between 1905 and 1907. They revealed the inhibiting effect on reform of the foreign presence and the deficiencies of the imperial government's reform policies.

By 1907 it was apparent that modern Chinese nationalism was growing stronger and that it was becoming more hostile to the ruling dynasty. The imperial government, the despatches reported, realized this and had responded with edicts aimed at diminishing the tension between Manchus and Chinese. It had also accelerated the political reform program, calling for the establishment of a Constitutional Assembly and for the immediate convocation of Provincial Deliberative Assemblies. The provincial assemblies would occupy center stage during 1908 and 1909.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROVINCIAL DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLIES: EXPERIMENT IN LIMITED REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Unquestionably the most momentuous event in the imperial government's post-Boxer reform movement was the creation of the Provincial Deliberative Assemblies. The establishment of the provincial assemblies, coming on the heels of the abolition of the civil examination system, radically transformed the nature of China's local power structure, a development which made the political upheaval of 1911 something more than a dynastic fall.[1] It goes without saying that the imperial government had not foreseen the position that the provincial assemblies would occupy, that the role the imperial government had assigned the assemblies and the role these institutions actually played were entirely different in character.

The establishment of Provincial Deliberative Assemblies was another attempt by the imperial government to increase its authority over the local power structures, dominated since the Taiping Rebellion by powerful military leaders, the governors and governors-general, in

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[1] John Fincher has demonstrated the critical role the Provincial Deliberative Assemblies played in China's political crisis, "Political Provincialism and the National Revolution," in China In Revolution, pp. 189-220.

the provinces.[2] The assemblies were to supplement the central administration where it was ineffective and, by circumventing the local authorities, enable the Throne to mobilize the human and economic resources which, due to the abolition of the civil examinations and because of the imperial government's restricted power to tax, were beyond its control.[3] The plan backfired and something quite different from what the imperial government intended occurred.

Instead of a force for reviving the traditional political system, the provincial assemblies became a most effective instrument for stimulating Chinese nationalism, an important force for self-government, and an influential organ of the rights recovery movement. When the provincial assemblies convened in Autumn of 1909, China's constitutional and rights recovery movements merged, united in a new kind of gentry class which was demanding that the imperial and provincial governments promote its interests, interests defined by the requirements of modern Chinese nationalism, and which saw in the assemblies, under gentry control, a powerful instrument for achieving their objectives.[4]

Members of the Chinese gentry class became, therefore, leading

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[2]See above, pp. 10-12.

[3]Fincher, pp. 186, 190, 198, 201, 218-219; The Throne's share in the total tax revenues declined sharply in the late Ch'ing period. Yeh-chien Wang, "The Fiscal Importance of the Land Tax During the Ch'ing Period," Journal of Asian Studies, vol. XXX, No. 4, August, 1971, pp. 837-842.

[4]Fincher, pp. 209-217; P'eng-yüan Chang, "The Constitutionalists," pp. 149-153.

advocates of constitutional government. Whether the gentry class would exercise as much influence on the imperial government's political reform program as it was exerting on foreign policy remained to be seen. Given the critical position the gentry occupied within the imperial system, the central government had to satisfy gentry demands. This, at any rate, was the conclusion reached by senior members of the United States Foreign Service personnel who deplored what they considered a too conservative reform ideology and who predicted that revolution in China would occur not because of foreign aggression but because the imperial government failed to honor its promise to give China a constitutional government.

As the constitutional movement progressed the vital question became whether the gentry would accept the imperial government's definition of constitutionalism. The imperial government had decided to establish a constitutional monarchy like that of Japan wherein the Throne retained its traditional prerogatives.[5] But the provincial assemblies refused to function as rubber-stamp institutions. Neither did they become the tools of the provincial governors. The assemblies became autonomous bodies, sometimes aligning themselves with the Throne against the provincial governors and at other times joining with the governors to circumscribe the power of the Throne.[6] In time, and a rather short time at that, the provincial assemblies became the legitimizers of political power. With their members

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[5]Cameron, Reform Movement, pp. 113-114.

[6]Fincher, pp. 205-206.

popularly elected rather than appointed, the provincial assemblies began to view themselves, rather than the Emperor, as the true representatives of the people.[7] When that happened any governing force that acted contrary to the wishes of the assemblies was in serious trouble.

The imperial government had committed itself to establishing a constitutional government in September of 1906. But until mid-summer of 1908 it had taken an indirect approach to the problem of forming a constitutional system. Between 1906 and 1908 the imperial government had concentrated primarily on educational reform and on administrative reform in the central and provincial governments. Improving relations between Manchus and Chinese also occupied a priority position, especially after the assassination of the Manchu Governor of Anhwei, En-ming. The political murder and other signs of popular unrest had spurred the imperial government to action, and on 13 August 1907 it had created a Commission of Constitutional Reform to assist it in the formulation of a political reform program. Edicts in September and October of 1907 decreed the formation of a Constitutional Assembly and the immediate establishment Provincial Deliberative Assemblies. Yet, according to Minister Rockhill, the provincial authorities had accomplished nothing toward that latter objective as of late August, 1908. The reason for this in Rockhill's opinion was

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[7] Ibid., pp. 189-199, 201.

that the imperial government was still searching for a coherent political philosophy.[8]

By Summer of 1908 it appeared as if the imperial government had formulated a definite opinion regarding constitutional reform in China. On 22 July 1908 the Throne issued an important edict ordering the Provincial Deliberative Assemblies to convene within the next year and setting forth regulations which defined the responsibilities of the provincial assemblies, which established the requirements for membership and for voting, and which governed the election process. The imperial government also ordered the Bureau for the Collation of Administrative Reforms and the Constitutional Commission to prepare a report concerning the principles to be embodied in the constitution, the procedures for electing members to the Constitutional (National) Assembly, and the powers to be vested in the National Parliament, scheduled to open in 1916. Lastly, the edict directed the Constitutional Commission to formulate a comprehensive reform program that would insure the successful operation of the National Parliament.[9]

Based on the reports of the Bureau and the Commission, the imperial government issued another edict on 27 August 1908 in which it outlined the constitution and detailed the reforms the imperial and provincial governments had to implement during the nine-year preparatory period prior to the opening of Parliament. The

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[8]See above, pp. 192-193.

[9]Rockhill to Root, 12 September 1908. The Department of State Archives.

constitution defined the powers and responsibilities of the Sovereign, the Parliament, and the Provincial Assemblies respectively. Minister Rockhill divided the ambitious reform measures into five major categories: 1) representative assemblies; 2) financial reforms; 3) judicial reform; 4) educational reform; 5) administrative reform. The year 1916 would see the selection of a premier, the establishment of a national budget, and the promulgation of the constitution. The entire reform program would culminate in 1916 with the major reform objective of the period,--the convening of the National Parliament.[10]

A comprehensive report by the Chinese Secretary to the American Legation, Charles D. Tenney, educated the Department on the details pertaining to the provincial assemblies, such as the size of each assembly, the requirements for membership therein, the length of the members' terms, the qualifications of the voters, and the organization, responsibilities, and powers of the assemblies.[11] The imperial government based the size of the first provincial assemblies on the number of qualified voters in each district as determined from the tax roles and the old civil examination rosters. But it would reconsider the question upon the completion of the new census then underway. The size of the first assemblies varied greatly; the Manchurian provinces of Kirin and Heilungchiang were the smallest

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[10] Ibid.; See also E. T. Williams to Assistant Secretary of State, 5 September 1908. USCD-Tientsin.

[11] The following paragraphs concerning details pertaining to the provincial assemblies are based on material contained in Tenney's Memorandum of 15 January 1910, inclosure in Fletcher to Knox, 21 January 1910. The Department of State Archives.

with thirty members each, while Chihli was the largest with 140 members, Kiangsu second with 121 members, and Chekiang third with 114 members. The remaining provincial assemblies varied in size from approximately forty to 100 members.

A member of the provincial assembly had to be at least thirty years old and be either a native or resident for ten years of the province in which he served. The edict of 22 July 1908 excluded certain types of people from serving in the provincial assemblies: it barred anyone convicted of crime, anyone engaged in disreputable business, or even suspected of business irregularities, and anyone whose family members were so involved; opium users, insane and illiterate persons could not qualify; nor could office holders, soldiers, policemen, priests--Taoist, Buddhist, or otherwise, students enrolled in any school and, finally, primary school teachers.

Members to the provincial assemblies would be indirectly elected. Qualified voters would choose electors who would then elect the assembly members. To qualify to vote one had to be an adult male of at least twenty-five years and meet the same residency requirements as for serving in the assembly. Those ineligible to serve in the assemblies were also ineligible to vote, with the exception of primary school teachers. The edict limited the franchise to those employed for three years either in teaching or in some other socially desirable occupation, to those with degrees from a Chinese or foreign Middle School or the equivalent, to those with the old literary degree of Senior Licentiate or above, to those who had held an official post at the seventh civil rank or the fifth military rank, and to those who

had any business capitalized at 5000 yüan.

The edict also determined the organization and functions of the provincial assemblies. It provided each assembly with a chairman, a vice-chairman, and a permanent committee elected by the members of the assembly, all to hold office for three years. The remaining members would serve for one year and for no more than two consecutive terms. The provincial assemblies would convene annually for a forty day session with an additional ten days permitted to complete unfinished business. The provincial authorities controlled the assemblies to a certain degree. The imperial government had empowered the viceroys or governors to determine the subjects the provincial assemblies would discuss. But these authorities were unable to prohibit the assembly from discussing any issue it chose. Yet, the provincial assemblies were conceived as purely deliberative and consultative bodies without legislative powers. The edict had vested that authority in the viceroys or governors who were free to accept or reject bills passed by the assembly.

Before preparations for the provincial and national assemblies could proceed very far, however, there occurred two almost simultaneous events which drastically altered the complexion of the reform movement. On 14 November 1908 Emperor Kuang-hsü died; the Empress Dowager T'zu-hsi, his aunt and the real power behind the Dragon Throne, died on the following day. The two deaths had a disasterous effect on the imperial government's constitutional reform program. Kuang-hsü's heir, Prince Pu-yi, was just three years old. Therefore, his father Prince Chun, the inexperienced and incompetent brother of the deceased

Emperor, would serve as Prince Regent during Pu-hi's minority. Apparently T'zu-hsi had realized Prince Chun's deficiencies when she had resolved the succession problem, but because she had expected to outlive the Emperor for more than twenty-four hours she had considered them of little consequence. Of the two deaths, that of T'zu-hsi was the most serious. While the Empress Dowager was at the helm, the Manchu ship of state had managed to navigate the turbulent waters. But now, with the captain gone and an inexperienced crew aboard, storm winds hurled it against one rocky reef after another until finally, irreparably damaged, it sank beneath the waves.

