The Pacific question, 1914-1918
war, strategy and diplomacy

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The Pacific question, 1914-1918: War, Strategy and Diplomacy

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DECLARATION

I confirm that the following thesis does not exceed the word limit prescribed in the College regulations. I further confirm that the work presented in the thesis is my own and all references are cited accordingly.

ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the Great War in Europe triggered a chain of events in the Pacific that includes an often overlooked short war which, in turn, changed the balance of power in the region with ramifications of a global order.

Before the war, Germany had a thin but significant presence across large parts of the Ocean, in between an Anglo-Australasian and French-controlled southern portion and a growing Japanese Empire to the north of the islands, with the United States interspersed across the Pacific. The opportunity provided in August 1914 was quickly seized by Japan, absorbing the vast northern portion of the German Pacific from Palau to the Marshall Islands, whereas the southern part, including New Guinea, was occupied by British Australasia, with the United States looking on from outside and Germany, militarily overwhelmed, from inside the war.

The long duration of the war meant that the possible outcomes for the Pacific were being discussed for years between the powers, not least the reactions of all those previous 'incumbents' to the expansion of Japan deep into the Ocean. Viewing these events from the perspectives afforded by the archives of all those different 'incumbent' nations exposes the underlying fault-lines which in due course led to a new political map and order in the Pacific, diplomatically rehearsed throughout the war and finally cemented by the Paris Peace Conference. This little-known settlement proved just as unstable as the better known one in Europe and the Middle East. Ultimately - but not teleologically - it constituted a decisive element on the path to the Pacific War of 1941-45.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Auswärtiges Amt, German Foreign Office
ANZ	Archives New Zealand
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BA	Bundesarchiv, German Federal Archives
CAB	Cabinet Office (Papers) (UK)
CHAR	Chartwell Trust Papers, Churchill Archives Centre
CinC	Commander-in-Chief
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence (UK)
CNB	Commonwealth [Australian] Naval Board
CO	British Colonial Office
FO	British Foreign Office
FRUS	*Foreign Relations of the United States* series
GGAus	Governor-General of Australia
GGNZ	Governor-General of New Zealand
GNZ	Governor of New Zealand
HMG	His Majesty's Government (British Government)
IJN	Imperial Japanese Navy
IWC	Imperial War Cabinet (British Empire)
LG	Lloyd George (Papers)
LoC	Library of Congress (US)
LoN	League of Nations
MAE	Ministère des Affaires étrangeres, French Foreign Ministry (Archives)
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NARA	National Archives and Records Admistration (United States National Archives)
NARA CP	US National Archives College Park site
NARA DC	US National Archives Washington D.C. site
NBK	Nan'yo Boeki Kabushikigaisha (South Seas Trading Company) (Japan)
NIO	Naval Intelligence Officer (in New Zealand)
NLA	National Library of Australia

NS	Nouvelle série (MAE archives)
NLNZ	National Library of New Zealand
NZPD	*New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*
ONI	Office of Naval Intelligence (within US Dept of the Navy)
PA AA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, German Foreign Ministry Archives
PA UK	Parliamentary Archives of the United Kingdom
PPC	1919 Paris Peace Conference
PPCo	Pacific Phosphate Company
PWW	*The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, series of volumes edited by Arthur Link
RAC	Rear Admiral Commanding (Royal Navy)
RG	Record Group (NARA files)
RKA	Reichskolonialamt, German Colonial Office
SD	United States Department of State
SecNav	United States Secretary of the Navy
SS	United States Secretary of State
SSCols	British Secretary of State for the Colonies
SSFO	British Foreign Secretary
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom
USekAA	Unterstaatssekretär Auswärtiges Amt, Under-Secretary of State Foreign Office (Germany)
USSCO	Under-Secretary of State Colonial Office (UK)
USSFO	Under-Secretary of State Foreign Office (UK)
VAC	Vice Admiral Commanding (Royal Navy)
WC	British War Cabinet
WO	British War Office

Introduction

The term 'Pacific War' is mostly associated with events between 1941 and 1945, as part of the Second World War, and one might wonder what happened in the Pacific during the previous one, between 1914 and 1918. Mostly ignored, the Great War has a Pacific Ocean storyline of its own, albeit of lesser magnitude, but, as this work will contend, of equal strategic and political impact. Easily overlooked is the fact that Germany, the main opposition to the Allied powers in 1914, had a Pacific empire of vast proportions, stretching from the Palaus near the Philippines across to the Marshall Islands, and from the Mariana Islands, only 2,000 kilometres from mainland Japan, to New Guinea, where it bordered with Australian Papua. When it was brought into the conflict in August 1914, it made the area involved the most far-flung from Europe and the contested space the largest in the war. The outcome redrew the map of the Pacific Ocean, removing the German Empire and filling the vacuum with new Australian, New Zealand and Japanese possessions.

This is a story of international diplomacy embedded in a war rather than a war story itself. What started as a short war in the Pacific in 1914 turned into a complex multitude of questions about regional security, imperial ambition, strategic vision and political ideals. I will bring to light the rifts and ruptures catalysed by the war, but also the continuities as they evolved over its course. The perspectives are multi-layered, both domestic and international, bilateral as well as multilateral, binary and byzantine, Eurocentric as well as Pacific-focused. Consequently, or as a *conditio sine qua non*, the toolkit is multi-archival.

It is worth saying a few words about terminological convention. It is contestable who 'invented' the Pacific Ocean. A good start is the Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa who in 1513 marched across the Panama Isthmus to what he named the 'Mar del Sur', originally a merely local reference to little more than the Bay of Panama.[1] From this developed the English 'South Seas' and the German 'Südsee'. The christening of the sea with the term 'Pacific' is ascribed to the Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan after his crossing westwards in 1520 of the strait to be named after him.

[1] O.H.K. Spate, ''South Sea' to 'Pacific Ocean': A Note on Nomenclature', *The Journal of Pacific History* 12, 4 (1977), 210.

Later Western ethnographic exploration led the French explorer Jules Dumont d'Urville to designate the area as Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia in 1831.[2] When in the 19th and 20th centuries, the above terminology was mixed and combined, the 'South Pacific' became the designator of the islands in the three ethnographic regions, but later led to scholar Ron Crocombe, for example, asking 'south of what?', in order to then invoke the relativity of the term by saying that 'Most Europeans, Japanese and Americans tend to mean south of where they are', thus making the 'South Pacific' a distinguisher between a northern centre and a southern periphery.[3] While this could be said to be a true perspective for most incumbent powers in the Pacific in the 20th century, it would not be so for Australia and New Zealand, nor would it apply to the Pacific Islanders.

Another scholar, Arif Dirlik, argues that early European explorers, rather than *discovering* the Pacific Ocean, which would suggest that the people who inhabited the region before the European arrival did not know that they were there, set the foundation for its later *invention*.[4] When the earlier inhabitants interacted with each other, these interactions were local, and so was the inhabitants' consciousness of them. To speak of Euro-Americans *inventing* the Pacific is therefore justified because 'they created a structure out of the area that had not been there earlier; that this invention was not by design but was the result of often haphazard human motions does not mean that it had no logic to it'.[5]

Nomenclature changed in the 20th century, and two good examples are the 'South Pacific Commission', founded in 1947, and the 'South Pacific Forum', founded in 1971, two inter-governmental organisations, who changed their names to 'Secratariat of the Pacific Community' and 'Pacific Islands Forum', respectively, reflecting a growing geographical scope as well as a terminological shift moving away from 'southern' designations and accepting the Equator as a technical divider. My work will thus refer to a geographically neutral 'Pacific question', while contemporary sources remain consumed by terminological 'southernness'.

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ron Crocombe, *The South Pacific* (Suva, 2001), 16.
[4] Arif Dirlik, 'The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure', *Journal of World History*, 3, 1 (1992), 64.
[5] Dirlik, 'The Asia-Pacific Idea', 65.

Before the war broke out in 1914, the American President Theodore Roosevelt had heralded a 'Pacific Era' in 1903, invoking trade across the Pacific to the Far East as a future source of American prosperity, while the Germans were pursuing a *Weltpolitik* at the beginning of the 20th century to augment their political, commercial and cultural influence across the globe, including the Pacific.[6] Similarly, the Japanese were contemplating an outlet both onto the Chinese mainland as well as to the vast island world to Japan's south, their *Nan'yo*.[7]

The Pacific was essentially a carved-up colonial space by 1914 (see map on next page), after the various powers had occupied and negotiated their way in across the 19th century.[8] Australia and New Zealand were by now British Dominions, while Germany had seized parts of New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, had purchased the Caroline and Marianna Islands from Spain and had established a presence in Samoa. The United States had seized the eastern part of Samoa and had paid off the Spanish for Guam and the Philippines. Hawaii had also been annexed. Other sizeable British possessions were the Solomon Islands, Fiji, and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, while the French had their foothold around Tahiti, in New Caledonia and - with Britain – in the New Hebrides.

[6] See, for example, Bernhard von Bülow, *Memoirs 1897-1903* (London, 1931), 412.
[7] Henry P. Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (Melbourne, 1991), 39-40, 45, 66.
[8] Pierre-Yves Toullelan estimates that 98.9 per cent of the Pacific Islands had come under foreign imperial rule by the year 1900; see his *Tahiti Colonial (1860-1914)* (Paris, 1984), 31.

Map: Sovereignty and political control in the Pacific area in 1914

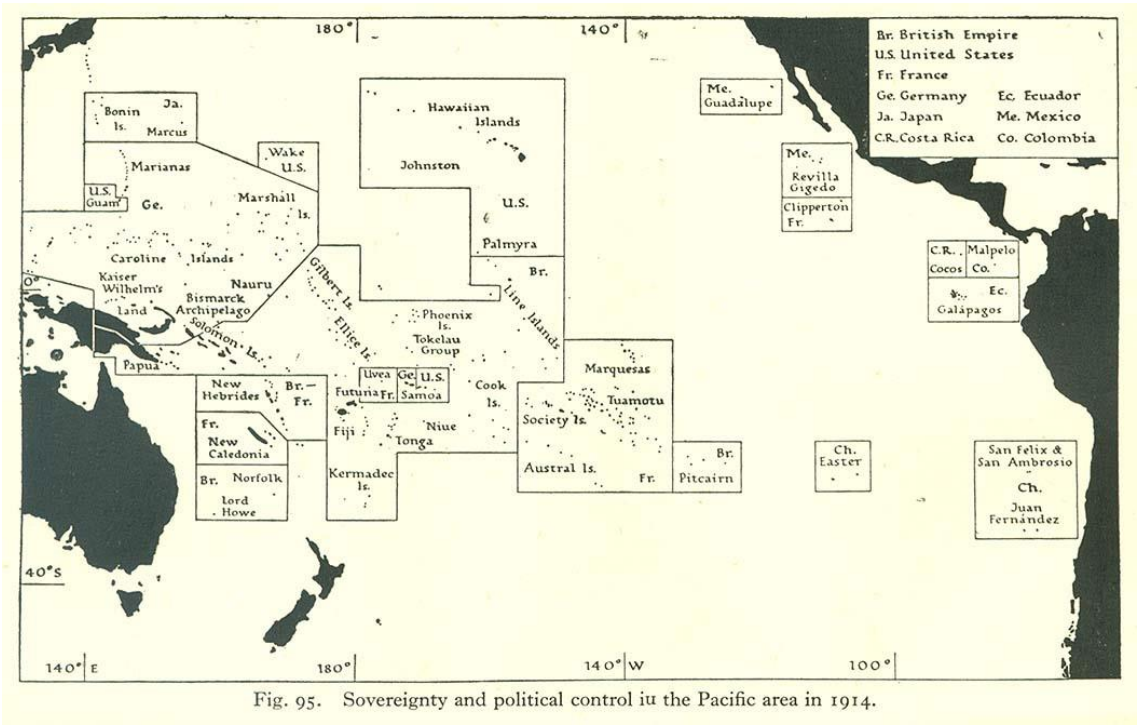

Fig. 95. Sovereignty and political control iu the Pacific area in 1914.