T'zu-hsi's death marked the beginning of the end for the Manchu dynasty. The Prince Regent lacked sufficient training and experience to handle the crisis that was creeping up on the imperial government. His inexperience went uncompensated for by native ability. Prince Chun lacked such qualities as prudence, constancy, magnanimity, political sensitivity, and just plain common sense. In appointing officials, Prince Chun was inept and unstatesmanlike, advancing the old-style, often reactionary officials instead of those who were liberal and reform-minded and favoring Manchus over Chinese. He was imprudent in selecting his advisors, surrounding himself with friendly incompetents. Toward those who had displeased him, Prince Chun was vindictive and often allowed personal feelings rather than the public, or even dynastic, interests to determine his policies, as evidenced in the removal of Yüan Shih-k'ai. In formulating policy he temporized and then was inconsistent in implementing it. Prince Chun's difficulties stemmed in part from a failure to consolidate

his power. Consequently, an internecine struggle for power had erupted between the Regent and the new Empress Dowager, the wife of the deceased Emperor, who desired to emulate T'zu-hsi. The sacrifice this time was the Manchu reformer, Tuan-fang. Instead of stabilizing China's political situation, Prince Chun's regency further stimulated the political unrest. Whether the imperial government could have controlled the provincial assemblies had T'zu-hsi lived is an impossible question to answer. Yet, the consular despatches conveyed the distinct impression that China after 1908, under the regency of Prince Chun, was moving toward revolution at a greatly accelerated pace.

The first casualty of Prince Chun's regency was the Chinese Viceroy Yüan Shih-k'ai whose dishonorable discharge from public service on 2 January 1909 provoked a minor crisis in relations between the United States and China. Ostensibly the Throne had dismissed Yüan because the viceroy was suffering from an incapacitating illness, "rheumatism" of the leg to be specific. Minister Rockhill informed the Department of the 'real' reasons the Regent had purged Yüan. Rockhill attributed it to the Regent's personal dislike of Yüan because the latter had supported the Empress Dowager in the coup d'etat of 1898 in which the Emperor had fallen with the reform movement and also to the antagonism of Manchus whose pensions and secular privileges Yüan's reform policies had destroyed.[12] Yüan's dismissal alarmed Rockhill, as well as the other foreign

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[12]Rockhill to Root, 16 January 1909. The Department of State Archives.

ministers, because he feared it signalled the end of the reform movement and a return to the reactionary policy of 1900, which could jeopardize foreign interests in China.[13] Reports on what had transpired in the meeting of the Grand Council confirmed the Minister's fears. For Rockhill learned that Prince Chun had explained to those who had opposed Yüan's removal that, first, Yüan's power threatened the Throne, and, second, that Yüan was responsible for the constitutional movement.[14] This was the first indication the powers had received that the Prince Regent might reverse the reform program inaugurated by the preceding reign.

The foreign ministers met in the afternoon of 2 January 1909 at the American Legation in Peking to discuss the reasons for and implications of Yüan's dismissal. The ministers agreed that Yüan's removal seemed to be the first step in a policy of reaction. Rockhill reported that Prince Chun's apparent volte face regarding reform had shocked everyone:

> The Regent, much to the surprise of those who, like myself, have known him for years, is showing himself impulsive, self-willed, intolerant of any advice from his authorized councillors, listening only to those who lend themselves to his views and wishes.[15]

Rockhill saw in Prince Chun's retention for future consideration of a memorial from the Manchu censors which had urged that in the future

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[13]Two telegrams, Rockhill to Root, 2 January 1906. The Department of State Archives.

[14]Rockhill to Root, 16 January 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[15]Ibid.

the Prince Regent appoint only Manchus to the Grand Council or as Presidents of Boards evidence of a reactionary attitude.[16] If followed, this course of action would constitute a departure from the traditional Manchu policy of neutralizing Chinese opposition to Manchu rule by including Chinese in the government, and it would exacerbate the enmity, already strong, between the two ethnic groups.

Before adjourning, the foreign ministers considered the problem of how the powers should respond to the imperial government's apparent change in policy. Pending the approval of their respective governments, the ministers decided to protest separately Yüan's removal on the ground that it jeopardized the reform program which the powers considered essential to foreign interests in China as well as to China's strength and independence.[17] In the end, however, only the United States and England formally expressed disapproval of the Prince Regent's action. Rockhill and his British colleague Sir John Jordan had concluded that failure to protest might have disastrous consequences for reform and foreign interests:

> . . . if the Regent should find that he was able to remove, without raising a word of protest from the foreign Powers, the man who has been the most influential and prominent exponent of a policy of order and progress, he would not stop there but would follow it up as the impulse of the moment and his personal likes or dislikes might move him and arrest, . . . the progress of the last few years and bring back the troubles, uncertainties

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[16] Ibid. See also Cameron, pp. 119-120.

[17] Telegram, Rockhill to Root, 2 January 1909, P.M. The Department of State Archives.

> and perplexities of ten years ago, complicated with an impaired financial credit and a vastly increased burden of national expense.[18]

The policy of concurrent representation broke down when Russia and Japan failed to cooperate because, as Rockhill explained, they saw in Yüan's absence an opportunity to advance their positions in Manchuria. The European system of alliances meant that Germany, France, and Austria would remain silent, too.[19]

The United States and Great Britain applied pressure on the imperial government, not on behalf of Yüan Shih-k'ai, but in the interests of the reform program. Ministers Rockhill and Jordan secured an interview with Prince Ch'ing, the head of the Foreign Office, on 15 January 1909. Rockhill informed the Prince that the United States' concern was not with the particulars of Yüan Shih-k'ai's dismissal but solely with the policy Yüan represented.[20] Prince Ch'ing, who had opposed Yüan's removal, expressed hope that he would soon return to power and then assured the two ministers that regardless of what happened the imperial government had pledged itself to the "policy of reform and progress initiated in the last few years of the preceding reign and that nothing would be allowed to interfere with or arrest it."[21] Rockhill thanked Prince Ch'ing for this assurance and then

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[18]Rockhill to Root, 16 January 1909; telegram, Rockhill to Root, 9 January 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Telegram, Rockhill to Root, 15 January 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[21]Rockhill to Root, 16 January 1909. The Department of State Archives.

confided to Secretary Root that the Throne's big problem now was "to allay the apprehension this hasty action has caused throughout the official world in China."[22] As subsequent consular reports would reveal, the imperial government failed to convince Chinese that it was sincere in its desire for political reform.

It was in this atmosphere of political intrigue, of uncertain policies, and of undefined political power that China's first provincial elections occurred and that the provincial assemblies opened. The political climate was certain to affect the election proceedings and the manner in which the provincial assemblies would function. The nature of its influence became apparent in the Consular and Legation reports of late 1909.

The foreign service personnel kept the Department well-informed on the progress of the constitutional movement with detailed reports on the nature, implications, and effects of the political reforms. The reports revealed the diplomatic corps' opinion of the reform activities both of the central government and of the provincial assemblies. In addition, they suggested answers to the question of whether the imperial government's constitutionalism coincided or clashed with that of the moderate reformers throughout the empire. The consular reports revealed sharp differences between the imperial government's handling of foreign policy and its approach to internal political reform. Although the imperial government had included Chinese in formulating and implementing its foreign policy, it sought to retain control of the

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[22] Ibid.

constitutional program completely in its own hands. According to the diplomatic despatches the imperial government's political reform ideology and objectives were essentially conservative in nature and were resisting the demands of modern Chinese nationalism. Most significant, the diplomatic personnel testified that the provincial assemblies had moved into the power vacuum created by the weakness of the imperial government.[23] The United States Legation and Consular reports therefore offered insights into the problems of the cause and nature of the revolution of 1911.

The American diplomats expressed disappointment at what they considered the conservative character of the imperial government's emerging constitutionalism. As Canton Consul General Leo Bergholz pointed out, the edict had not established universal manhood suffrage. Bergholz attributed the exclusion of the common man from participation in the electoral process to his lack of education. While not promoting universal manhood suffrage, Bergholz still felt that the imperial government would profit by further extending the franchise. Yet, he conceded that at least it had made a beginning.[24] Although Minister Rockhill felt that the provincial assemblies had ample power and that their members possessed sufficient guarantees of personal liberty to make them "valuable aids to the Government in enlightening it on the wants of and conditions of the Provinces," he deplored the fact that the edict had given the viceroys and governors absolute control over

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[23]Fincher, pp. 188-189.

[24]Bergholz to Assistant Secretary of State, 20 December 1909. USCD-Canton. 893.00/351½.

the assemblies and their discussion subjects; for, he feared it would "check free discussion and make them subservient instruments of the Government for years to come."[25]

Minister Rockhill deplored what he believed was a conservative reform ideology. In Rockhill's opinion the sole concern of the Constitutional Commission was "to preserve undiminished the autocratic powers of the sovereign, while bringing him in closer relation with the people through the medium of the provincial assemblies and the Imperial Parliament, which are to be purely consultative bodies, . . ."[26] Minister Rockhill therefore concluded that the main objcctive of the reform movement appeared to be "no other than the perpetuation of the existing system under a thin veil of constitutional guarantee."[27]

The consular despatches suggested that the foreign service personnel favored more radical political reform measures than the imperial government was sponsoring. Despite their criticism of the constitutional program, members of the diplomatic corps continued to hope, and at times predicted, that more meaningful reforms would be forthcoming. Consul General Bergholz had concluded his report on just such an optimistic note:

> . . . if those who now exercise the franchise for the first time in the history of the Empire show that they appreciate the privilege, and the members selected acquit themselves in

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[25]Rockhill to Root, 12 September 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

> a worthy manner, there can be little doubt that the scope of the experiment will be enlarged, ...[28]

Nor was Bergholz as upset as was Rockhill by the restrictions placed on the provincial assemblies. In fact, Bergholz recognized the element of popular sovereignty contained in the popularly-elected assemblies and the power that this conferred on these bodies:

> The members, however, are not altogether without powers as they will have all the influence which comes from popular elections, and standing as the representatives of the people they will be enabled to secure the requisite deference to their wishes which is, perhaps, not apparent on the surface.[29]

Yet, regardless of the limitations placed on the provincial assemblies, Rockhill still considered them and the encouragement being given to popular discussion of important political issues as events unprecedented in the history of imperial China and as likely to have far-reaching consequences. Rockhill prophesied that by the time the Imperial Parliament convened the Throne might discover "that the people are no longer content with the rights granted them, and that they will try to wrench from the Throne additional and more real powers for themselves and their representatives."[30] Consequently, the United States diplomats anxiously awaited the opening of the provincial assemblies, wondering if China's first representative institutions would accept the imperial government's brand of constitutionalism.

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[28] 893.00/351½.

[29] Ibid. Emphasis mine. See also Fincher, pp. 188-189, 194.

[30] Rockhill to Root, 12 September 1909. The Department of State Archives.