Source: H.C. Darby, Raymond Firth and J.W. Davidson (eds), Naval Intelligence Division, *Pacific Islands*, vol. I, *General survey* (London, 1945), fig.95.

The Pacific Ocean of the 19th century was an 'English Lake', under the impact of a growing British settler population in Australasia and an expanding formal British Empire in the Pacific Islands in the second half of the 19th century.[9] However, after Spain had sold off its Micronesian possessions to Germany and the United States in 1899, two powers with great ambitions had entered the game. The Pacific was thus becoming a 'contested lake' with powers jostling and colliding. Historian Paul Kennedy writes that as 'the twentieth century approached … the pace of technological change and uneven growth rates made the international system much more unstable and complex than it had been fifty years earlier'.[10] This was manifested in the frantic post-1880 imperial race not only for the Pacific, but also for African and Asian possessions. The United States had surpassed the United Kingdom economically since the 1870s, and Germany would do the same in the early 1900s. One reading of events in the Pacific in the years leading up to 1914, but also during the war itself, is thus about the

[9] For the 'Spanish Lake', 'English Lake' and 'American Lake' paradigm, see Dirlik, 'The Asia-Pacific Idea', 69.

[10] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London, 1989), xix.

rise and decline of imperial powers and the processes that the negotiating of the change of status brought about. Britain had an empire to lose not to gain. In the Pacific by the early 1900s, the same was also true for the Americans and Germans. The French, the weakest player in this configuration, were an incumbent without the resources and means of their competitors, who were eager to fill in for them. Maritime Japan was confined to Formosa and islands nearer the mainland, such as the Ryukyu Islands and the Volcano Islands. As the Japanese, Australian and New Zealand drives for the German colonies at the outbreak of war show, imperial ambition was simmering pre-war only to be released at the right moment, a moment of instability wherein to readjust the political map of the Pacific, which was later confirmed by the Versailles Peace Treaty. The lake would remain contested and in a state of multilateral imbalance, however, which lasted until after the Second World War when it became American.[11]

The present work draws on a number of historiographical categories or sub-categories, defined by my use of archival sources and by the narrative. The primary sources consist mainly of governmental, diplomatic and military (mostly naval) archival material from the various involved countries (except Japan, which remains outside the author's language remit).

On classification, if diplomatic history is the 'analysis of relations between states, employing diplomatic archives', then the present work is diplomatic history, although some find the term and field unduly restraining, preferring to incorporate it into the more inclusive framework of 'international history'.[12] The latter is meant to take into account military, economic and demographic data as well as technological developments, which the present work does. This should not obscure the fact, however, that nation-state actors were at the origin of the decision-making processes concerned, which means that national governments, administrations, foreign ministries, colonial and naval offices, and so on, and the men (all men, indeed) in them were shaping the course of events.

[11] Eleanor Lattimore invokes the term 'American Lake' in an article appearing less than three months after the end of World War II in the Pacific, see Eleanor Lattimore, 'Pacific Ocean or American Lake?', *Institute of Pacific Relations, Far Eastern Survey*, 14, 22 (1945), 313-6.

[12] See Roger Bullen's and Simon Adams' contribution to: D.C. Watt et al., 'What is Diplomatic History?' *History Today*; 35, 7 (1985), 36-7.

Now a few words about some methodology. The eminent Japanese-American scholar Akira Iriye distinguishes between four approaches within the framework of 'foreign affairs relations between at least two countries', listing them as the study of the domestic sources of foreign policy, a cultural, intellectual or 'mentalities' approach towards foreign policy, a multi-archival approach and a systemic one.[13] This study will cover ground on all four levels, with an emphasis on combining the domestic with a multi-archival approach, but also appreciating the systemic level of understanding, which Iriye describes as '[examining] the international system as a whole … whether in terms of alliances, global strategies, imperialism, colonialism, or economic linkages' and interpreting the 'whole globe … as a system and various regions of the world as subsystems, each developing their own rules of the game'. The Pacific (and its 'question') 1914-18 was one of those subsystems. Its geographic vastness, distance from the various imperial cores, colonial character, maritime nature, sparseness of population, and interaction with (anticipated) developments in military technology meant that a relatively low but specific level of economic and military penetration was necessary to control or contest the system. Although I am not aiming to utilise such explanatory patterns to introduce a 'world systems' approach, thereby arriving at some level of systemic predictability, it should nevertheless be pointed out that the area had unique features which underpinned pre-war preparations and wartime political decision-making. Finally, various factors, not least geography, meant that political and military cultures were at play, and it will become obvious how Britain's maritime and global trading culture clashed with more continental cultures in Australia and the United States, while Japan was locked in a dilemma between land and sea and in Germany, the uneasy co-existence between globalists (mostly in the navy and north German overseas trade and shipping) and Europeanists had to give in favour of the latter.

The historiography of the field, in its entirety, is vast and impossible to appreciate in a short overview. Some have attempted presenting the history of the Pacific Islands as a whole, reaching back as far as the beginnings of human settlement in the area over

[13] See Akira Iriye's contribution to: D.C. Watt et al., 'What is Diplomatic History?', 40.

50,000 years ago, but barely mentioning the First World War.[14] Oskar Spate has taken a different approach in his three-volume account, *The Pacific since Magellan*, seeking to 'explicate the process by which the greatest blank on the map became a nexus of global commercial and strategic relations' by reaching back to the days of early European discovery.[15] Emphasizing that his work is 'a history of the Pacific, not of the Pacific peoples', Spate goes on to say that 'From the very beginning, the implications of Magellan's voyage made the Ocean a theatre of power conflict.'[16] He thus touches on the core of the subject which informs the context of analysis of the present work: imperial rivalry in the Pacific Ocean. There is one significant limitation to Spate's work, however. His account ends in the 1820s, roughly a century before mine begins, as he expresses regret that he has gone 'Thus far, and alas, no farther'.[17] Here, I have decided to take the chronology of Spate's account farther by attempting it for the years 1914 to 1918, taking on board the complexities of late 19th century and early 20th century imperial strategy and politics.

These emerged when the winds of imperialism had blown in the direction of the Pacific Ocean in the 19th and early 20th centuries and had brought about its Europeanisation (or Americanisation or Japanisation), turning it, borrowing from Norman Davies, into a 'playground' of great power influence.[18] This was followed by historians' works on the different areas occupied and produced an historiographical body consisting of area studies defined through the prism of the particular imperial powers, the examining from a state actor perspective. Although the directions of narrative vary, including political-economic-strategic accounts, military accounts (especially about the Pacific War of 1941-5), sociocultural and indigenous accounts, what they have in common is

[14] For a recent work, see Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of the Pacific Islands* (Basingstoke, 2013, 2nd edition). It is worth noting that Fischer is a specialist on Polynesian languages and literature. For an earlier work, see Douglas L. Oliver's *The Pacific Islands,* first published in 1951, and also Ian C. Campbell, *A History of the Pacific Islands* (Berkeley, 1989) and *Worlds Apart : a New History of the Pacific Islands* (Christchurch, 2003).

[15] Spate was a trained geographer and was also strongly affiliated with the field of 'Pacific Studies', reflecting on the interdisciplinarity of his undertaking. O.H.K. Spate, *The Pacific since Magellan*, vol. 1, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra, 1979), ix.

[16] Ibid.

[17] O.H.K. Spate, *The Pacific since Magellan*, vol. 2, *Monopolists and Freebooters* (Minneapolis, 1983), ix; see also on this David Mackay's review of Spate's third and final volume *Paradise Found and Lost* in *Pacific Studies*, 14, 2 (1991), 169-71.

[18] Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1981).

that they are based on a nation-state framework of analysis and then relate it to the space, the people and imperial rivals in the Pacific.[19]

[19] This is a limited overview of the various works. On (greater) Britain in the Pacific, a siginificant amount of literature has been produced and published in Australia. This includes early works, such as Charles Brunsdon Fletcher's *The New Pacific* and *The Problem of the Pacific*, published in 1917 and 1919 respectively, and S.S. MacKenzie's and Arthur Jose's volumes *The Australians at Rabaul* and *The Royal Australian Navy* as part of C.E.W. Bean's *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–191*8, first published in 1927 and 1928 respectively. Later works of great standing include Neville Meaney's *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-1914* (published in 1976) and *Australia and World Crisis, 1914-1923* (published in 2009) and Roger Thompson's *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: the Expansionist Era 1820-1920* from 1979. Australian scholars have also taken great interest and published abundantly on the various powers present in the Pacific at the time, such as Robert Aldrich on France in his *The French presence in the South Pacific, 1842-1940* (1990) and Peter Hempenstall's and Peter Overlack's various books and articles and John A. Moses' work on Germany, *The German empire and Britain: The German empire and Britain's Pacific dominions, 1871-1919 : essays on the role of Australia and New Zealand in world politics in the age of imperialism* (as editor and contributor, published in 2000). The most notable works from New Zealand are Angus Ross' *New Zealand aspirations in the Pacific in the nineteenth century* and *New Zealand's Record in the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century* from the 1960s. Another book of great value is Ian McGibbon's *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand 1840-1915,* first published in 1991. By contrast, work on non-Dominions Britain in the Pacific is rudimentary and includes Paul Kennedy's *The Samoan Tangle : a Study in Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900* (Dublin, 1974), Barrie MacDonald's *Cinderellas of the Empire : towards a history of Kiribati and Tuvalu* (Canberra, 1982) and W.P. Morrell's *Britain in the Pacific Islands* (Oxford, 1960). The latter two are New Zealanders.
The American perspective is reflected by Rupert Emerson's *America's Pacific Dependencies: A Survey of American Colonial Policies and of Administration and Progress toward Self-Rule in Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and the Trust Territory*, published in 1949, and Hartley Grattan's *The United States and the Southwest Pacific,* published in 1963, and other works on presidential policy, such as Roy Watson Curry's *Woodrow Wilson and Far Eastern Policy, 1913-1921* (1952), flanked by highly authoritative and useful accounts on the United States Navy, such as William Braisted's two volumes *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909* and *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (1958, 1971).
German Pacific historiography has seen a fairly recent (re)naissance and the subject has been reasonably well covered by German and Australian scholars, most notably through the work of Hermann Hiery in *The Neglected War: The German South Pacific and the Influence of World War I* (1995), and the more socio-cultural *Das Deutsche Reich in der Südsee (1900-1921): eine Annährung an die Erfahrungen verschiedener Kulturen* (1995) and *Die deutsche Südsee 1884-1914 : ein Handbuch* from 2001. German naval strategy, albeit pre-war, has been recently minutely covered by Heiko Herold in his *Reichsgewalt bedeutet Seegewalt: die Kreuzergeschwader der Kaiserlichen Marine als Instrument der deutschen Kolonial- und Weltpolitik 1885-1901* (Munich, 2013), in addition to Overlack's various articles on the subject and to Erich Raeder's authoritative naval account about the Pacific in World War One in *Der Krieg zur See, 1914-1918, Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern,* vol. I*, Das Kreuzergeschwader* (1922). As a general rule, works on German imperialism and German colonial and later war aims have focused predominantly on the African colonies, largely neglecting Germany's vast possessions in the Pacific.
The historiography on the French Pacific between 1914 and 1918 is sketchy at best. While the French possessions are well covered by French scholars, such as Toullelan's *Tahiti Colonial*, published in 1984, or Sylvette Boubin-Boyer's *De la Première Guerre Mondiale en Océanie: Les Guerres de tous les Calédoniens, 1914-1919* (2003), the international context of the French Pacific in the early 20th century is largely lacking in French historiography. Sarah Mohamed-Gaillards *Histoire de l'Océanie de la fin du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours* from 2015 has been a welcome and overdue recent addition, but it is telling that some early accounts still stand out in this context, such as Henri Russier's *Le partage de l'Océanie* (1905), or Charles Lemire, *Les Intérêts Français dans le Pacifique : Tahiti - Nouvelles-Hébrides, Canal de Panama* (1904).