Spring and Summer of 1909 were taken up with the election of the members to the assemblies which were scheduled to open on 14 October. Henry P. Fletcher, who was in charge of the United States Legation until the arrival of the new American Minister, instructed the consuls to report on all matters pertaining to the provincial assemblies in their respective districts.[31] Secretary Tenney summarized the consuls' findings and opinions in a comprehensive report to the Department.[32]

Consular opinions of the election proceedings and of the quality of the men elected to the provincial assemblies varied. The consuls reported strong official influence in the elections, with the officials in the Manchurian provinces actually appointing the members to the provincial assemblies. Corruption prevailed in many cases, with Consul General Bergholz reporting that in the Canton vicinity electors sold their votes for between forty and two hundred dollars. But in other districts of Kwantung Province honesty prevailed.[33] Other consuls reported similar variances in the election proceedings in their districts. The quality of the men elected to the assemblies also varied considerably from province to province and within a province, with some members highly qualified and others poorly equipped for

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[31]Fletcher to Knox, 16 October 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[32]Unless otherwise indicated, the discussion on the elections and the provincial assemblies is based on Tenney's Memorandum of 15 January 1910, inclosure in Fletcher to Knox, 21 January 1910. The Department of State Archives.

[33]893.00/351½.

the position. In general, the consuls found it impossible to make a blanket statement regarding the election procedures and the quality of the men elected to the provincial assemblies. According to Chang P'eng-yuan's recent study, however, the voters elected men of the gentry class who held civil service degrees, and, therefore, the gentry controlled the provincial assemblies.[34]

All the consuls reported "popular indifference" to China's first elections. They suggested that voter apathy stemmed from popular ignorance regarding the nature of the assemblies. Some consuls reported that many Chinese with sufficient property to qualify to vote had hidden the fact because they distrusted the imperial government and feared the census was for the purpose of levying new and higher taxes. The fact that only a small percentage of those who qualified to vote had actually cast ballots perhaps owed to the weakness of nationalism and a sense of futility. There was piteously little in the imperial government's reform performance to date to inspire confidence in its policies.

Despite their disappointment with the election proceedings, China's first provincial assemblies favorably impressed the American

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[34]Chang, "The Constitutionalists," found that 89 per cent were degree holders with 50 per cent from the upper level gentry and 39.5 per cent from the lower level gentry. However, Chang studied only the five provinces of Fengtien, Shangtung, Shensi, Hupeh, and Szechuan. Cameron disagrees, p. 122, maintaining that the gentry had no taste for politics and that therefore the candidates were often from the returned student class who were professional politicians. She derived her facts from J. O. P. Bland, Recent Events and Present Policies in China (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1912), p. 125. Fincher described the new political class, pp. 209-217, 220-223.

diplomats. Tenney reported that "without exception" the different assemblies had conducted their business "with decorum and dignity." The consular corps concluded that the members of the assemblies had revealed "great aptitude in learning methods of parliamentary procedure . . . [and that] they give every promise of making very efficient . . . debators."[35] The consuls breathed a sigh of relief that with only two or three exceptions the first provincial assemblies had acted moderately and with dignity and had not attempted to assert themselves too strongly. For, they felt that turbulence in the assemblies might frighten the imperial government and retard the progress of the constitutional movement. There was no doubting that the American diplomatic personnel favored the establishment of a constitutional government in China.

One feature of the assemblies' first sessions in particular disappointed the consuls. They had found the Chinese people as indifferent to the proceedings of the assemblies as they had been to the elections. Tenney's own experience of being the sole occupant of the spectators' gallery on the day he visited the Chihli Assembly verified the consular reports. Tenney suggested that popular indifference stemmed, first, from the "academic and perfunctory" nature of the subjects deliberated and, secondly, from the fact that the viceroys and governors had determined the discussion subjects which had led the people to view the assemblies as representing official interests rather than those of the people. Although disappointed at

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[35]Tenney's Memorandum, 15 January 1910.

the lack of popular enthusiasm for the political innovations, the consuls were still sanguine regarding the future of representative institutions in China, as was evident in Tenney's conclusion:

> On the whole, although the Assemblies have accomplished nothing very stirring and have not, as yet, aroused much enthusiasm among the people, the country is to be congratulated upon the success of this first step in Constitutional reform. Experience has been gained in the forms of parliamentary procedure. . . . The possibilities of the Assemblies in expressing the will of the people will be better understood by the people year by year, and a greater interest will be shown in the elections than has been the case this year. There is a strong spirit of democracy among the people with which the nominally despotic Government has always had to reckon and that spirit will invariably cause the people to make good use of the new parliamentary machinery when they come to understand it better.[36]

Some of the provincial assemblies, however, had manifested just such a spirit of independence as the consular corps sometimes favored and at other times feared. Chargé Fletcher reported that the Chihli Assembly was attempting to secure a greater role in government.[37] It had nullified decrees from the Throne pertaining to the levy and the collection of the stamp taxes, and it was demanding a voice in the selection of officials. Fletcher regarded the Chihli Assembly as the voice of the gentry. He reported that the local gentry was rejecting the newly appointed viceroy of Chihli, whom it considered inept and of low character, as a protest against the Throne's sudden dismissal of the reform-minded Viceroy of Chihli, Tuan-fang.

Foreigners in China were as upset as the local gentry by

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Fletcher to Knox, 3 December 1909. The Department of State Archives.

Tuan-fang's removal. The Throne had given three reasons for removing the viceroy: he had taken photographs of the Empress Dowager's funeral procession; he had moved about in his sedan chair with undue freedom; he had used the trees near the Imperial Mausolea as telegraph poles. To foreign observers none of the charges warranted impeachment, and they therefore interpreted Tuan-fang's removal as evidence that the Court reactionaries were again in the saddle. The NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS castigated China's central government:

> After Yüan Shih-kai Tuan Fang. A ruler has need to be both wise and capable when he is as prodigal of his statesmen as the Prince Regent. But the position in Peking to-day argues no such genius of government for Prince Chun. If some sacred traditions had been grieviously outraged, criticism might stay its voice, but only in dismay at the hopelessness of an administration that can find no alternative to dismissing a highly placed and able offical because some workmen fasten a telegraph wire to a tree. When, however, we look round upon the present condition of things in China there can be little inclination to make allowance for the Government. Complete inability even to take advantage of opportunities given it, stupendous apathy in grappling adequately with any one of the numerous problems that confront it, a blind adherence to a stereotyped policy of what is well described as shifting opportunism, characterize the Chinese Administration today and must, unless arrested,--lead the country rapidly downhill to political disintegration.[38]

Most significant, however, was Fletcher's observation, based on the consular reports, that the spirit of independence shown by the Chihli Assembly was spreading throughout the empire. The Hunan Assembly had attempted to bring the viceroy under its control by passing a resolution ordering him to account for public receipts and expenditures. Of course, the assembly had no authority so to compel the viceroy, but its action was indicative of its new, independent

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[38]"The Dismissal of H. E. Tuan Fang," 25 November 1909, inclosure in ibid. Emphasis mine.

mood. The Chekiang Assembly had voted to extend its session twenty days to complete unfinished business, and the members had agreed to serve the additional time without pay.[39] Some of the assemblies were taking their responsibilities most seriously.

The provincial assemblies were demanding not only a bigger role in local government, but, contrary to orders from the Throne and to consular consternation, they were also interfering with foreign affairs. The Throne's failure to delimit the Macao boundary had led the Canton Self-Government Society to raise a volunteer defense corps.[40] Consul Julean Arnold reported from Amoy that the Fukien Provincial Assembly was obstructing foreign business and missionary interests. It had passed resolutions to adopt strict measures with regard to the acquisition by foreigners of land in non-treaty ports and to demand that the Standard Oil Company return to Chinese jurisdiction the land it had purchased for tank installations. The assembly felt that the tanks endangered the lives of the people and therefore wanted them dismantled. The assembly had also restricted foreign sign posts to treaty ports. It had ruled that Chinese who had obtained foreign citizenship could not enjoy the rights and privileges of Chinese citizenship in non-treaty ports, and it had ordered the arrest of all foreigners travelling in the interior with improper passports. Finally, the assembly had ruled that before the mission societies could erect buildings on lands they had

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[39]Fletcher to Knox, ibid.

[40]Ibid.

purchased, the local officials must first investigate the title deeds, and the local self-government society must grant its permission.[41]

Consular reports on the activities of other provincial assemblies told a similar story. The provincial assemblies of Honan and Hupei were emphatically opposing the proposed foreign [Hukuang] railway loan.[42] Herbert G. Baugh, Vice-Consul General in charge at Hankow, reported that the Hunan Provincial Assembly was interfering with the enforcement of the treaty system. The assembly had passed resolutions to place the railroads under native control and to prohibit the use of foreign capital in constructing them; it had barred foreigners from purchasing any more land, and had also prohibited the employment of foreigners in the Imperial Post Office.[43]

In the opinion of the foreign service personnel the Chinese gentry were responsible for the imperial government's foreign affairs problems. The gentry class was obviously hostile to foreign investments in China. Its opposition, noted Fletcher, "has forced the Government unwisely to buy back whenever possible, industrial, railway and mining rights and concessions heretofore granted to foreigners, with the result that the development of the country has

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[41]Arnold to Knox, 16 January 1910. USCD-Amoy. 893.00/375.

[42]Tenney's Memorandum, 15 January 1910.

[43]Baugh to Assistant Secretary of State, 25 January 1910. USCD-Hankow. 893.00/358.

been practically arrested."[44] The diplomats welcomed the arrival of representative government in China, but they preferred that the assemblymen confine their activities to domestic matters and leave foreign affairs to the imperial government.

The gentry class was leading the rights recovery movement and to the diplomats' discomfiture was successfully dictating policy to the imperial government. Secretary Tenney explained the source of the gentry's power over the Throne. Historically the local literati and gentry were the natural leaders of the people, and as long as the imperial government retained gentry support there could be no successful anti-dynastic uprising. Therefore, the central government was bending over backward to please the gentry even though gentry demands jeopardized China's relations with the foreign powers.[45] Whatever the gentry's motives, be they economic or patriotic considerations, the activities of the Chinese gentry were contributing to the development of Chinese nationalism.

The consular reports testified that the activities of the provincial assemblies and self-government societies were having a disturbing effect on the political situation in China. The rights recovery activities had placed the imperial government in an embarrassing position with the foreign powers and were weakening its authority in the provinces, all which served to stimulate revolutionary

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[44]Fletcher to Knox, 5 March 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/369.

[45]Tenney's Memorandum, 15 January 1910.

nationalism.[46] Chargé Fletcher summed up the general diplomatic opinion:

> The Central Government is very weak and does not feel in a position to take issue with the provinces on any issue in which local sentiment is aroused, and the various self-government societies . . . , as well as the native press, by making appeal to prejudice and the new found sentiment of Chinese nationality continue to complicate international issues and embarrass the central government.[47]

Members of the consular corps saw trouble ahead for the imperial government, particularly if it hedged at all on its promised political reforms. Secretary Tenney prepared the Department for future political unrest:

> . . . expect to see the beginning of the conflict between absolutism and freedom which has usually accompanied constitutional reform in other countries . . . after the people . . . realize the possibilities of the new form of Government as a means of asserting their rights and resisting oppression.[48]

As revealed by the diplomatic despatches, some of the people, specifically the gentry, had already perceived the potential of the provincial assemblies. Moreover, the imperial government, as portrayed by the American diplomats, was pursuing policies that were alienating the members of the provincial assemblies and their supporters. The activities of the provincial assemblies suggested that their members had rejected the imperial government's definition of constitutionalism. Soon the provincial assemblies, with the aid of the provincial

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[46]P. S. Heintzleman to Assistant Secretary of State, 23 August 1909. USCD-Shanghai; Fletcher to Knox, 28 August 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[47]Fletcher to Knox, 2 July 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[48]Tenney's Memorandum, 15 January 1910.

governors, would attempt to force the imperial government to accept a more truly representative constitutional order. Members of the provincial assemblies, who constituted one-half of the National (Constitutional) Assembly that convened in Peking in October, 1910, dominated that body and concentrated its energies on forcing the imperial government to convene the National Parliament and to establish a responsible cabinet immediately.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWELFTH HOUR: THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY

The year 1910 was the critical year in the imperial government's constitutional program. The Constitutional Assembly was scheduled to open that Autumn, and the imperial government's attitude toward and treatment of that body would determine whether China's political modernization would be peaceful or violent. The imperial government's constitutional program could never win the support of China's revolutionary nationalists. That group blamed China's weak condition on the Manchu dynasty and nothing short of the dynasty's destruction would have satisfied them. Yet, pleasing the revolutionary minority was hardly the imperial government's major problem. It just had to neutralize the appeal of the revolutionaries' program and thereby render them ineffective. This objective was within its grasp. By pursuing a policy that appealed to the far more numerous and strategically located gentry class and the provincial assemblies through which they were operating, the imperial government would attract the support of the natural leaders of the people. Winning the allegiance of the gentry, whose political complexion was that of moderate constitutional reformers, was for the Manchu dynasty a matter of life and death.

To stave off revolution the imperial government had to establish a constitutional government. This was the conclusion of American diplomats in China at the time. In the opinions of Charles Tenney, the Chinese Secretary to the American Legation, Henry Fletcher, the Chargé d'affaires, and William Calhoun, the American Minister to China, nothing that happened in China, neither internal uprisings nor foreign aggression, could undermine the authority of the imperial government as effectively as its own equivocation regarding the constitutional reform program. Yet, the Legation and Consular reports regarding the provincial and constitutional assemblies revealed that the imperial government was pursuing precisely that kind of policy. According to the diplomatic reports, the imperial government's constitutional reform program, despite all its unprecedented innovations, was essentially conservative in nature, designed to preserve the imperial system with the traditional prerogatives of the dynasty intact. As such, the imperial government's reform ideology was on a collision course with that of modern Chinese nationalism.

Unfortunately, however, the American diplomats' evaluation of the political situation in China failed to alter substantially the policy the United States was pursuing in China. Several factors were responsible for this. Despite their critical evaluations of the imperial government's reform policy, the American diplomats did not believe revolution in China was imminent. They failed to perceive the real and permanent breach between the Throne and the provincial assemblies' delegates to the Constitutional Assembly that had occurred in November of 1910. Then, the diplomats concluded that the

revolutionary forces lacked strength, discipline, and leadership and therefore could not unite the widespread discontent into a general anti-dynastic uprising. This assessment of the political situation in China led the United States, with the other powers, to pursue in essence the same policy that in 1900 had precipitated the full-scale Boxer uprising,--with precisely the same results.

The imperial edict of 27 August 1908, containing the detailed provisions for the Provincial Deliberative Assemblies, had also provided for a Constitutional Assembly. Not until August of 1909, however, did the imperial government announce the regulations governing its formation and activities. The Constitutional Assembly was actually a copy of the provincial assemblies, but it would function at the national level. It, too, was to serve as a school for educating the people in constitutional government, preparatory to the opening of the National Parliament in 1916. The Constitutional Assembly was solely a deliberative and advisory body; like the provincial assemblies it had no legislative or judicial powers. The central government retained complete control over its activities. The assembly would consist of two hundred members, with one hundred appointed by the Throne and one hundred chosen by the provincial assemblies, subject, however, to the approval of the provincial

authorities.[1]

The provincial assemblies' delegates to the Constitutional Assembly were in a rebellious mood. Before adjourning on 23 November 1909, the provincial assemblies had inaugurated measures to establish their own brand of constitutionalism, a more representative form of government. The provincial assemblies of Chihli, Shensi, Shansi, Honan, Hunan, Kansu, Kiansu, and Chinese Turkestan voted to send delegates to an extra-official meeting at Shanghai in December, 1909. The purpose of the meeting was to draft a memorial urging upon the Throne the necessity of convening the National Parliament earlier than the 1916 scheduled date.[2] Thus, the idea to accelerate the constitutional reform program, which became the dominating concern of the Constitutional Assembly when it opened in October of 1910, actually originated in the provincial assemblies.

The diplomatic personnel at the American Legation perceived the significance of the Shanghai meeting. In Chargé Fletcher's opinion it illustrated the "rapid growth of the movement toward representative government."[3] Fletcher also sent the Department an article from the NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS which expressed the Legation's

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[1]"Memorandum on the Chinese Constitutional Assembly by the Chinese Secretary," inclosure in Calhoun to the Secretary of State, 25 May 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/405.

[2]Fletcher to Knox, 21 December 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[3]Ibid.

understanding of the political situation in China at the time.[4] The author predicted that the proposed acceleration of the constitutional program would rupture relations between the provincial assemblies and the central government which in late 1909 still seemed as uncertain of its political reform objectives as American diplomats had previously found it. Like the American diplomatic personnel, the writer considered such an event undesirable, "as the country is in need of a slower process of evolution than is to be anticipated from an open breach between the Provincial Assemblies and the Government."[5] The writer came to the same conclusion that American diplomats had reached so often over the past several years. Everyone agreed that the imperial government had to convince the members of the provincial assemblies that it was sincere in its reform efforts. Failure to do so meant revolution:

> . . . so long as the members of the provincial parliaments are encouraged in their belief that, whatever Edicts may preach to the contrary, the real authorities in Peking have no intention of allowing constitutional government to encroach upon the time-honored privileges of the ruling class, they [delegates] will be tempted to accelerate evolution by revolutionary methods. The Central Government may have yet to learn that neither secret societies nor foreign 'aggression' can undermine the authority it has so often abused as effectively as the constitutional forces created by itself.[6]

As if deliberately working to insure the veracity of the consular reports, the imperial government issued an edict on 30 January 1910

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[4]"Shanghai and the Provinces," 14 December 1909, inclosure in ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid. Emphasis mine.

flatly rejecting the Shanghai delegates' petition on the ground that the time was not yet ripe for the National parliament.[7] Undaunted, the petitioners sent another memorial in June, 1910, again demanding the early establishment of parliament. An imperial edict on 27 June emphatically refused the demand, affirmed the Throne's intention to adhere faithfully to the original reform program, and forbade any further memorials on the subject.[8] Consequently, the provincial delegates decided to use the Constitutional Assembly as an instrument to force the imperial government to yield to their demands for greater participation in the policy making processes of government.

Apparently the regulations concerning the Constitutional Assembly somewhat disappointed the foreign service personnel. For, William J. Calhoun, Rockhill's long-awaited successor who had arrived at his post in Spring of 1910, sent the Department a clipping from the NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS which emphasized some defects in the program. The author noted that the Throne had postponed consideration of the vital issue of the national budget until the seventh year, or 1913, and that neither the provincial assemblies, nor the Constitutional Assembly, nor the Parliament had any control over the appointment or conduct of officials.[9]

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[7]Fletcher to Knox, 1 February 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/359.

[8]Tenney's Memorandum, 15 November 1910, inclosure in Calhoun to Knox, 21 November 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/482.

[9]"China's Senate," 12 May 1910, inclosure in Calhoun to the Secretary of State, 25 May 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/406.

The Legation reports portrayed the imperial government as obsessed by a fear of losing control of the Constitutional Assembly to the reformers. Chargé Fletcher worried that the means it was adopting to preserve itself would prove disasterous. He referred specifically to the fact that the imperial government had concentrated power in the hands of Manchu officials.[10] Minister Calhoun reported that the imperial government's chief criterion in choosing members to the assembly was that they be subservient to the Throne. It had selected a relatively unknown personality, the Manchu Prince P'u-lun, as the presiding officer of the assembly with, in Calhoun's opinion, "a view to minimizing its importance."[11] After reviewing the list of the Throne's appointees, Secretary Tenney replied: ". . . mediocrity is to be the chief characteristic of the members of the Constitutional Assembly. It is evident that the Government is determined to have a docile and submissive Assembly."[12] Minister Calhoun seconded Tenney's evaluation of the members: "While there is, at the present time, a conspicuous dearth in China of men of authority and force, it would yet seem as if the Throne had been careful to eliminate even the few who might have been available."[13] The Minister severely criticized the Throne's policy:

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[10]Fletcher to Knox. 893.00/369.

[11]Calhoun to the Secretary of State. 893.00/405. It was a plan which, according to Calhoun, backfired. Calhoun to Knox. 893.00/482.

[12]Tenney's Memorandum. 893.00/482.

[13]Calhoun to Knox. 893.00/482.

> It is this half-hearted support of reform and the apparent determination to strip it of all practical significance which would seem to render ominous the future of this Empire, even if other causes did not exist. Without either the will to enforce, or the strength to repress, it can hardly be hoped that the transition which China is now passing through will be affected without violence.[14]

The preparations for the opening of the Constitutional Assembly occurred in the midst of widespread native uprisings and revolutionary activities. Predictions of a general anti-dynastic rebellion were commonplace in China during 1910 and 1911. Edward S. Little, an American employed by a British manufacturing firm in Shanghai, noted the political implications of the effect that Halley's Comet was having on the Chinese people: "In China a Comet is universally regarded as portending disturbances and disasters."[15] According to Vice-Consul Albert W. Pontius at Nanking, it suggested, among other things, the collapse of the dynasty.[16] Dr. J. C. Ferguson, a long-time American resident of China and confidant of Chinese leaders, confessed that he had never known a more ominous outlook.[17] Missionary reports and newspaper articles echoed these comments which had accompanied such disturbing facts as a mutiny among the

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[14] Ibid. Emphasis mine.

[15] Memorandum written by Edward S. Little to Messrs. Brunner, Kond & Co. Ltd.; Norwich, England; 16 January 1910, inclosure in Fletcher to the Secretary of State, 5 March 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/369.