These works usually rely on one body of national archival sources, sometimes extended by an imperial rival for comparative purposes. While they achieve a certain unilateral or bilateral perspective, they have difficulty transcending the national framework, and, for most parts, remain one or two-way narratives of international affairs.

It is also worth drawing attention to the rich historiography on the 'origins of war', significantly extended in recent years, explicating how the dynamic within the 'concert of powers' in Europe had such tragic consequences. It is essential to note that August 1914 turned the Euro-American colonial periphery in Africa, Asia and the Pacific into war zones by the imperial and military logic that Europe on fire meant a world on fire. There is no other connection between Samoa and Sarajevo. These works are important sources as they help to establish the context of the alliance system prior to and at the start of the Great War, but they do not, and are not meant to, explain how the conflict was exported globally and to the Pacific.[20] Fritz Fischer, for instance, argues that the German desire for imperial expansion was a cause of the war, but then focusses on an aspirational 'Deutsch-Mittelafrika' and overlooks the German Pacific.[21] In a more recent and widely discussed work, Christopher Clark does make reference to overseas

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With regard to Japan, my work relies on secondary work from various authors, Japanese and non-Japanese. Among authoritative non-Japanese scholars, Henry Frei has written about Japan and the *Nan-yo* in his *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (1991), while Mark Peattie's *Nan'yo. The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945* has contributed greatly to the understanding of the Japanese occupation of German Micronesia at the outbreak of the Great War. Akira Iriye has explained the foreign relations between the United States and Japan in *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897-1911* (1972), followed chronologically by Noriko Kawamura, *Turbulence in the Pacific : Japanese-U.S. relations during World War I* (2000), while Peter Lowe and Ian Nish have authoritatively covered the Anglo-Japanese foreign relations dimension during the period in Lowe's *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915* (1969) and Nish's *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23* (1972). Fred Dickinson's *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (1999) focuses on Japanese policy debates during World War I, while Tosh Minohara edited *The Decade of the Great War : Japan and the Wider World in the 1910s* in 2014, which includes valuable work by Charles Schencking on the Japanese Navy during World War I.

[20] William Mulligan, for instance, focusses on the pre-war European theatre of action and does not mention the imperial periphery in his *The Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2010). For methodological comparison, D.C. Watt includes one chapter about Japan in his minute and detailed book about the origins of the Second World War from September 1938 to September 1939, but essentially focusses on European international politics, with some United States policy inclusions, acknowledging that 'it [the Second World War] began as the result of a breakdown of the European international system'; see D.C. Watt, *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939* (London, 1989), xiv.

[21] See Fritz Fischer's *Krieg der Illusionen. Die deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914* (Düsseldorf, 1969) and *Griff nach der Weltmacht. Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18* (Düsseldorf, 1961).

Germany in his *The Sleepwalkers*, but only mentions the (German) Pacific in passing.[22] Also, the United States, Japan, Australia and New Zealand hardly feature in this narrative, which, from a global point of view, thus remains limited.

One scholar who stands out from a Great War-Pacific Ocean perspective is William Roger Louis, whose chronology I am partly replicating. However, as the book title indicates, he limited his work to *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919* and its source material essentially to Britain and Australia.[23] Building on Louis' work, it seems desirable not only to update his account, published in 1967, but also to make it multinational. Another monumental study is Paul Kennedy's *The Samoan Tangle : a Study in Anglo-German-American Relations, 1878-1900*. While it deals with an earlier period and is limited to Samoa, its detailed examination of the three-way diplomacy is a benchmark.

Last, but certainly not least, a group of writers should be mentioned whose grand conceptual approaches are influential for any study including geopolitical elements. Alfred Thayer Mahan and Halford Mackinder, writing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, are not only considered to be among the founders of the study of geopolitics, but have also contributed greatly to an understanding of the influence of military power over space. Whereas Mackinder emphasised the supremacy of land power, Mahan, also considered as one of the most influential naval thinkers and strategists, stressed that 'the use and control of the sea is and has been a great factor in the history of the world'.[24] Later, Paul Kennedy built upon their work to develop his thoughts on early 20th century power politics in his chronologically extensive *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers.*[25] Touching on the instability of the international system at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the relativity and change in power relations, and the supremacy of British home waters defence (versus the maritime periphery, thereby explaining British decline there), he addresses vital broad points which are also

[22] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London, 2013), 151-2.
[23] William Roger Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919* (Oxford, 1967).
[24] Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (Boston, 1918, 12th edition), p.iii.
[25] See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London, 1989) and *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870–1945* (London, 1984).

applicable to the great power relations in the Pacific Ocean of the Great War period and therefore highly relevant for the present work.

Kennedy, Spate, and others, have been criticised for being Eurocentric, which I accept is inevitable when writing about Western powers in the Pacific.[26] The present work constitutes a history of early twentieth century foreign relations, not a commentary on the present day, and thereby reflects the Pacific's character as a collection of cultural constructions (and how Europeans created them in their own image) and as a colonised area without its own foreign relations agency in a modern sense.[27] In the same vein, the images of an 'English Lake' or an 'American Lake' or of a German and a French Pacific were cultural constructions, following the pattern of (European) discovery, missionising, economic penetration and, finally, annexation and re-annexation, before the tide of decolonisation (and dedominionisation) set in. That should not discredit them, however, as these images and the underlying concepts reflect broad power relationships and are not meant to be understood universally. With qualification, they are thus useful terminological hooks.

This study aims at presenting the reader with an international and diplomatic history of the Pacific question as it emerged between 1914 and 1918, and a dedicated, connected chronological space for the area and for the period, which has thus far not been attempted. My multinational and multiarchival approach stems from this neglect. Moreover, the work will add to the understanding of the outbreak of the war and its particular narrative as defined by events to do with Pacific geostrategy, thereby helping connect the 'European war' with the 'global war', an understudied area. The work, too, will develop and apply different levels of analysis and interpretation. Its scope is thus both global and regional, Eurocentric as well as Pacific (Rim)-centred, metropolitan and peripheral, free-trading and protectionist, maritime and continental.

[26] Both Spate and Kennedy admit to Eurocentrism in their work, see: Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers,* p. xxiii; Spate, for instance, writes that 'there was not, and could not be, any concept of 'Pacific' until the limits and lineaments of the Ocean were set: and this was undeniably the work of Europeans' and that 'The fact remains that until our own day the Pacific was basically a Euro-American creation', in *The Spanish Lake,* p.ix.

[27] Although various Pacific Islands were conducting diplomacy *vis-à-vis* Western powers towards or at the turn of the century, for example in the Hawaiian Islands, Tonga and Samoa, their absorption into greater (national) imperial systems led to a loss of agency, which, in turn, largely led to their absence from the diplomatic record of the Pacific war element of the Great War.

What is more, it also uses the wider British Empire as an analytical framework, which stems from the available archival material, but also from the logic of imperial penetration in the Pacific increasingly being undertaken from Australia and New Zealand rather than from the British Isles. Due to its dominance, or even omnipresence in some parts of the Pacific and to its being an international system in itself, the British Empire framework mirrors the above-mentioned categories, thereby 'doubling' the interpretative potential. This will be particularly highlighted by the tensions about Pacific questions (and others, as it would turn out) between Britain and Australia and New Zealand. As Dominions, the latter two possessed a degree of international agency under the British imperial umbrella, ultimately underlined by their presence, albeit subordinate, at the Paris Peace Conference (PPC) in 1919.

The work's structure to fulfil the outlined purpose begins with two chapters to explain the outbreak of the Great War in the Pacific, one more political and focussed on August 1914, the other more military, talking about naval movements and the carve-up of the German Pacific between August and December.

The next two chapters deal with the diplomatic jostling following the various occupation moves and stretch from 1915 to early 1918 and contextualise the situation in the Pacific in the light of the wider war. During this time, the Americans joined the armed conflict, a game-changer in Europe which raised more question marks about the Pacific.

The last two chapters cover 1918 and end in January 1919, as the PPC was about to start. During this time, the new arrangement in the Pacific was all but formalised, with the exception of the American position, which remained ambiguous until 1919 and beyond. The American President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points entered the international discourse with lasting effect, while the Armistice in November 1918 sealed the German defeat and consequent loss of empire, in the Pacific and elsewhere.

An Epilogue will add some relevant peace conference detail to the war story and will also provide a chronological context of the years and decades that followed, which led to the next Pacific war in 1941.

Chapter 1
The Outbreak of War and the Pacific: August 1914

The first shot of the war in the Pacific was fired on 5 August 1914 when an Australian naval battery at one of the heads of Port Phillip, the bay incorporating Melbourne, was ordered to send a warning to the leaving German steamer SS *Pfalz*.[1] One week later, the first attack on German territory in the Pacific was carried out by a British cruiser against Yap in the Caroline Islands in the Western Pacific. Britain, and its empire, had gone to war with Germany on 4 August, yet both events, and some more that were to come, beg the question: how and why was the war exported from Europe all the way to Yap and other Pacific islands in August 1914? What were the relevant political and military mechanisms at the outbreak of the war both in Europe and in the Pacific Ocean? The following chapter will elaborate on these questions and will lay the groundwork for an analysis of the war diplomacy that would determine the fate of the German overseas territories and change the political map of the Pacific Ocean.

When Britain and its allies found themselves at war with the Central Powers in early August 1914, the global ramifications of these actions were not instantly clear.[2] What was clear, however, was that the war's main participants, with the exception of Austria-Hungary, possessed territories far beyond their European core. While Russia was a land-based empire that stretched from Odessa to Vladivostok on the Pacific coast, Britain's, France's and Germany's possessions were scattered around many parts of the globe. Germany's outposts in the Far East and in the Pacific Ocean, Tsingtao[3], with its main naval base, large parts of Micronesia, New Guinea, and Samoa, were far removed from any other of its possessions and therefore detached and exposed to the opposition that the war had created.

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[1] For an account of this story, see Arthur W. Jose, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. IX, *The Royal Australian Navy* (Sydney, 1941, 9th edition), 547, appendix no.11, 'The Capture of S.S. Pfalz'. The *Pfalz* subsequently turned around and had its crew interned.

[2] Germany declared war on Russia on 1 Aug. and on France on 3 Aug. 1914; Britain entered the war at 11pm London time on 4 Aug. after an ultimatum to Germany had lapsed. Douglas Newton's *Hell-Bent: Australia's leap into the Great War* (Melbourne, 2014) provides a very useful account of the immediate pre-war and early war diplomacy from an Anglo-Australian perspective.

[3] For consistency's sake, I will use the anglicised contemporary names 'Tsingtao', 'Shandong' and 'Kiaochow' when describing the German presence in the area, unless the original German name is useful.

The opposition included Britain, the world's most potent naval power. But that was not all. Britain was allied with Japan within the framework of an Anglo-Japanese Alliance.[4] Japan was a regional power at the time, a rapidly modernising country with a growing economy, an expansionist outlook and, not least, the largest navy in the Pacific Ocean, a position amplified since the crushing naval defeat the Japanese had inflicted on the Russians during the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Britain's declaration of war on Germany did not automatically trigger the Alliance, however, and Japan did not go to war at the same time as the other Allied powers, as will be demonstrated.

[4] The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was entered into in 1902 and was renewed in 1905 and again in 1911, to expire in 1921. It was a cornerstone of British security in the Pacific, particularly after Britain's decision in 1905 to concentrate the vast majority of its naval forces, including all of its battleships, in home waters in order to counter the German navy's ambitious expansion in the North and Baltic Seas. A memorandum from May 1911 found: 'The existence of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance at present relieves us from the necessity of considering the scale of attack that Japan could bring to bear on British possessions in the Pacific. For, so long as the Japanese Alliance remains operative, not only is the risk of attack by Japan excluded from the category of reasonable possibilities to be provided against, but British naval requirements are held to be adequately met if the combined British and Japanese forces are superior to the forces in those waters maintained by any reasonably probable combination of naval Powers.' TNA, CAB 38/18/40, CID memo. entitled 'Australia and New Zealand: Strategic Situation in the Event of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance Being Determined', 3 May 1911. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, reiterated Britain's position only months before the war, speaking before the House of Commons on 17 March 1914: 'The alliance with Japan has now been renewed up to 1921, with the full concurrence of the Overseas Dominions … [Apart from the alliance] there is a strong continuing bond of interest between [Britain and Japan] on both sides. It is this bond that is the true and effective protection for the maintenance of British naval supremacy.', 'Extract from a speech by … Churchill in the House of Commons', in Gordon Greenwood and Charles Grimshaw (eds), *Documents on Australian International Affairs 1901-1918* (Melbourne, 1977), 208. For a detailed account of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the outbreak of the Great War, see Ian Nish's *Alliance in Decline*, ch. VII.

The following table displays the overwhelming naval superiority of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) in the Pacific in 1914.

Select cruising strength in the Pacific of relevant naval powers in the area, Aug. 1914

	Battleships or battle-cruisers	armoured cruisers	light cruisers	old or small cruisers	gunboats, sloops etc.	combined tonnage
Total Brit. Empire	1	4 (incl. one old battleship)	6	5	1	111,345
Britain		4	3	1		61,900
Australia	1		3	1	1	39,000
New Zealand				3		6,845
Japan	4	11	7	7	4	257,512
Germany		2	3		3	36,757
France		2			2	19,140
United States	1	12	10			174,000 (estimate)

Sources: Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 540-2, appendix no.7, 'Cruising strength in the Pacific'; Neville Meaney, *Australia and the World : A Documentary History from the 1870s to the 1970s* (Melbourne, 1985), doc. 107: *CPP*, 1914 Session, vol.II, no.33 'Navies relative strength in the Pacific. Return showing strength of Navies of the various powers now stationed in the Pacific'.

While some confusion and uncertainty persisted in early August as the various powers were readying their military forces, the different decision-makers affected by the conflict, including those in Japan and the United States, both formally not part of the conflict, quickly had to find solutions with respect to those areas away from the main action in Europe. Regarding the Pacific, this translated into some dramatic and escalating exchanges – international diplomacy in the capital cities, naval action near the shore and on the high seas, and some limited warfare on land.

The British assets were substantial. In addition to Britain's control over a significant portion of the Pacific Islands, its close relationship with the two Australasian Dominions of Australia and New Zealand, which – if not quite colonies any longer – were politically, militarily and economically closely connected to the mother country,

gave it considerable strategic clout.[5] When the Dominions declared their loyalty as the metropole was entering the war, Germany was faced with the entire military might at the British Empire's disposal in the Pacific.[6] Not only did Australia throw a population of 4m into the war, and New Zealand another million – while the German Pacific had about 1,000 Germans living among a total population of about 500,000, Australia also provided a sizeable fleet for the war, including one battlecruiser, HMAS *Australia*, and three light cruisers.[7] The British China Station in Hong Kong and the much smaller New Zealand Station yielded another eight cruisers and an old battleship. All Australian, New Zealand and British vessels came under unified British Admiralty command with the outbreak of war to carry out relevant operations in line with Britain's global naval policy.[8] Moreover, Britain could also count on the support of France, adding its modest naval means in the theatre.[9] Finally, Britain possessed a global communications

[5] Australia had formally decolonised in 1901 by becoming a federally organised 'Commonwealth', while New Zealand gained Dominion status in 1907. The implementation of colonial self-government both in New Zealand and Australia dates back to the 1850s.

[6] Legally speaking, Australia and New Zealand entered the war *ipso facto* under a united crown, when it was declared by Britain. Nevertheless, their declarations of allegiance served to emphasise both their autonomous status within the Empire and their proactive determination to fight for and with Britain. Famously, former and subsequent Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher pledged Australian support, speaking at an election meeting on 31 July 1914: 'But should the worst happen … Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend [Britain] to our last man and our last shilling.' See Sally Warhaft (ed.), *Well may we say: the Speeches that made Australia* (Melbourne, 2004), 74. On the same day, New Zealand Prime Minister William Massey spoke before parliament and said that his government would offer London the services of an expeditionary force, which the MPs emphatically affirmed. TNA, CO 616/1, fol.18, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 1 Aug. 1914. On 5 August, Lord Liverpool, the Governor of New Zealand, wrote to London that the country was willing to 'make any sacrifice' for the British cause, which was then read out in the Legislative Council along with the war message from the King. NLNZ, *NZPD*, vol. 169, 395, Legislative Council, 5 Aug. 1914, 'War: New Zealand Expeditionary Force'. Australia and New Zealand even entered a race for loyalty, both countries competing over who would get troops to battle first. See Ian McGibbon, 'The Shaping of New Zealand's War Effort, August-October 1914', in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland, 2007), 59. See also Rolf Pfeiffer, 'Exercises in Loyalty and Trouble-making: Anglo-New Zealand Friction at the Time of the Great War, 1914-1919', Australian Journal of Politics and History, 38, 2 (1992), 179-80. McGibbon writes about 'Massey's desire that New Zealand be first in the field with its contribution'. For a manifestation of the latter, see TNA, CO 616/1, fol.35, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 2 Aug. 1914; fol. 79, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 4 Aug. 1914.

[7] The German population figure does not include Tsingtao. See Charles Stephenson, *Germany's Asia Pacific Empire, Colonialism and Naval Policy 1885-1914* (Woodbridge, 2009), 59-60.

[8] TNA, CO 616/1, fol.334, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 11 Aug. 1914. The official 'transfer' of the Australian vessels to British command was another political act, causing some irritation in London.

[9] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.80, Bertie, Paris, to FO, cable, 5 Aug. 1914.

dominance, created by and based on cable networks, the world's foremost steamship merchant fleet, and the control of coal supplies.[10]

Yet, diplomacy and strategic planning in London and Paris was not all that mattered. Of equal importance was the attitude taken in Tokyo, not least in light of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and any possible co-operation between the two countries it might prompt. As early as 3 August 1914, and thus before entering the war with Germany, the British had stretched out feelers to the Japanese government, suggesting that 'if hostilities spread to [the] Far East, and an attack on Hong Kong or Wei-hai Wei were to take place, we should rely on their support'.[11] Kato Takaaki, Japan's adroit Foreign Minister and also an expert on Britain after having served as an ambassador there, responded instantly, cautioning that Japan had 'no interest in a European conflict' and that 'the Imperial Government will await an intimation from His Majesty's Government as to what action they have decided to take before defining their own attitude', but also reassuring that 'if British interests in Eastern Asia be placed in jeopardy … His Majesty's Government may count upon Japan at once coming to assistance of her ally … leaving it entirely to His Majesty's Government to formulate the reason for, and nature of, the assistance required'.[12] Kato also confirmed that an attack on Hong Kong or 'any other aggressive act' would justify triggering Japanese military involvement. The Japanese government sanctioned Kato's initiative on 4 August, still before Britain's declaration of war with Germany.

Presented with the Japanese offer, the British administration, although having asked for it, was at first reluctant. Foreign Secretary Edward Grey even backpedaled and replied that Britain 'should avoid, if we could, drawing Japan into any trouble', but also wanted to keep all options open by adding that 'should a case arise in which we

[10] A case in point is the All Red Line, the British land and submarine cable network spanning the world through water and British Empire territories, possessing so many redundancies that 49 cuts were needed to isolate the United Kingdom. Even to isolate Australia, seven cuts were needed. Furthermore, 'the world's cable industry was almost entirely in British hands', from operating firms to cable insulation makers. See Paul Kennedy, 'Imperial Cable Communications and Strategy, 1870-1914', *The English Historical Review*, 86, 341 (1971), 735-7, 740-1; Jonathan Reed Winkler, *Nexus: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I* (Cambridge, Massachussets, 2013), 12-13. The British Mercantile Marine comprised nearly one-half of the world's steam tonnage at the outbreak of war, and was four times as large as its nearest, German, rival. See Archibald Hurd, *The Merchant Navy*, vol. I (New York, 1921), 85.

[11] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.330, Grey to Greene, Tokyo, cable, 3 Aug. 1914.

[12] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.320, Greene to Grey, cable, 3 Aug. 1914.

needed her help, we would gladly ask for it and be grateful for it.'[13] The latter formulation suggests that what Grey had in mind was that it would be up to Britain to invoke the Alliance. This reflects the Foreign Office's understanding that Japan was to be employed, if employed at all, in a limited role and as a part of a British military strategy under London's control. Moreover, these early vacillations indicate how cautious the British were about bringing Japan into the war and that they expected not only military or strategic implications but also political ones.