[16] Pontius to Assistant Secretary of State, 1 April 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/374.

[17] A conversation between Ferguson and Consul General Amos P. Wilder. Wilder to the Secretary of State, 26 May 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/408.

Canton viceroy's troops in mid-February of 1910, a rice riot that had begun the following March at Changsha, and the April mutiny of the government troops at Tsingkiangsu in Kiangsu Province. Summer of 1910 saw famine riots in the Suchien area of Kiangsu and uprisings in Shangtung. Autumn and Winter brought rioting at Samkwong and Lien Chow near Canton. Minister Calhoun concluded that with the exception of North China a "general seething exists which, . . . seems ready at slight provocation to burst into sudden violence."[18]

According to the consular despatches the widespread unrest was having a sobering effect on the imperial government. Shanghai Consul General Amos P. Wilder reported ". . . the Chinese Government is getting pretty badly scared and is trying to strengthen the governing bodies."[19] It had appointed progressive Chinese, Wu Ting-fang, Tang Shao-yi, and Hsü Shih-chang, to the Grand Council. Both Calhoun and Wilder, indeed foreigners in general, hoped that Tang's appointment pressaged the return to office of Yüan Shih-k'ai, and Minister Calhoun anticipated an early settlement of the railway loan issue.[20]

Neither man appeared convinced, however, that the imperial government's appointments, made on the eve of the convening of the Constitutional Assembly, meant a real change in its policy. Wilder

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[18]Calhoun to the Secretary of State, 5 July 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/ 422.

[19]Wilder to Knox, 22 August 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/443.

[20]Ibid.; Calhoun to Knox, 23 August 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/439.

recognized the action as a ". . . familiar device of the Peking government when hard pressed to seek foreign confidence by putting to the fore men who have prestige as progressives, . . ." and he therefore adopted a wait-and-see attitude. He hoped the imperial government could "retrieve something" but feared it was "too late in waking up to the situation."[21] Minister Calhoun presented the Throne as "out of touch with the people as much mentally as it is geographically, cooped up in its Manchu stronghold in the northeastern confines of the Empire."[22] A confidential report by Tenney in mid-September revealed a "growing dissatisfaction with the weakness and vacillation of the Prince Regent . . . ." on the part of progressive members of the Court. Rumors abounded that this party, led by Duke Tsai-tse, was planning a coup d'etat to establish the Empress Dowager as the nominal Regent and to recall Yuan Shih-k'ai from retirement.[23] There was little doubt that such a coup would have pleased the United States representatives.

In this atmosphere of political intrigue, widespread revolutionary uprisings, and foreign pressure on the imperial government to accept the Hukuang railroad loan the second sessions of the provincial assemblies began and China's first Constitutional Assembly convened in Peking. If Consul General Bergholz's reports regarding the Kwantung

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[21]893.00/443.

[22]893.00/439.

[23]Confidential report by Dr. Tenney, inclosure in Calhoun to Knox, 17 October 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/464.

Provincial Assembly were representative of the others, then the provincial assemblies were in a rebellious mood. The Kwangtung Assembly was demanding that the central government submit the proposed annual budget to the assemblies for their approval.[24] In Bergholz's opinion China was approaching a crisis:

> The Imperial Government has given birth to a body which, unless it can be brought into harmony with the National and Provincial Governments, may, in time, become too powerfully successful to contend against. The idea of deliberative bodies of the people, responsible to the people, and working in the interests of the people, is strongly taking hold of the masses. A great social movement is about to seize upon the public mind to transform it and to hurry it towards an unknown future. The Assemblies will be the indefatigable instruments of the new spirit, . . .[25]

The United States consular despatches pinpointed the year 1910 as the critical one in the imperial government's constitutional reform program. Moreover, the reports on the Constitutional Assembly's activities suggested that the imperial government's political reform policy had radicalized the Chinese gentry who dominated the provincial assemblies and thereby sealed the fate of the Manchu dynasty. The provincial delegates to the Constitutional Assembly, most of whom belonged to the gentry class, concluded from the imperial government's actions that the Throne intended to yield none of its traditional powers and privileges. Consequently, after the Assembly adjourned many of the delegates returned to their respective provinces and joined forces with the local revolutionary societies. Others did

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[24]Bergholz to Knox, 17 October 1910. USCD-Canton. 893.00/469.

[25]Ibid.

nothing to obstruct the revolutionary activities, and when the revolution began in 1911 they gave it their support, thus insuring the collapse of the dynasty.[26]

After observing the opening day proceedings of the Constitutional Assembly, Minister Calhoun confided to Secretary Knox: ". . . it may not be going too far to state that the seeds of a revolution, peaceable or otherwise, are now being planted."[27] Consul General Wilder agreed: "No one can see this Peking Senate in session without a conviction that old China is dead."[28] Prompting these remarks was the fact that, despite the imperial government's precautionary measures, the Constitutional Assembly was asserting its independence. The provincial delegates had easily cowed the Court appointees and the Assembly had voted unanimously to memorialize the Throne a third time for an early convening of Parliament and the establishment of a responsible cabinet.[29]

Minister Calhoun doubted that the imperial government would again refuse an earlier convocation of the National Parliament. He did not, however, believe that such a course of action was a prescription for a peaceful China, for two reasons. He noted that the parliament, to perform responsibly, would have to attack every vested interest in

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[26]Chang traced the stages of alienation through which the constitutional reform delegates moved, "The Constitutionalists," pp. 143-183.

[27]25 October 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/461.

[28]Wilder to Knox, 10 November 1910. USCD-Shanghai. 893.00/472.

[29]893.00/461; Tenney's Memorandum. 893.00/482.

the empire. Most astute were Calhoun's observation that reform in China had developed unevenly and his understanding of the implications of that fact. The Minister pointed out that the reform spirit had seized the educated and merchant minorities while the masses had remained indifferent, and that the reforms had taken hold in the Central and Southeastern provinces and in those areas in the North near foreign settlements but had left distant provinces, such as Kansu, relatively unaffected. In Calhoun's opinion ". . . a situation might be created where the different elements in China were likely to pull in opposite directions. . . ." leading the vested interests into an alliance with the "retrograde" elements against the progressives.[30] Yet, although Calhoun did not enthusiastically applaud the Assembly's action, neither did he disapprove of it.

Minister Calhoun warned the Department that the proceedings of the Constitutional Assembly would probably affect foreign interests in China. For, the members were talking about instituting financial reforms, investigating into the methods of collecting and spending public revenue, and, most significantly, inquiring into the terms and application of the foreign loans. Such close scrutiny of the activities of the members of the Finance Board and the Foreign Office, who were negotiating the Hukuang loan, would make them timid. Calhoun advised that "this new development be taken into consideration by the Department and the American group."[31]

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[30]893.00/461.

[31]Telegram, Calhoun to Knox, 25 October 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/449.

The diplomatic personnel recognized that patriotism rather than blind anti-foreignism underlay Chinese opposition to foreign enterprise, at least in South China. Chargé Fletcher defined the difference between the earlier and present spirit of anti-foreignism in China: "The distinction is rather a fine one, but I mean that such anti-foreign feeling as exists there is engendered by specific cases of what is considered an infringement of China's sovereign rights, and is more or less limited to the foreign nations involved in the disputes--. . . ."[32]

As expected, the imperial government yielded to the Constitutional Assembly's demands for an early convocation of Parliament and the establishment of a cabinet. An edict on 4 November 1910 set the year 1913 for the opening of Parliament, promised to establish a cabinet before that date, and then ordered no further petitions and the end of all agitation on the subject.[33] Instead of propitiating the Assembly, the edict outraged its progressive members who wanted the National Parliament convened in 1911 and a responsible cabinet established immediately.[34] But, relations between the imperial government and the Constitutional Assembly did not at this time reach the breaking point.

The provincial delegates to the Constitutional Assembly

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[32]893.00/369.

[33]Telegram, Calhoun to Knox, 4 November 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/452.

[34]Tenney's Memorandum. 893.00/482.

became actively hostile to the imperial government in late November, 1910.[35] Secretary Tenney's memorandum suggested that the Assembly had interpreted the imperial government's response to several issues as an indication that the Throne intended to relinquish none of its traditional powers. The Prince Regent had referred the questions of the salt tax in Yunnan and the school regulations in Kwangsi to the Boards of Finance and of the Interior respectively instead of to the Assembly which claimed jurisdiction. Although the central government yielded to the Assembly's demands, it failed to satisfy that body which decided to impeach the members of the Grand Council whose existence the progressives considered incompatible with the principles of representative government. The Prince Regent then rebuked the Assembly for overstepping its authority, but the Assembly rejected the reprimand and for the first time began criticizing the Prince Regent and attacking the Throne.[36]

The events of November, 1910, therefore precipitated a political crisis. While the members of the Assembly debated resigning in protest, the Prince Regent considered dissolving the Assembly. In Tenney's opinion, the only choice the Throne had was that of picking its poison. If the Prince Regent yielded to the Assembly's demands, it "will be so convinced of his weakness that it will assume a still more dictatorial attitude." Yet, if the Prince Regent dissolved the

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[35]Chang, "The Constitutionalists," p. 166.

[36]Tenney's Memorandum of 21 December 1910, inclosure in Calhoun to Knox, 26 December 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/492.

Assembly, continued Tenney, "there will be a great danger of a revolution against the Manchu government, commencing in the Southern provinces."[37]

The foreign service personnel did not, however, agree on the implications of the crisis. Minister Calhoun flatly rejected Secretary Tenney's evaluation of the situation. First of all, he doubted that the imperial government would be so stupid as to dissolve the Constitutional Assembly when the session was about to terminate naturally. But even if it did, Calhoun did not believe revolution would result because he now disputed Tenney's conclusion as to what would likely cause a revolution in China. In so doing Calhoun reversed his earlier conclusions. "If, as is not unlikely, it does break out, it will be brought about more by the pinch of poverty and starvation than by the desire for parliamentary institutions."[38] Calhoun reached this conclusion despite his knowledge of the widespread agitation for the immediate convening of the National Parliament.[39]

In actuality, Minister Calhoun thought a revolution in China highly improbable at this time. This opinion derived from the consul's reports regarding both the reasons behind the local disturbances and the strength of the nationalist revolutionary forces. The consuls had

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[37]Ibid.

[38]Calhoun to Knox, 893.00/492. For Calhoun's earlier opinion see above, pp. 228-229.