One of the main reasons for this was the suspicion with which the Alliance had been viewed in Australia and New Zealand. While British strategists had themselves been secretly factoring in the possiblity of Japan as a potential future enemy, the scepticism about their increasingly potent northern neighbour was much more evident in Australia and New Zealand. Billy Hughes, Australia's Attorney-General and later Prime Minister, was outspoken and had expressed his view in 1911, writing:

> Britain still rules the waves, but no longer is she their unchallenged ruler. Australia is still safe, but her safety is no longer beyond doubt. It hangs upon the issue of the titanic struggle in the North Sea …! And it hangs, too, upon the continuance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance! That is to say, it depends … upon the observance and the renewal of the terms of a treaty with a nation whom we [Australians] have openly humiliated by declining to admit its people on terms of equality with those of other civilised nations.[14]

Other influential figures critical of Britain's reliance on Japan in the Pacific included Frederic Eggleston, a highly respected Australian lawyer and writer, who commented in March 1914 that 'a policy which disregards the Pacific, or leaves it to Japan, cannot be regarded as a truly Imperial policy'.[15] New Zealand's mistrust towards Japan was reflected in an article entitled 'The Admiralty's Broken Pledge' in the *New Zealand Herald* from 2 May 1914.[16] The writer denounced Britain's unwillingness to navally

[13] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.359, Grey to Greene, cable, 4 Aug. 1914.
[14] *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 27 May 1911, 'Extract from WM Hughes, 'The Case for Labor'', in Greenwood/Grimshaw, *Documents on Australian International Affairs*, 241. The 'humiliation' Hughes refered to was Australia's discriminatory White Australia immigration policy. For some detail on the contemporary 'yellow peril' discourse in Australia, see Neville Meaney, ''The Yellow Peril': Invasion Scare Novels and Australian Political Culture', in James Curran and Stuart Ward (eds), *Australia and the Wider World: Selected Essays of Neville Meaney* (Sydney, 2013), 73-98.
[15] Meaney, *Australia and the World*, doc.104, *Argus*, 31 March 1914, 'Naval Policy. Australia and Japan.', by Frederic Eggleston.
[16] MAE, NS Océanie, Nouvelle Zélande 2, French Consul, Auckland, to Minister for Foreign Affairs, letter, 3 May 1914, with attached clipping, *NZ Herald*, 2 May 1914, 'The Admiralty's Broken Pledge'. Note that

reinforce the South Pacific, arguing that 'had Japanese protection been hinted at in 1909 [at the Imperial Conference], New Zealand would have repudiated with indignation that impossible policy, would have built the dreadnought [HMS *New Zealand*] for its own ocean [rather than the North Sea] and co-operated earnestly with Australia for mutual defence'. Less alarmingly, but more astutely, Australian Prime Minister Joseph Cook wrote in his diary on 1 August that 'the war means a new map', and he certainly had more than Europe on his mind.[17]

The British Foreign Office and, even more so, the Colonial Office were aware of Australasian reservations towards close co-operation between the British Empire and Japan, but the Admiralty had somewhat different views. The latter's priority was to secure control of home waters, to impose economic warfare on Germany, and to build up naval forces to sustain that strategy against any interference from the German High Seas Fleet, the world's second strongest force. All other strategic targets stemmed from the above, including the maintenance of security in the Pacific Ocean.[18] Intra-imperial political relations were not at the forefront of naval thinking, as planners were making efforts to bring all major ships from the Pacific (and elsewhere) to the European war theatre and thus needed to clear the Far East and the Pacific from any naval threat quickly. Unable to deal with the East Asia Squadron[19], Germany's main naval asset in the Far East and Pacific Ocean with its two armoured cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, on its own, the Admiralty saw Japanese aid as critical, and consequently expressed great appreciation of the Japanese military offer and made it clear that it would like to appeal directly to the Japanese naval high command if the

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the *Herald*'s editor at the time was William Lane, author of a dystopian novel in 1888 entitled *White or Yellow? The Race War of 1908 AD*.

[17] NAA, M3580, Cook Diary, 1 Aug. 1914, cited in Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy 1901-23,* vol. 2, *Australia and World Crisis, 1914-1923* (Sydney, 2009), 56. Meaney describes the scenario of a Japanese intervention in the Western Pacific and East Asia as an 'Australian Crisis'.

[18] As an expression of this strategy, Churchill had famously dismissed Australia's creation of its own naval organisation in 1912 as follows: 'The whole principle of local Navies is, of course, thoroughly vicious, and no responsible sailor can be found who has a word to say in favour of it', Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Harcourt Papers, MS. 468, Churchill to Harcourt, letter, 29 Jan. 1912, cited in Neville Meaney, *A History of Australian Defence and Foreign Policy, 1901-23*, vol. 1, *The Search for Security in the Pacific* (Sydney, 1976), 230-1.

[19] The Squadron was based at Tsingtao, where it could rely on dry docking facilities. Established in 1898, its history goes back to a 1859 Prussian mission to the Far East. For a very detailed account of the Squadron's history and a summary of its use up to the First World War, see (in German) Herold, *Reichsgewalt bedeutet Seegewalt*, chs IV.1.b) and IV.3.

need arose.[20] The view was 'to be most careful not to hurt Japanese feelings by not using their assistance at all' which might 'offend them and tend to make them ally themselves with Germany later in the war, or after the war'. It was thus recommended by the British Admiralty 'to let them commit themselves by hostile acts early in the war against Germany'.[21]

Beilby Alston at the Foreign Office, and a previous hand in China, took a similar line and warned Grey that the Germans had a naval force in the Far East 'somewhat above the strength of ours' and that serious damage to British trade could only be averted by calling on Japan for assistance. Meanwhile, mixed messages were being received from the field. While the ambassador in Tokyo, William Conyngham Greene, tended to favour an accommodating stance towards the Japanese, John Jordan, the minister in Peking, cautioned London:

> I presume that Her Majesty's Government have fully considered the probable seizure by Japan of the islands lying between this country and Australia in the event of her declaring war. It seems very advisable that, pending the arrangement of a considered scheme of co-operation, the Japanese declaration of war should be put forward.[22]

The possibility of not being able to contain Japan once a belligerent must thus have been clear to the British, but Grey determined that it was necessary to 'employ some of their warships in tracking down and destroying German armed merchantmen who are at present making attacks on our merchant shipping' while 'our own warships will take some time to bring to action and destroy the German warships in Chinese waters'.[23] In any case, if Britain wanted to have its way and protect its trade and sea lanes using Japanese naval means, hostile Japanese action 'would of course amount to an act of war against Germany, but [HMG] see no way of avoiding this'.

In his communication with Inoue Katsunosuke, the Japanese ambassador in London, Grey still wavered, however, and wrote that the German capture of British merchant ships was for now only a 'hypothetical case' upon which Japanese involvement would

[20] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.341, Grey to Greene, cable, 5 Aug. 1914.
[21] TNA, FO 371/2016, fols 368-9, Secret note by H.F. Oliver, D.I.D. [Director of the Intelligence Division of the Admiralty War Staff], 6 Aug. 1914.
[22] TNA, FO 371/2016, fols 362-4, note by Alston, 5 Aug. 1914; fol. 415, Jordan to Grey, cable, 9 Aug. 1914.
[23] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.372, Grey to Greene, cable, 6 Aug. 1914.

require the need of 'consulting with [HMG] before taking any definite action', only to confirm one day later to Inoue that 'it would be of the very greatest assistance' to employ Japanese warships to provide protection from German armed merchant vessels 'in the Far East'and 'while British warships are locating and engaging German warships in Chinese waters'.[24] This was now a more decisive stance than before, reflecting the tendency in London to bring the Japanese into the action, provided that there was previous consultation and setting the 'Far East' as a vague geographical boundary. Grey explained the move as resulting from 'communications which have been passing with the Admiralty', thus suggesting that the Admiralty had pulled the strings on the government's decision.[25] Escalating the requested support from a scenario of land attack on Hong Kong to operations at sea, which was altogether more likely in any case, invited a great degree of imprecision both in verbal formulation as well as in operational predictability, but was limited to maritime trade protection, whereas the German warships were still meant to be dealt with by the Royal Navy.

Kato cautioned that the ultimate decision would lie with his cabinet and the Emperor but assured Greene that he 'would use his influence with his colleagues to meet the wishes of [HMG]'.[26] He also added, in concurrence with Grey, that 'in any case it meant war with Germany'. This was not quite an assurance of support yet, but indicated Kato's willingness to act. Within the space of two days, the scope of action Kato had in mind was revealed, however, when he informed Greene that his government had now decided to declare war on Germany, 'subject to the concurrence of [HMG]'.[27]

What London was expected to concur to was a Japanese version of involvement, not a British one, formulated as part of the Japanese declaration of war draft:

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[24] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.325, Grey to Inoue, letter, 6 Aug. 1914; unnumbered folio between fols 372 and 373, Grey to Inoue ['Inouyé' in original document], letter, 7 Aug. 1914.

[25] This point is also supported by an intervention by Admiral Doveton Sturdee, the Admiralty Chief of Staff, who urged in a memorandum on 7 August that the assistance offered by the Japanese Government should be accepted, pointing out that the British naval force in the Far East was about equivalent with the German force, an argument reiterated by Alston. Sturdee argued that the waters where the opposing forces were operating were large and that Japanese assistance was thus required immediately. This also indicates that Sturdee did not make a distinction between German armed merchantment and cruisers and had Japanense action against both in mind, an evolution from Grey's more limited position. See TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.370, memo. by Sturdee, 7 Aug. 1914.

[26] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.380, Greene to Grey, cable, 7 Aug. 1914.

[27] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.442, Greene to Grey, cable, 9 Aug. 1914.

> if Japan once becomes a belligerent she cannot restrict her action to destroying armed merchant cruisers, but she will be obliged to make use of all and every means available to attain the object which the two allied Powers have in common as far as Chinese waters are concerned, namely, the destruction of the power of Germany to inflict damage in Eastern Asia on the interests of Great Britain and Japan. In addition, as it is possible to regard the employment by Japan of some of her warships for the destruction of German armed merchantmen as an act limited in scope and one dictated by temporary convenience of Great Britain, Japanese Government consider that their participation in the war should be based on broad grounds which are stated in the agreement of alliance, and that they should take such action as the development of events may necessitate.[28]

To make it even clearer, Kato claimed that 'what Japan wanted was a free hand and no "limited liability"', adding that 'all preparations have been made to wipe out Germany from this part of the world'. Kato spelled out the Japanese position even more bluntly on the following day and formulated a warning rather than an offer to the British, claiming that

> Whether Great Britain co-operates or not, it will be impossible to check the rising tide of feeling against Germany, which is fast growing to one of hatred, and which will of itself compel Japan to take active measures against Germany. Relations with the latter country are irrevocably broken off, in consequence of the German Ambassador's threatening language, and a national outbreak is to be apprehended unless some intimation is given to the public that prompt action will result from the communications which ... are now being exchanged between the two Governments.[29]

Greene commented after this latest turn that 'Japan is willing to take steps for protection of commerce at sea, but I am afraid that it is now impossible that operations should be confined to this. Japan wishes to do more and to do it with us, but if we refuse will do it by herself'.[30] What 'more' Japan wished to do was not entirely clear to London, but even Kato's escalating language had its implied territorial and maritime limitations, as he invoked 'Eastern Asia' and 'this part of the world', whereas the Alliance's original text was making reference to a 'general peace in the Extreme East' and mentioned China and Korea in its text.[31] The Anglo-Japanese

[28] Ibid. A similarly worded declaration was also passed on to Inoue in London, who communicated it to the Foreign Office. See TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.442, 'Memorandum by Baron Kato, confidential, communicated by Mr. Inouyé', 10 Aug. 1914.
[29] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.456, Greene to Grey, cable, 10 Aug. 1914.
[30] Ibid.
[31] For the text of the original Alliance of 1902, see: https://www.jacar.go.jp/nichiro/uk-japan.htm, retrieved 15 Jan. 2018.

discourse, despite its vagueness, was thus based on the assumption that the war in the 'East' involving Japan would be limited to maritime markers broadly defined as Far Eastern and Chinese waters.

At this stage, French and Russian diplomats were also getting involved, increasingly aware of the possibility of a Japanese participation in the war. Attempts were thus made to embed Japan in a broader alliance, and London, because of its particular relationship with Tokyo, was employed as a conduit. France's concern was that the Japanese were 'likely to seize the opportunity to strengthen her position in China'.[32] In such a case, it was argued, the French possessions in the Far East would be safer if France was formally aligned with Japan.[33] Paris then reached out to the British, via Greene in Tokyo, to convince them of the 'expediency of Franco-British naval co-operation' in the Chinese theatre of war.[34] The French were also in direct talks with the Japanese about a possibility of establishing a Franco-Japanese alliance, while Russia wanted to create 'more intimate relations' with Tokyo and engage the Japanese in a partnership with the Triple Entente 'in their diplomatic and strategical action'.[35] The Japanese, however, aware of the limitations this was designed to create, were unwilling to being tied down and rejected the various overtures, bar the London channel.[36]

By contrast, the Germans stretched out feelers towards the Japanese wanting to keep Japan neutral and avoid an escalation of the war to the Far East and the Pacific. In early August, Gottlieb von Jagow, the foreign secretary, asked his ambassador in Tokyo, Arthur von Rex, about his impressions of Japan's view of the war, to which the latter replied that 'should the war be confined to Europe … then Japan would presumably remain neutral' and that Kato had assured him that 'Japan desired to

[32] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.395, Greene to Grey, cable, 8 Aug. 1914.
[33] MAE, NS Japon, 85, Regnault, Tokyo, to MAE, cable, 9 Aug. 1914.
[34] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.395, Greene to Grey, cable, 8 Aug. 1914.
[35] Ibid; fol. 383, Buchanan, St Petersburg, to Grey, cable, 8 Aug. 1914.
[36] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.87, Greene to Grey, cable, 18 Aug. 1914. Cambon, the French ambassador in London, agreed after a discussion he had with Grey with the latter's view that French attempts of acceding to the Alliance were 'losing time' and that the French and Russians could join an Anglo-Japanese war effort in the Far East at a later stage. See MAE, NS Japon, 85, Cambon, London, to MAE, 15 Aug. 1914. The French only asked the Japanese at this stage that their interests in the Far East would 'not be impaired' by Japanese operations. See MAE, NS Japon, 85, MAE to Japanese Embassy Paris, letter, 19 Aug. 1914.

remain neutral as long as possible'.[37] After Britain and Germany had gone to war, Rex reported to Berlin that the Japanese government had assured the British a 'benevolent neutrality as long as war is limited to Europe', and he even suggested that a 'proposition from Japan about the neutralisation of the Orient' would be made.[38] While Britain was going to wage a global war against Germany, its limited resources in the Far East and the Pacific and Japan's neutrality so far led Berlin to maintain some hope that their possessions in the East could be salvaged for the duration of the conflict.

Whether this was a realistic expectation is difficult to gauge. On a broader level, the relationship between Germany and Japan, while having undeniably gone through a significant cooling period across the previous two decades, was not at its worst.[39] Ian Nish posits that 'relations between Japan and Germany [by the outbreak of war] were not bad or irretrievable' and that they even 'had distinctly improved and had become cordial without being friendly'.[40] He continues that 'it cannot, therefore, be said that the Japanese government had a great animus against Germany … much before the outbreak of the European war'. Thus, the political potential for some sort of truce in the Far East, at least as far as Japan was concerned, seems more than just wishful thinking from Berlin.[41] This is also supported by the fact that the Japanese had

[37] Jagow to Rex, cable, 1 Aug. 1914, in Max Montgelas and Walter Schücking (eds), *Outbreak of the World War, German Documents collected by Karl Kautsky* (New York, 1924), doc.545; BA Freiburg, RM 5/2292, Rex to AA, cable, 3 Aug. 1914.

[38] BA Freiburg N 253/95, Rex to AA, cable, 4 Aug. 1914; *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 166, Guthrie, Tokyo, to SS, cable, 11 Aug. 1914.

[39] After decades of co-operation in the late 1800s, which saw a heavy German influence on the Japanese constitutional and army models, among others, Japanese-German relations deteriorated at the end of the century due to German imperialist aspirations in East Asia, culminating in Germany's participation in the Triple Intervention of 1895 to remove Japan from the Liaodong Peninsula after the Sino-Japanese War. More stress was added when Germany secured the Kiautschou Bay concession in 1898 and supported Russia during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5. Moreover, the Kaiser had been alienating Japan by his 'yellow peril' discourse, epitomised by his famous Hun Speech of 1900 (aimed at China amid the Boxer Rebellion). For a useful account of German-Japanese relations in 1914 and after, see Ian Nish, 'German-Japanese Relations in the Taisho-Period', in Josef Kreiner (ed.), *Japan und die Mittelmächte im Ersten Weltkrieg und in den zwanziger Jahren* (Bonn, 1986), 81-96. For an account of the 'yellow peril' discourse in Germany, see Iikura Akira, 'The 'Yellow Peril' and its influence on Japanese-German relations', in Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich (eds), *Japanese-German Relations, 1895-1945: War, diplomacy and public opinion* (Abingdon, 2006), 80-97.

[40] Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, 130-1.

[41] This stance was somewhat contradicted by Erich Raeder. Raeder, who had been appointed as one of the official German naval historians after the war (and would later become Commander-in-Chief of the Nazi *Kriegsmarine*), argued that German diplomacy had failed before the war in creating more favourable conditions for Germany in the Far East and the Pacific. Also writing after the conflict, Alfred

expressed to the British their unwillingness to be drawn into a European conflict in early August.[42]

Maximilian von Spee, the commander of the East Asia Squadron (*Ostasiengeschwader*) and touring the German Pacific with his ships when the war broke out, had been informed on 5 August that Japan would remain neutral as long as British territory in the Far East was not attacked.[43] Accordingly, on 8 August, Spee announced to Alfred Meyer-Waldeck, the governor of Tsingtao, that he was aware of Japan's neutrality conditions and that he 'will not attack British territory in East Asia'.[44] While British shipping was not mentioned, Spee was clearly not on a war footing, having written in his diary on 4 August that he would 'keep the Squadron in hiding'.[45] Having no full grasp of the situation in Japan and after receiving some conflicting information, he decided to remain cautious. He also held back from an initial plan to head for the Strait of Malacca in the Indian Ocean in order to cause damage there, deciding to remain in the Pacific Ocean and informing Meyer-Waldeck on 11 August that he was going to show 'full consideration for Japanese shipping and interests'.[46] His actions were in line with official German Admiralty policy, which was formulated on 13 August as 'not wishing to enter into conflict with Japan'.[47]

That being said, the pre-war operational orders for the Squadron stipulated that cruiser warfare and commercial raiding against British trade were to be undertaken in

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von Tirpitz, State Secretary of the German Naval Office in 1914 and Germany's great navalist of the time, had similar grievances and lamented Germany's missed opportunities before the war to come to achieve some understading with Japan 'to make good on the mistake of Shimonoseki [in 1895]'. 'As far as the Kaiser was concerned', Ishii Kikujiro, Japanese Foreign Minister between 1915 and 1916, later commented that 'this was not negligence but the result of his utter indifference towards Japan'. See Erich Raeder and Eberhard von Mantey (eds), *Der Krieg zur See, 1914-1918, Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern,* vol. I*, Das Kreuzergeschwader* (Berlin, 1922), 18-19; Alfred von Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen* (Leipzig, 1920), 76-7, 152-3; Ishii Kikujiro*, Diplomatic Commentaries*, translated by William Russell Langdon (Baltimore, 1936), 83.

[42] Peter Overlack posits that the Germans believed until the outbreak of the war that Japan would remain neutral and that Japanese expansionism was not sufficiently appreciated in Berlin. See Peter Overlack, 'Asia in German Naval Planning Before the First World War: The Strategic Imperative', *War & Society*, 17, 1, (1999), 1-23.

[43] Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader,* 75.

[44] Ibid., 76.

[45] Ibid*.,* 75.

[46] Ibid*.,* 77. While Spee had sailed in the direction of Japan and the Chinese mainland at this stage, he approached it no closer than Pagan in the Marianas, over 2,000 kilometres from Tokyo.

[47] PA AA, R21301, Chef des Admiralstabes der Marine to StaSek AA, letter, 13 Aug. 1914, with attached memorandum concerning possible war in the Far East.

case of conflict.[48] While these orders remained in place, the German priority had shifted to avoiding warfare in the Far East and in particular to avoiding bringing the Japanese into it, directly or indirectly by attacking British targets. The motive seems obvious. Tsingtao had about 4,000 troops to defend it and a ring of fortifications, but the islands in the Pacific were virtually defenceless but for the Squadron.[49] With total Allied military supremacy looming if Japan joined the Allies, the German strategy was thus an exercise in damage control by trying to keep the war localised in Europe in order to salvage the colonial empire in the East.

The signs in Tokyo were increasingly pointing in the direction of conflict, however, and the German government became yet more proactive. The German foreign office tried to cable Rex to inform and instruct him about the German aim of neutralising the Far East and its waters 'on condition that our opponents do likewise', but could not rely on the message's transmission after German communications with Tokyo (via Yap) had been cut off.[50] The Germans thus turned to the United States, both for communication and as a broker in the hope that a neutral United States with a territorial stake in the Pacific Ocean would be able to weigh in on events. The American ambassador in Rome thus reported that a German representative had paid him a visit to sound him out on American intentions in the Pacific and the prospect of Japanese action.[51] Meanwhile, Rex in Tokyo was in talks with his American counterpart George Guthrie and called on the United States to intervene with the British, arguing that a Japanese seizure of Tsingtao would be detrimental to American interests, and to help send the relevant messages to Berlin.[52] The American reaction was cautiously positive and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan moved to 'discreetly ascertain the view of the German Government as to the possibility of circumscribing the area of hostilities and maintaining the status quo in the Far East' through his ambassador in Berlin James W.