[39]Mukden Consul General Fred D. Fisher reported to Knox on the demonstrations for the early convening of parliament: 6 December 1910. 893.00/487; 24 December 1910. 893.00/490; 28 December 1910. 893.00/494. USCD-Mukden.

not found nationalism behind the widespread disturbances. They had attributed the various uprisings to purely local conditions such as famine, floods, excessive taxation, and corrupt officials, causes which they considered too varied and therefore insufficient to unite the people in a general rebellion.[40] The diplomatic officers never regarded the nationalist revolutionaries as a potential unifying force. According to Shanghai Consul General Wilder, they lacked the machinery to transform the local outbreaks into a revolution.[41] Minister Calhoun regarded the various outbreaks as uncoordinated and concluded that a widely organized revolutionary movement was non-existent.[42]

Another factor which led Minister Calhoun to conclude that a revolution in the immediate future was unlikely was the imperial government's actions in late December of 1910. On 24 December the imperial government issued an edict rejecting the memorials demanding the immediate convening of Parliament and asserting its intention to adhere to the 1913 schedule.[43] If Secretary Tenney's description of the Constitutional Assembly as "dictatorial" was indicative of his

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[40]A. W. Pontius (Nanking) to Assistant Secretary of State, 1 April 1910. 893.00/374; Amos Wilder (Shanghai) to the Secretary of State, 26 April 1910. 893.00/381; J. C. McNally (Tsingtao) to Calhoun, 15 July 1910. 392.00/425; Leo Bergholz (Canton) to Knox, 7 November 1910. 893.00/471; Calhoun to the Secretary of State, 28 May 1910. 893.00/410. The Department of State Archives.

[41]893.00/408.

[42]893.00/410.

[43]Calhoun to Knox, 10 January 1911. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/496.

attitude toward its actions, he probably welcomed the edict.[44] Minister Calhoun definitely approved of the Throne's action which he described as a "firm and reasonable" way of dealing with "irresponsible interference from the outside." In Calhoun's opinion:

> A strong guiding hand is needed here at this moment and the edict may be accepted as an indication that this need is realized by the high officials. It is hoped that the officials are impressed with the fact that any attempt to hurry the evolutionary process in the difficult path of constitutional reform can only result in a revolutionary failure.[45]

Minister Calhoun had concluded that the imperial government had found its backbone at last and had firmly established its control over the constitutional reform program. He failed to perceive that quite the opposite had happened. A permanent rupture between the Throne and the moderate reformers in the provinces had occurred, and the imperial government was by the end of 1910 politically isolated.

Despite their constant criticism of the imperial government's too conservative reform policies, the American diplomats' attitude toward political reform in China was basically a conservative one, and therefore the diplomats continued to favor the imperial government over the provincial reformers. There is no doubt that the diplomats sincerely desired political reform, but they wanted it to be deliberative, gradual, and non-violent. Minister Calhoun expressed this attitude: "At the present time it is necessary for the Central Government to hasten slowly, and those best able to judge and to put into articulate form real reforms are not clamoring for the immediate

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[44] See above, p. 236.

[45] 893.00/496.

convocation of a parliament, . . ."[46] Calhoun had earlier forwarded to the Department an article from the NORTH CHINA DAILY NEWS which had expounded a realistic attitude toward the political reform program:

> . . . by nothing short of a miracle could we expect to find a constitution spring, . . . into full working order after the manner of European constitutions, at the end of the prescribed nine years. The framework may be there, but the tradition of too many centuries has first to be overcome before life and reality can be breathed into it; the prevalent mistake both of China and foreigners appears to lie in expecting that every reform can be instituted as soon as imagined.[47]

No one today looking back on China's twentieth-century experience would challenge the writer's analysis or dispute the correctness of the conservative approach to reform. Yet, it failed to consider the sense of urgency that imperialism had aroused in the Chinese nationalists, if not in the imperial government.

The American diplomats' conservative attitude toward China's political reform program is easy to explain. As observed, it rested in part on their appraisal of the nature and rate of reform that China's tradition, present problems, and resources would tolerate. Equally influential in determining the diplomats' attitude was their concern for United States objectives in China which the Chinese nationalists, both reformers and revolutionaries, threatened much more seriously than did the imperial government.

In the United States' opinion, American present and future

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[46]Calhoun to Knox, 11 January 1911. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/497.

[47]"China's Senate," inclosure in 893.00/406.

interests in China rested on maintaining an open door to equal commercial opportunity there. It had also concluded that preserving the open door depended on modernizing and strengthening China. The United States expected to participate in strengthening China, indeed assumed that foreign assistance was essential to the successful development of China's resources. At one time or another most of the diplomats had expressed the opinion that China was unable to finance its own industrialization. In the opinion of James C. McNally, Consul at Nanking, "this so called awakening of China involves the expenditure of great sums of money, the raising of which must tax her every resource and . . . that must eventually call for outside assistance."[48] Secretary Tenney pointed out in mid-1909 that China's foreign debt was a heavy burden and that the imperial government had not yet tackled the enormous problem of financial reform. Moreover, it was too weak to do so and consequently was approaching bankruptcy.[49] Chargé Fletcher had concluded that foreign financial assistance and technical knowledge was essential to the development of Chinese resources because the Chinese "lacked confidence in themselves and their officials."[50] The consular despatches all reached the same conclusion. China lacked the desire, the technical knowledge, the administrative experience and ability, and the financial means to

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[48]McNally to Assistant Secretary of State, 11 March 1908. USCD-Nanking.

[49]Tenney's Memorandum, 22 June, inclosure in Fletcher to Knox, 2 July 1909. The Department of State Archives.

[50]Fletcher to Knox. 893.00/369.

develop its own resources.

Yet, the diplomatic personnel was unable to deny that Chinese nationalism was rejecting foreign economic assistance. McNally reported that the people of Chekiang had refused the British railroad loan and had pledged fourteen million dollars to replace it. McNally concluded "it is quite evident that China herself is determined to personally direct these reforms or improvements and to enjoy whatever credit or emolument that may be thereto attached."[51] Chargé Fletcher confided to the Department that even if China lacked the financial and technical resources to industrialize, which he felt they did, the Chinese "prefer that their country should lie fallow until such time as China can develop it herself, rather than that it should be exploited by foreigners."[52]

In August, 1909, before the opening of the provincial assemblies which had shown a disposition to challenge the unequal treaties, Fletcher had felt "China should be permitted to work out her own salvation untrammeled by foreign political intervention; humanity demands it; our own interests support it."[53] International rivalry refused China this luxury. The foreign powers had concluded that China could not develop its own resources and must allow, even

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[51]McNally to Assistant Secretary of State, 11 March 1908. USCD-Nanking.

[52]Fletcher to Knox. 893.00/369.

[53]Fletcher to Knox, 28 August 1909. The Department of State Archives.

encourage, foreign assistance. As noted, the American diplomats had also concluded that the imperial government was firmly in control of the political reform situation and that the nationalist revolutionaries were insufficiently strong to organize a revolution.

The Legation and Consular evaluations of the political situation in China influenced the State Department's attitude and affected the United States policy toward China. This fact became apparent in the fall of 1910. In late July of 1910 Rear Admiral John Hubbard, Commander-in-chief of the United States Asiatic Fleet, inquired of the Navy Department concerning the United States policy in the event of a revolution in China. Hubbard reported that all the essential ingredients of a revolution existed and required only a leader and organization.[54] Acting Secretary of State Huntington Wilson replied to the Navy Department's inquiry that it was most unlikely that the revolutionary situation would acquire those essential ingredients. Wilson pointed out that the situation to which Admiral Hubbard referred had existed for the past twenty years and that the Department had no indication that it had altered appreciably: ". . . there are so many different secret societies preaching revolution, each jealous of the others, and there is such utter lack of organization and cooperation that all uprisings that have hitherto occurred have been quite easily suppressed."[55] Wilson concluded that therefore the State

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[54]Hubbard to the Secretary of the Navy, 26 July 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/432.

[55]15 September 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/432.

Department "does not anticipate any serious uprising in China in the near future."[56]

The State Department maintained that attitude until the outbreak of the revolution, despite the riot at Hankow in January, 1911, the assassination of the Acting Tartar General of Canton, Fu-ch'i, an attack at Fatshan, and an attack on the Canton Viceroy's Yamen, all which occurred in Spring of 1911. Again, the Legation and Consular reports influenced the Department's attitude. Canton Vice and Deputy Consul General Hamilton Butler had investigated the revolutionary movement in the Canton vicinity and had reported that there was no relationship between the assassination of the tartar general, the attack at Fatshan, and that on the Canton Viceroy's Yamen. He had identified at least two competing revolutionary organizations in the field,--one following Huang Hsing and the other loyal to Sun Yat-sen, not to overlook the numerous unaffiliated secret societies. In Butler's opinion successful revolution necessitated a change in revolutionary tactics. The revolutionaries would have to unite, enlist popular support, and establish internal discipline. Butler believed that this would take months, maybe years, and that meanwhile the imperial government had ample opportunity to prepare its defense.[57]

Despite its knowledge of the existence of widespread disenchantment with the imperial government and of anti-imperialist nationalism, the United States had concluded that a nationalist-inspired

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Hamilton Butler's Memorandum, 25 May 1911, inclosure in Calhoun to Knox, 5 June 1911. USCD-Canton. 893.00/530.

revolution in China was highly improbable. Although understandable, the conclusion was an unfortunate one. It permitted the United States, with the other powers, to pursue a policy which challenged modern Chinese nationalism and which put the imperial government in a bad light in the view of the Chinese nationalists. The powers continued to insist that China fulfill the terms of the unequal treaties which Chinese nationalists, reformers as well as revolutionaries, found so offensive.

Correspondence between the Mukden Consulate General office and the State Department in mid-1910 hinted at an abandonment of dollar diplomacy, but in deference to Japanese and Russian interests rather than to Chinese nationalism. Consul General Fred D. Fisher blamed the failure to arrest Japanese advances on the Chinese, on the "incompetence," the "evasive and equivocal methods, . . . the corruption and lack of ability among the present provincial officials, together with the weakness of the Chinese Central Government."[58] Assistant Secretary of State Wilbur J. Carr's reply suggested a change in the United States policy in Manchuria:

> . . . the chief questions in Manchuria are such that their solution depends primarily on China itself. . . . By fully respecting vested rights, already guaranteed by treaty, and by resisting the temptations of the extreme 'rights recovery' movement, while at the same time quietly and steadily refusing to submit to any encroachments, it is believed that China would be able so to command the sympathy and respect of the treaty

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[58]Confidential, Fisher to Assistant Secretary of State, 27 May 1910. USCD-Mukden. 893.00/412.