[48] For German pre-war plans for operations in the Far East and the Pacific, see Peter Overlack, 'The Force of Circumstance: Graf Spee's Options for the East Asian Cruiser Squadron in 1914', *Journal of Military History,* 60, 4 (1996), 659. Referring to German guidelines for operations going back to 1905, Overlack writes that the 'damaging of British trade was the main goal of all operations'. See also Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader,* 68-9.

[49] The largest land force mobilised in the Pacific by the Germans (other than in Tsingtao) was in New Britain, *Neupommern* at the time, where a mixed contingent of German reservists and Melanesian police, amounting to 300 troops in total, was put together.

[50] PA AA, R22396, Jagow to Copenhagen, for Tokyo, cable, 10 Aug. 1914.

[51] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.156, Rennell Rodd, Rome, to Grey, letter, 19 Aug. 1914.

[52] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 165-6, Guthrie to SD, cable, 10 Aug. 1914, and cable, 11 Aug. 1914.

Gerard, but emphasised that 'this must not as yet be considered a formal proposal by this Government but an enquiry'.[53] He also added 'that the German Ambassador [in Tokyo], who cannot communicate with Berlin direct, is also desirous of knowing the attitude of his Government'.

The Germans replied promptly, and Gerard sent the following from Berlin on 13 August:

> 1. Germany does not seek war with Japan.
>
> 2. If Japan, on account of the treaty with England, asks that Germany do nothing against English colonies, warships, or commerce in East, Germany will assent in return for corresponding promise from England.
>
> 3. England and Germany to reciprocally agree that either all warships of both in East leave eastern waters or remain inactive as against the other, if remaining there.
>
> 4. Japan, England and Germany to agree that none of these three shall attack warships, colonies, territory, or commerce of any of the others in the East.
>
> 5. The East to mean all lands and seas between parallels London 90 east and all Pacific to Cape Horn.
>
> Notify German Ambassador in Tokyo. If this zone is too large, smaller limits will be accepted.[54]

The suggested zone reached from east of the Dutch East Indies across to Chile and provided for German non-aggression against the entire British Empire in the Asia-Pacific, thus including Australia and New Zealand. After the message was received in Washington, it took another two days for it to be relayed to Japan. The Americans also made contact with the British government. Robert Lansing, the State Department's Legal Counsellor, took the lead by inquiring with Colville Barclay, Counsellor at the British Washington embassy, whether 'it would be feasible to neutralise whole of the Pacific during [the] European war', but emphasised that 'he had not even spoken to the Secretary of State on the subject'. While Barclay did not consider the approach a concerted American diplomatic effort, it was clear to him that the 'United States are evidently anxious lest Japan should acquire too preponderating an influence in China

[53] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 12, 763.72/317, Bryan to Gerard, Berlin, cable, 11 Aug. 1914.
[54] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 12, 763.72/406, Gerard, Berlin, to Bryan, cable, 13 Aug. 1914, and the same cable forwarded to Guthrie, Tokyo, 15 Aug. 1914.

whilst European powers are fighting'.[55] Meanwhile, Bryan had suggested to President Wilson that American diplomacy should aim for an international agreement that hostilities were not be extended to Far East and if this was not agreeable, to have the treaty ports neutralised and the status quo preserved in China.[56]

The American initiative, albeit cautious and tentative, played into Grey's hands as events in Tokyo were accelerating fast and definite signs were emerging that the Japanese were preparing for war on their own terms around 10 and 11 August. Possibly emboldened by the American position, Grey made an attempt at seizing the initiative and, faced with a potentially undesirable *fait accompli* and fearful that events might spiral out of control in China and beyond, he handed Inoue a memorandum in which he stated that 'His Majesty's Government will … for the present refrain from invoking action under the treaty', but that 'should further developments of a serious character occur, such as attack upon Hong Kong, His Majesty's Government would reconsider their decision'.[57] Grey thus tried to turn back the clock on events. Even the scenario envisaged a few days earlier, notably that Japanese assistance would be invoked and triggered in the unlikely case of a German attack on British territory in China, was now to be reassessed. This latest British intervention meant that the Japanese were to be deprived of their *casus belli*, the invocation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. All of a sudden, Japanese naval support for British transport and sea lanes did not seem to be of the highest priority, at least not to Grey.

Grey's push was coupled with his communication with the Americans. Referring to Lansing's proposal from 8 August, he suggested to Walter Hines Page, the American ambassador to Britain, that, while 'so sweeping an arrangement could hardly be made', a 'suggestion from the United States to England and Germany to agree that status quo in China be maintained by each of them would be a great advantage if agreed to' and that there was 'little doubt in my mind about the [British] Cabinet's acceptance'.[58] In great confidence, Grey also informed Page about calling off the

[55] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.423, Barclay to Grey, cable, 8 Aug. 1914.
[56] Link, *PWW*, vol. 30, 362-3, Bryan to Wilson, letter, 8 Aug. 1914. At the same time, the SD approved a suggestion from the Navy Department to increase American naval forces in China, but with 'as little comment as possible'. NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 145, Lansing to NavySec, letter, 7 Aug. 1914.
[57] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.434, Grey to Greene, cable, 10 Aug. 1914.
[58] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 165-166, Page to SS, cable, 11 Aug. 1914.

Japanese from invoking the Alliance.[59] Bryan had been brought into the conversation by now and agreed that 'an escalation of the conflict into China was undesirable from an American perspective and that it should indeed be suggested for the conflict not to be extended to the Far East in order to preserve the status quo'.[60] The State Department also spoke on behalf of the Chinese, who had asked Washington 'to obtain the consent of the belligerent European nations to an undertaking not to engage in hostilities either in Chinese territory and marginal waters or in adjacent leased territories.'[61]

This coincidence of communal interest between the British, the Americans and the Germans is remarkable, but was very short-lived. What was more, Grey's latest move to leave the Japanese out was instantly contested by the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who criticised Grey heavily over it and wondered 'what is in your mind on this aspect'.[62] He accused Grey of 'being chilling indeed to these people [the Japanese]' and that his latest message to Tokyo was 'almost hostile', but also touched on a valid point when considering that he [Churchill] could not see 'any half way house … between having them in and keeping them out'. As a consequence, on the same day as conferring with Washington about possible neutrality in the Pacific, Grey sent out a rather different message to Tokyo. In it, he admitted that the British trade route from Singapore to Japan had been declared clear by the Admiralty and that 'under these circumstances, and in the absence of any present danger apparent to Hong Kong or British concessions, I cannot say the special interests of Great Britain in Eastern Asia are so seriously menaced as to make it essential to appeal to the alliance on that ground alone', but recognised, crucially, 'that Japan has interests also to be considered'.[63] In particular, Grey acknowledged the 'menacing language used by German Ambassador to Japanese Government', which Kato had reported the previous

[59] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol. 424, Grey to Barclay, cable, 10 Aug. 1914.
[60] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 166-7, SS to Page, London, cable extract, 11 Aug. 1914; see also Arthur Stanley Link, *Wilson*, *The Struggle for Neutrality, 1914-15* (Princeton, 1960), 192-4.
[61] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 162, MacMurray, Peking, to SS, cable, 3 Aug. 1914. In the aftermath of the British entry into the war with Germany, the Chinese government also shared its concern with the Americans about the possibility of Japanese and British cooperation against Tsingtao, to be followed by the occupation of South Manchuria and Fukien. See NARA CP, RG 59, M 367, roll 141, 763.72/354, MacMurray to SS, cable, 13 Aug. 1914.
[62] Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge, Chartwell Trust Papers, 1874-1945, CHAR 13/43/49, Churchill to Grey, letter, 11 Aug. 1914.
[63] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.449, Grey to Greene, cable, 11 Aug. 1914.

day in order to provide an excuse for war. This matter, Grey now argued, 'is something which Japan alone has the right to judge'.

Even more importantly, Grey agreed

> to a statement that the two Governments, having been in communication with each other, are of opinion that it is necessary for each to take action to protect the general interests contemplated by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

Within the space of one day, Grey had thus gone from withdrawing from triggering the Alliance to agreeing to a common statement, albeit with some strings attached. Those were to come in the shape of a territorial and maritime limitation, as Grey asked for the statement to declare 'that the action of Japan will not extend to the Pacific Ocean beyond the China Seas nor extend beyond Asiatic waters westward of the China Seas, or to any foreign territory except territory in German occupation on the continent in Eastern Asia', explaining that 'this is important to prevent unfounded misapprehension abroad'. Grey also refered to operations on the water, writing that 'I assume this would be action on high seas only', but also acknowledged that the Japanese 'might have to protect Japanese shipping lines in Pacific from German cruiser'. He concluded this latter part of his cable by writing that he would 'leave it to [the Japanese] Minister for Foreign Affairs to express his own views'.

In a more detailed letter the same day, Grey explained to Greene what precisely he meant by those 'misapprehensions abroad', referring to a meeting he had had with Inoue to talk him through the British position. In it, he had pointed out to Inoue that a publicised limitation of Japanese action was necessary in order to allay American and Australasian suspicions of Japan, not least those 'apprehensions felt in the United States that Japan had designs upon the Pacific coast of America' which, he admitted, he found 'absurd'.[64] As they nevertheless existed and 'were shared to some extent in our own dominions', Grey urged that they needed to be taken into account.

The cable Grey had sent to Greene was a reluctant mix of providing *carte blanche* to the Japanese and attempting to preserve a level of British control over Japanese action. His readiness to accept the Japanese protection of 'shipping lines in Pacific

[64] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.542, Grey to Greene, letter, 11 Aug. 1914, with attachment, memo., 11 Aug. 1914, communicated by Japanese Ambassador.

from German cruisers', a hugely imprecise and open formulation potentially covering large parts of the Ocean, indicates that the limitation of the Japanese war effort was, by design or necessity, an exercise in paying lip service by Whitehall. Furthermore, accepting that some 'menacing language' by the German ambassador to Kato could justify war if the Japanese saw it that way meant that the initiative was ceded to the Japanese, as London was taking the back seat in the arrangement and was now only trying to impose some form of geographical limitation on Japanese actions.[65]

Others in London were less cautious than Grey. One of his own, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Francis Dyke Acland, in a hawkish manner, saw the opportunity for Germany to 'be crushed everywhere with the greatest rapidity possible' and thought that 'it will be time enough to consider political results later', the Japanese being an ideal tool for this strategy in the Asia-Pacific.[66] 'Destroying German power in those regions', Dyke Acland continued, was far more important 'to maintaining general peace in the Far East'. Greene in Tokyo, meanwhile, was of the opinion that Anglo-Japanese cooperation could 'create warm feelings' between the two powers and be beneficial for Britain. Churchill also took the opportunity to weigh in again. Wanting to bring his large ships back to Europe as soon as possible, he intervened with Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, arguing that the 'entry of Japan will of course make Pacific absolutely safe very soon' and that 'any declaration against entry of Japan into war would harm'.[67]

But doubts were growing as well. Greene in Tokyo, for instance, who was an advocate of close relations with Japan (in opposition to his counterpart Jordan in Peking), warned the Foreign Office that Grey's green light towards invoking the Alliance had

[65] Greene makes reference to this incident in a private letter to Grey. He thus describes how Kato had shared with him that Rex, during a visit to the Japanese vice-minister at the foreign office had 'lost his temper, and indeed his reason' and 'flew into a passion', launching a tirade and shouting that 'Germany can never be defeated' and that Japan would ultimately pay for her 'ingratitude'. TNA, FO 800/68, fol.186, Greene to Grey, letter, 11. Aug. 1914. Neither Greene not Grey subsequently questioned this account. By contrast, Raeder writes that the German embassy in Tokyo cabled Peking on the same day of the alleged incident, 9 August, that there were currently 'no signs of danger [of war]'. Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader*, p.77.