> powers . . . . The Chinese Government must know that this Government will not cease to give China its hearty moral support in the orderly development of the Manchurian provinces.[59]

But President Taft and Secretary Knox desired the United States to contribute more than moral support to the development of China. Despite the failure of the neutralization of the Manchurian railroads scheme and its awareness of Chinese opposition to foreign economic control, the Taft administration talked the American Banking Group into extending China a $50,000,000 loan for currency reform and the development of Manchuria.[60]

The United States insistence that the imperial government enforce the unequal treaties furnished the Chinese nationalists, if not with a sufficient cause, then with an occasion for revolution. The Taft administration demanded, and, in late Spring of 1910, achieved the admission of the American Banking Group to the European banking consortium that was in the process of negotiating a loan with the imperial government for the development of the Hukuang railroad system. That the proposed loan was extremely unpopular with the Chinese people, merchants, and gentry, the United States was well aware at the time. The consular despatches had reported these facts often during the several years preceding the revolution. And Minister Calhoun had advised that American investors consider this fact. The reports also revealed that the United States understood fully the implications of gentry opposition to imperial policies. Yet, when

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[59]Confidential, Carr to Fisher, 18 July 1910. The Department of State Archives. 893.00/412. Emphasis mine.

[60]Varg, Open Door Diplomat, pp. 109-112.

the imperial government, fearing revolution, rejected the agreement, the United States joined the other consortium powers in forcing it to accept the loan.[61] Finally, on 20 May 1911, the imperial government signed the Hukuang Loan Agreement, precipitating the anti-dynastic, anti-imperialist, national revolution that erupted in the Fall of 1911. The China policy of the powers precluded any possibility that the "revolution" which the American diplomats had observed was taking place in the provincial and the constitutional assemblies would be a peaceful one.

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[61]Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, p. 163.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Chinese nationalism is older than the May 4th Movement, older even than the national revolution of 1911. Observers of modern China have placed its birth at various dates. American diplomats in China during the decade preceding the revolution put its birth in 1904 and 1905 when Japan's triumph over Russia inspired the nationalistic rights recovery movement which the United States experienced first-hand in the anti-American boycott. A recent study has viewed the 1900 Boxer uprising as the birthdate of Chinese nationalism,[1] while another has placed it in the 1890's when a small group of radical reformers attempted to free Chinese thought and institutions from China's universalist perception of world order and cast them in a nationalist mold.[2] One casual American observer travelling in China in 1879, former president Ulysses S. Grant, had seen nationalism animating the so-called Self-Strengthening movement.[3]

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[1]Mary C. Wright, "Introduction," in China In Revolution, pp. 1-3.

[2]John Schrecker, Imperialism And Nationalism, pp. 52-58.

[3]"Their leading men thoroughly appreciate their weakness, ... Their idea seems to be to gradually educate a sufficient number of their own people to fill all places in the development of railroads, manufactories, telegraphs, ... Thus, with their own men, and capital, to commence a serious advancement." Grant to General, 7 June 1879. Peking, China. John Russell Young Collection. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Conclusions concerning the birthdate of Chinese nationalism depend ultimately on one's definition of nationalism. Nationalism is a complex, dynamic sentiment. It varies in nature and intensity according to time, place, and the changing conditions and attitudes of the people who express it.

The existence of such differences of opinion concerning the birth of Chinese nationalism are evidence of the complex nature of nationalism in twentieth-century China. The United States Legation and Consular reports identified two distinct strains, and variations thereof, of nationalism in China during the decade that preceded the revolution. One was an inward-looking nationalism, or "militant culturalism," that considered China's civilization vastly superior to all others and that was determined to resist any alien forces of change. The second brand, playing the role of the challenger, was modern, nation-state nationalism which had lost confidence in the traditional universalist outlook and which desired to replace it with a nation-state, composed of four hundred million Chinese, as the all inclusive group and focus of loyalty.

Several factors determined who was likely to belong to the "militant culturalist" group and who to the modern nationalist group. Basically, they were age, ethnic group, education, and occupation. The imperial government, composed of old and long-established Manchus and Chinese who were educated in the Confucian classics and confident of the superiority of China's civilization and whose official positions gave them a vested interest in the preservation of the traditional order, expressed inward-looking nationalism. So, too, did the

majority of the Chinese people who were illiterate and who hated the changes occurring in their lives under the western impact. A small, but vocal and strategically located, minority expressed modern, nation-state nationalism. This group consisted, usually, of younger generation Chinese, a few Manchus, and a new kind of gentry-merchant class that had blended traditional and modern ways in its education and careers. For the most part, the modern Chinese nationalists were born after 1860 and had lived their entire lives under the humiliating and threatening cloud of imperialism, a condition that had influenced their intellectual orientation. The younger generation lacked the confidence of the elder statesmen in the superiority of China's traditional institutions. When Japan defeated China in 1894, these aspiring statesmen challenged the conservative reform formula of the Self-Strengtheners. They were willing, indeed anxious, to experiment with institutional innovations. Unlike their elders, the younger generation saw no incompatibility between western institutions and the Confucian way of life, at least not initially. For Sun Yat-sen industrialization was the way to revivify the traditional civilization. Modern Chinese nationalists also had a vested interest in the emerging modern economic order. With the establishment of the provincial assemblies in 1909, they acquired the political power to achieve their objective of a political order responsive to their needs.

Modern Chinese nationalists divided into two main camps,--reformers and revolutionaries. They shared in common the objective of broadening the base of political power, but they differed in the methods they employed. The larger force was the moderate,

constitutional reformers who were willing to work with the Manchu establishment to modernize China's institutions. The other group was composed of nationalist revolutionaries who considered reform under the Manchus impossible and who concentrated therefore on destroying the Manchu dynasty. Because of the enmity between the Manchus and Chinese, the nationalist revolutionaries had a sympathetic following among the Chinese peasant class, despite the latter's "culturalist" orientation.

Nationalism in early twentieth-century China was therefore a complex sentiment. It was also a divisive sentiment. Twentieth-century China lacked the ideological unity that had characterized earlier periods and this feature greatly complicated China's efforts to revive its institutions and to withstand the imperialist threat. Instead of the cooperative spirit that had characterized so recent a reform effort as that of the T'ung-chih period, a three-way struggle for power erupted. Modern, nation-state nationalism was challenging the inward-looking nationalism of the establishment. Nationalist reformers and nationalist revolutionaries were competing for the leadership of modern Chinese nationalism. Whether China's transition from a traditional to a modern society would be peaceful or violent depended on the outcome of this power struggle. The 1911 revolution was evidence that the reform solution had failed.

The colonial context in which reform and revolution occurred has added a new dimension to these issues. What role, if any, did the powers play in the failure of the reform movement or in precipitating revolution? The United States was one of the powers involved in

China during this period, and its activities were representative of the others. American diplomats occupied ideal positions for viewing Chinese nationalism in operation. The diplomatic despatches offered revealing insights both into the nature and strength of Chinese nationalism and into the diplomats' attitudes and the United States' response to Chinese nationalism in this period. While the United States Legation and Consular reports could not provide definitive explanations for the failure of the post-Boxer reform movement or the cause of the 1911 revolution, they did offer insights into both issues. In addition, the diplomatic reports revealed the nature of the influence the foreign powers exercised on the political situation in China.

The consular despatches concerning the Boxer movement revealed that in 1900 the American diplomats were unaware of the existence of Chinese nationalism in any form. Although there was no real concensus of opinion concerning the cause of the uprising, in general the consuls considered the Chinese people friendly to foreigners and receptive to foreign ideas and goods. Those who found the Chinese anti-foreign considered them in reality only anti-Christian, and they attributed this attitude to the missionaries' meddling ways. For the most part, American diplomats believed that Chinese anti-foreignism began and ended with the official class, and they based their policy on this opinion. Admiral Seymour's march on Tientsin was to intimidate the Throne and force it to take action against the recalcitrant officials who the powers believed were responsible for the Boxer attacks against the foreigners and the native Christians. Military pressure on the

imperial government had the opposite effect of what the powers had expected. It resolved the power struggle between the progressive and conservative members of the Court in favor of the conservatives, and it precipitated the Boxer siege of the foreign Legations which was relieved only by an allied expedition against Peking.

The Boxer uprising taught all of the parties involved a valuable lesson. The powers realized the intensity and pervasiveness of anti-foreign sentiment in China. They also understood the importance of avoiding even the threat of military pressure on the imperial government which only served to strengthen the forces of reaction. The United States adopted a policy of supporting the moderates within the imperial government and of encouraging them to initiate reform. The imperial government was blamed for the Boxer debacle. To make matters worse, the Boxer Protocol increased China's indebtedness to the foreign powers which stimulated anti-dynastic and anti-foreign nationalism. The imperial government realized the necessity of reform to preserve the Manchu dynasty. Finally, foreign intervention in the Boxer uprising taught many Chinese nationalists that they must employ non-violent methods for achieving their objectives and keep the powers from ever again uniting against China.

The diplomatic reports on the political situation in China revealed that the nature of Chinese nationalism was changing radically in the decade that preceded the 1911 revolution. According to the diplomats, an inward-looking nationalism dominated the first phase of the post-Boxer reform movement, and they considered it responsible for China's failure to make substantial progress in reforming its

institutions. Yet, in 1904 and 1905, the diplomats perceived that "militant culturalism" was yielding to modern, nation-state nationalism.

This fact was brought home to American diplomats by the rights recovery movement which the United States experienced first-hand in the form of the anti-American boycott. The boycott was the result of disharmonious elements in the United States China policy due to a failure to reconcile the interests of American labor with those of American merchants and missionaries. The United States sought on the one hand to keep China's door open to Christianity and American manufactures and on the other hand to close the American door to Chinese immigration. Although the consular despatches suggested several motives for the boycott, ranging from profit to patriotism, they agreed that the boycott was stimulating the development of modern Chinese nationalism. The despatches also revealed that in the diplomats' opinion the Chinese gentry class in South and Central China was playing the leading role in organizing the rights recovery activities.

For American diplomats 1905 was a "watershed" year, the dividing line between traditional and modern China. In 1902 and 1903 Shanghai Consul General John Goodnow had recognized the role popular journalism was playing in developing a public opinion in China. But, for the diplomatic staff as a whole, acknowledgment of the presence of modern Chinese nationalism came in 1905 and was forced by such rights recovery activities as the attempts to cancel foreign railroad and mining concessions, the Huchow land controversy, and the anti-American

boycott.

The rights recovery movement was one of the chief vehicles for the expression of modern Chinese nationalism. It was therefore indicative of the form nationalism was assuming. Modern Chinese nationalists were demanding that China develop its own resources without foreign assistance. They desired to reclaim foreign land titles, to exercise greater control over foreign concessions, and to extend the jurisdiction of Chinese law over all foreigners residing in China, which meant the abolishment of extraterritoriality. Chinese nationalists were attacking the "unequal" treaty structure which they considered incompatible with sovereignty. Modern Chinese nationalism was therefore challenging the policy assumptions and objectives of the United States as well as the foreign policy procedures of the imperial government.

The constitutional movement was the other vehicle for the expression of modern Chinese nationalism, but the two were interdependent. The nationalists believed that a modern political system would enable China to manage its own destiny. This conviction grew stronger after 1905 because of modernized Japan's victory over Russia. But the nationalists' desire to broaden the base of political power threatened the position of the imperial government.

American diplomats realized the challenge to the United States China policy implied in the rights recovery movement. But in 1905 and 1906 the diplomats concluded that Japanese aggression was a greater threat to American interests than was Chinese nationalism. They concluded that Chinese nationalism did not necessarily have to be

anti-foreign. It could, and should, channel its energy into internal institutional reform. Therefore, American interest in the imperial government's reform program increased noticeably in 1906 and thereafter. In the diplomats' opinion successful reform would counter the challenge of anti-dynastic and anti-foreign nationalism.

Emerging modern Chinese nationalism alarmed the imperial government. It responded to the threat to its existence by expanding its reform program. In 1906 it announced that China would be given a constitutional form of government. But the imperial government did little directly connected with constitutionalism until late summer of 1907. Instead the Throne expanded the army, navy, and educational reforms of the first phase of its post-Boxer reform program and also attempted to reform the central and provincial administrative systems. A sharp increase in anti-Manchu activity in 1907 led the imperial government to accelerate its political reform program. It announced a nine-year constitutional program which was to culminate in 1916 with the establishment of a National Parliament. Two immediate steps in that direction were the creation of Provincial Deliberative Assemblies and a Constitutional Assembly to educate the people in the methods of constitutional government.

Although unintended and unforeseen, the provincial assemblies had revolutionary implications. Their members came from the newly emergent nationalist reform group, which was predominantly gentry in make-up, and they turned the assemblies into an instrument of modern Chinese nationalism. Popularly elected, rather than appointed, the members of these assemblies came to consider themselves, rather than

the emperor, as the representatives of the people. As the consular and Legation reports revealed, the assemblies quickly became a force for self-government and an influential organ of the rights recovery movement. These provincial delegates comprised one-half the membership of the Constitutional Assembly that convened in October, 1911.

The proceedings of the Constitutional Assembly precipitated a political crisis in China in late 1910. The provincial delegates overwhelmed the Throne appointees to the assembly and turned that body into an instrument for forcing the imperial government to accelerate its constitutional program. The provincial delegates demanded the immediate establishment of the National Parliament and of a cabinet responsible to Parliament. Because the Throne refused to convene the National Parliament any earlier than 1913 and also failed to recognize the assembly's jurisdiction over tax and budget matters, the assembly impeached the members of the Grand Council, charging that the existence of the Grand Council was incompatible with the principles of constitutional government. As the Prince Regent considered dissolving the runaway assembly, its members began attacking the Throne and the Regent himself. A permanent rupture between the imperial government and the provincial assemblies had occurred. The constitutional reformers who returned to their provinces after the assembly adjourned were more revolutionary in their nationalism. They had rejected the imperial government's definition of constitutionalism, and the imperial government had lost its gentry mainstay.

'Successful reform, no revolution,' is a simple equation for

expressing the political situation in China in the early twentieth century. This fact has placed the imperial government's post-Boxer reform movement in a position of central importance within China's twentieth-century revolutionary experience. Conclusions regarding the reason reform failed have varied considerably. For, there is a lack of agreement concerning the nature of the post-Boxer reform movement. In the earliest study of the Manchu dynasty's last reform efforts, Meribeth Cameron concluded that the reform program was radical in its ideology and objectives, that the imperial government had endorsed the program of the radical reformers of 1898.[4] Richard C. Howard in his Introduction to the Journal of Asian Studies 1969 Symposium on the subject disagreed with Cameron, concluding that the imperial government had instead returned to its earlier, conservative, and unsuccessful "self-strengthening" solution.[5] By illustrating the "traditional" element contained in K'ang Yu-wei's proposal to extend the privilege to memorialize, John Fincher has perhaps raised the question of just how radical was the 1898 reform program.[6] John Schrecker has demonstrated the radical character of the reformers' approach to foreign policy issues.[7] More such comparative studies are perhaps required in order to understand better the nature of the 1898 reform

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[4]Cameron, pp. 56-57.

[5]Richard C. Howard, "Introduction," in "The Chinese Reform Movement of the 1890's: A Symposium," Journal of Asian Studies, XXIX, No. 1, November, 1969, p. 8.

[6]Fincher, "Political Provincialism and the National Revolution," pp. 213-214.

[7]Imperialism and Nationalism, pp. 52-58.

program and its influence on and relation to that which followed the Boxer uprising.

While the United States Legation and Consular reports could not provide definitive explanations, they did offer revealing insights into the reason for the failure of the imperial government's post-Boxer reform movement. Unlike Meribeth Cameron, the American diplomats pictured the program as essentially conservative in its ideology and objectives, and they attributed its failure to this conservative character. According to the despatches, although the content of the reform program expanded in the decade that preceded the revolution, its conservative nature remained unaltered. Whether the imperial government was modernizing the army, the navy, the education system or the central and provincial administrative systems, the objective always was to preserve the Manchu dynasty with its traditional powers intact. The same considerations motivated the establishment of the provincial and constitutional assemblies. Although the diplomats sometimes wondered, in general they considered the imperial government sincere in its reform intentions. And, doubtless it was,--within the limits set by its conservative ideology. Yet, the American diplomats also understood that modern Chinese nationalism was challenging the assumptions that underlay the conservative program and that the imperial government would have to accomodate its program to the nationalist demands if it were to survive.

The imperial government failed to identify with modern Chinese nationalism. As described by the American diplomats, its reform policy was one of shifting opportunism. The diplomats remarked

often on the absence of a coherent reform policy. They noted that the Throne appeared willing to try almost anything it thought might strengthen the dynasty. The despatches revealed that the measures the Throne had adopted to preserve itself had the opposite effect, especially after the death of the Empress Dowager and Emperor in 1908. The new Regent, Prince Chun, moved to consolidate Manchu power by removing progressive Chinese, and Manchus as well, from office and by replacing them with conservative Manchus. Yet, this had been a feature of the preceding reign, too. The despatches suggested that the Chinese officials and gentry were not opposed to the centralization of power per se but only to centralization under the auspices of the Manchu dynasty. According to the diplomats' reports, the imperial government's opportunistic reform policy had alienated and radicalized the Chinese gentry who occupied the new positions of political power in the provincial assemblies and who feared the imperial government was attempting to enhance the power of the Manchus at the expense of the Chinese.

The imperial government's reform policy thoroughly exasperated the American diplomats. Its reforms were not progressive enough for the diplomats, and its methods of implementing those it actually attempted were inept. Yet, despite their criticism of the Throne's reform policies and their knowledge of the existence both of widespread disenchantment with the imperial government and of anti-foreign nationalism, the American diplomats favored the imperial government over the nationalist reformers and, of course, over the nationalist revolutionaries. There were several reasons for this pro-Manchu

position.

The United States China policy, assumptions and objectives, dictated that it support the imperial government and encourage it to inaugurate fundamental changes in China's political order. American interests in China, most of which were projected in the future, depended on maintaining an open door to equal commercial opportunity there. To achieve that objective, it was necessary to remove all causes for foreign intervention, which in the opinion of the United States entailed strengthening and modernizing China. The United States expected to participate in developing China, indeed assumed that American economic, technical, and administrative assistance was essential to the success of China's modernization program on which the open door depended. The United States also expected that Americans would occupy a privileged position in the new China. Modern Chinese nationalism was challenging the United States policy assumptions and objectives. The imperial government was a much lesser threat. The imperial government recognized that foreign assistance offered it an opportunity to increase its power and strengthen its hold on legitimacy.

The United States therefore was as paternalistic and opportunistic in its policy as was the imperial government. Practical, rather than philosophical, considerations determined the diplomats' attitude toward nationalism in China. The diplomats' personal opinions regarding representative government in China were inconsequential in determining the United States China policy. A strong, modern China need not be a democratic China. But the Chinese nationalists were

demanding political reform and they were a potentially disruptive force, particularly if they tampered with foreign treaty rights. In the opinion of the American diplomats, if the imperial government would meet the nationalists' demands for political reform it would minimize the appeal of the rights recovery movement and reduce the chances both of revolution and foreign intervention. But, to the imperial government conceding the demands of the nationalist constitutional reformers was tantamount to committing suicide.

Two other factors contributed to the United States decision to continue to pursue its decade-old policy of supporting the imperial government and encouraging it to reform China's anachronistic institutions, to develop China's resources, and to honor its treaty commitments. First, although the diplomats had predicted a rupture in relations between the imperial government and the provincial assemblies if the imperial government persisted in its opportunistic political reform policy, they failed to perceive that the breach had actually occurred and that the Throne was politically isolated. Secondly, the diplomats did not think that nationalism was sufficiently widespread and strong or that the revolutionary nationalists had the leadership, discipline, or organization to engineer a general uprising. And the diplomats believed that the imperial government could easily suppress anything less than a general uprising. In the opinion of the American diplomats and of the State Department, modern Chinese nationalism did not warrant a policy reorientation.

This unfortunate conclusion led the United States, with the other powers, to pursue a policy identical in spirit to that which

precipitated the Boxer uprising in 1900. Diplomatic pressure on the imperial government replaced military pressure, to be sure, but by 1911 Chinese nationalism had changed drastically and refused to tolerate such disregard for China's sovereign rights. Whether the revolution that had already begun in the provincial and constitutional assemblies would have been non-violent is an impossible question to answer. But the policy of the foreign powers in late 1910 and early 1911 precluded a peaceful resolution of China's political crisis.

The United States Legation and Consular reports suggested that the American diplomats' response to the imperial government's reform program and to the Chinese nationalism that had evoked it contained some deep-rooted contradictions. The American diplomats had greeted the expansion of the reform program because they believed it would develop and strengthen China, and the United States China policy was predicated on a strong, modern China. But the United States expected, and was prepared to insist, that reform in China be conducted on terms favorable to American interests. The United States favored progressive reform measures, but it, indeed all the powers, drew the line at the rights recovery movement. The United States expected to participate in developing China, assumed its assistance was essential, and believed that a grateful China should reward Americans by insuring them access to the China market. American objectives conflicted with those of modern Chinese nationalism, and the United States insistence that the imperial government uphold the unequal treaties made it more

difficult for the ruling dynasty to identify with that nationalism.

Yet, the diplomatic reports also revealed that the imperial government's fundamental problems were of its own making. The diplomats criticized the imperial government's conservative reform ideology and objectives and its inept methods of implementing its reforms which, they concluded, had alienated provincial leaders who questioned the Throne's reform commitment. The diplomats noted particularly the lack of talented and capable administrators within the imperial government and deplored the fact that Prince Chun had eliminated the one man, Yüan Shih-k'ai, capable of achieving reform. As portrayed by the American diplomats, the Manchu dynasty was unwilling to yield an ounce of its traditional powers, and the imperial government's reform ideology was therefore on a collision course with modern Chinese nationalism. Taken en masse, the United States Legation and Consular reports between 1900 and 1911 painted a picture of China moving ineluctably toward revolution.

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