[66] TNA, FO 371/2016, fols 446-7, note by Dyke Acland, 11 Aug. 1914.

[67] Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Documents on Canadian External Relations,* vol. I*, 1908-1918* (Ottawa, 1967), doc.62, Churchill to Asquith, cable, 14 Aug. 1914. Churchill, now positive about Japan's imminent entering the war, had Grey write to Tokyo about the 'pleasure with which men of British Navy will find themselves allied in a common cause and against a common foe with navy of Japan'. TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.580, Grey to Greene, cable, 13 Aug. 1914.

been interpreted by Kato 'as conceding to Japan a free hand to act immediately and independently'.[68] Grey then made another attempt at reaching out to Kato in order to extract a dependable promise, and he was very clear this time about what he had in mind, maintaining that

> as to assurance about geographical limits of action, the question of form is not important. What is required is publicity of an assurance in any form … that will make it clear that Japan is not going to seize German islands in the Pacific, which the self-governing dominions desire to deal with themselves, and also that she is not going to take advantage of the situation to seize Dutch East Indian colonies or interfere with Pacific coast of America. I have continually explained that these apprehensions about Japan are absurd, but they exist, and I only ask for some declaration about geographical limits of Japanese action in order that Japanese Government should themselves dispel them.[69]

The above formulation, despite having repetitive elements from previous statements, merits scrutiny. For one, Grey mentioned, and debunked, the scenario of a Japanese seizure of the Dutch East Indies for the first time in his official correspondence with Tokyo, and the mere fact of its inclusion created a level of British ownership of it. The same applies to his mention of the 'desire' by Australia and New Zealand to take over the German Pacific, which, *en passant*, revealed the British plan to the Japanese and made them aware that Australians might soon hold islands all the way up to the Marianas, an area not too distant from Japan.[70]

With regard to Grey's desired 'publicity' of an official announcement, all he could extract was temporisation. Thus, Greene reported back on 15 August that 'as to geographical limits of action, [the Japanese] Minister for Foreign Affairs will make a general reference in formal statement, and either he or Prime Minister will take an early opportunity of supplementing this by a public utterance intended to dispel the special apprehensions which you mention'.[71]

On the same day, it became clear where affairs were going in Tokyo. Greene wrote to Grey that 'the Japanese government have determined to send an ultimatum to

[68] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.533, Greene to Grey, cable, 12 Aug. 1914.
[69] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.534, Grey to Greene, cable, 13 Aug. 1914.
[70] German Pagan in the Northern Marianas and Japanese Iwo Jima were less than 900 kms apart.
[71] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.596, Greene to Grey, cable, 15 Aug. 1914.

Germany' and that the corresponding orders were going to go out to Japanese overseas embassies on the same day.[72] It was to demand the following:

> 1. Germany to give up Kiaochow to Japan without condition or compensation; China eventually to have the place restored to her.
> 2. All German vessels in Japanese or Chinese waters to be removed or disarmed.
> 3. Japan to take any measures she deems to be advisable, unless an unconditionally favourable reply be returned by noon on the 23rd instant.

Kato explained that this course of action, rather than issuing an outright declaration of war, was necessary because of 'the wishes of the more powerful members of the Cabinet'. More importantly, however, he had not found it necessary to consult with the British, thus making the move unilateral and dictated, as he admitted, by domestic affairs, not by Anglo-Japanese relations.

Grey reacted immediately and wanted to get the ultimatum deferred in order to discuss its terms with Inoue in London, but to no avail.[73] The Japanese government had decided and the Emperor had given it his blessing. It took another two days, until 17 August, before the ultimatum could be transmitted to Berlin.[74] The document communicated to the German government invoked the 'agreement of the Alliance between Japan and Great Britain', although Grey had clearly expressed some reservations, and was phrased in a way which the Germans would almost certainly not accept.[75] On their very own terms, the Japanese had thus scheduled war with Germany for 23 August.

Not giving up, Grey tried to corner the Japanese into a commitment and had a press release published by his government's Press Bureau which appeared in the London *Times.* It read that 'it is understood that the action of Japan will not extend to the Pacific Ocean beyond the China Seas, except in so far as it may be necesssary to protect Japanese shipping lines in the Pacific … or to any foreign territory except

[72] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.601, Greene to Grey, cable, 15 Aug. 1914.
[73] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.602, Grey to Greene, cable, 15 Aug. 1914.
[74] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.9, Japanese Chargé, Berlin, to Jagow, letter, 17 Aug. 1914, as communicated to British FO on the same day.
[75] Interestingly, Rex was in favour of accepting the ultimatum, which would have put the Japanese in a rather awkward position, but Tirpitz was strongly opposed and ultimately prevailed. BA Freiburg, N 253/154, memo. summarising the events regarding Tsingtau in 1914, by Tirpitz, undated.

territory in German occupation on the continent of Eastern Asia'.[76] As a reassurance to the Americans, this statement was then sent on to Barclay in Washington who handed it to Bryan.[77] What Grey had to admit, however, was that the statement 'represented our [British] view of any action to which we could be party' and that, while Grey had 'understood it to represent also the Japanese view … the Japanese Government had not given any definite pledge'.[78]

The American preoccupation, as Barclay reported it, was not so much with the American west coast as with Japan taking advantage of the 'opportunity of encroaching upon China' and 'seizing possibly Pacific Islands with minimum of trouble herself'.[79] More specifically, 'stress is laid upon danger to United States strategical position should islands be occupied, namely, Samoa and Ladrones'.[80] Barclay continued that 'these apprehensions, despite reassuring statement made by President that he is satisfied with Japan's good faith, seem to be shared in most circles, and curiosity is expressed as to significance of apparent authenticity of Japanese statement that Japan's action is taken on proposal of Great Britain'. In the same vein, Alfred Thayer Mahan, now a retired naval officer but still hugely influential, urged Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, that the administration should warn Britain against the probable American revulsion against the Allies if the Japanese seized the German islands in the Pacific, and furthermore, that this would be offensive to Australia and New Zealand as well.[81] Not only did the Americans thus suspect the Japanese of opportunism in China and the Pacific Islands, but they hypothesised about British instigation of it.

Barclay's allusion to Wilson's satisfaction with Japan's 'good faith' refers to an assurance the Americans had received from the Japanese government through

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[76] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.50, Grey to Greene, cable, 18 Aug. 1914; fol. 83, Grey to Barclay, Washington, letter, 18 Aug. 1914.
[77] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 171, 763.72/538, memo., Barclay to SS, 18 Aug. 1914.
[78] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.83, Grey to Barclay, letter, 18 Aug. 1914.
[79] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.24, Barclay to Grey, cable, 17 Aug. 1914.
[80] The Ladrones are now called the Mariana Islands.
[81] Mahan to Roosevelt, letter, 18 Aug. 1914, cited in William Reynolds Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (Austin, 1971), 161. In his attempt to enforce American neutrality, Wilson silenced Mahan by ordering that all active and retired officers refrain from publicly commenting on the war. See Suzanne Geissler, *God and Sea Power: The Influence of Religion on Alfred Thayer Mahan* (Annapolis, 2015), 189.

Guthrie. After Kato had handed him the text of the Japanese ultimatum to Germany, he expressed 'a strong desire to perpetuate the friendship between our two countries' and 'requested me [Guthrie] to impress on you [Bryan] as strongly as possible that in taking the present action Japan was not animated by selfish purpose but was acting strictly in pursuance of the alliance with Great Britain and would not seek any territorial aggrandizement or selfish advantage in China'.[82] Kato sent a similarly worded message to his ambassador in Washington to be communicated 'to the United States Government'.[83] Bryan instantly recognised its value and wrote to Wilson that 'the enclosed is an important document to keep' and that 'it contains a definite state[ment] of purpose'. Prime Minister Okuma Shigenobu also went public in the United States and had a dispatch sent to the East and West Cable Bureau in New York with the claim that 'Japan has no territorial ambition', followed by a cable to *The Independent*, a weekly magazine published in New York, in which he made it known that 'as Premier of Japan, I have stated and I now again state to the people of America and of the world that Japan has no ulterior motive, no desire to secure more territory, no thought of depriving China or other peoples of anything they now possess'.[84] While the above statements and conversations focussed on China primarily, they also made universal reference to 'no territorial ambition' and were so interpreted in Washington. As far as public relations went, the Japanese seemed more preoccupied with the Americans than with their British partners, and made relevant public efforts of appeasement in Washington rather than in London.

Wilson then dismissed any possible intervention and showed he intended to maintain his agenda of neutrality, confident that his administration would be further consulted if any action affecting the United States was to be taken.[85] Arthur Link, the leading

[82] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 763.72/434, Guthrie to Bryan, cable, 15 Aug. 1914.
[83] Link, *PWW*, vol.30, 390-2, Bryan to Wilson, letter, [c. 17 Aug. 1914], with enclosure 'A Telegram Received from Baron Kato', 16 Aug. 1914.
[84] NARA DC, RG38, entry 98, box 453, C-10-a, no. 4494, Monograph 'Japanese Declarations and Assurances Respecting Participation in the European War in the Pacific', Nov. 1914, published by Asiatic Institute. The message to the East and West Cable Bureau was sent on 15 August, the one to *The Independent* on 24 August.
[85] Wilson had declared on 4 August that 'the laws and treaties of the United States … impose upon all persons who may be within their territory and jurisdiction the duty of an impartial neutrality during the existence of the contest' and, fervently, on 19 August that the United States must be 'neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls' and 'impartial in thought as well as in action'. *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 547-51, 'Proclamation of August 4, 1914', and 551-2, 'An appeal by

authority on Wilson, writes about the American attitude that 'Wilson and Bryan had no reason to believe, at this time, that the Japanese contemplated anything more than limited military action against the German naval base at Tsingtao and that there was no sufficient danger to American or Chinese interests to justify stern representations to Tokyo'.[86] It is in this light that Wilson, when asked about the Japanese ultimatum at a press conference on 17 August, brushed off the question, responding that 'there is nothing to discuss about it'.[87]

This attitude was also the death knell to further German attempts in this direction. Thus, when Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, the German Chancellor, became involved after receiving the Japanese ultimatum and tasked the German foreign office to inform Gerard that the order for the East Asia Squadron to withhold from any hostile action would remain in force and to plead with him to now accelerate the American efforts towards neutralisation of the Far East, the Americans refused to involve themselves any further.[88] It was thus too little too late for the Germans, but it raises the question whether there was a possibility of avoiding conflict in the Far East and Pacific if the diplomatic wheels had been made to turn more quickly and, in particular, if the American administration had found its bearings more decisively early in the new situation.[89] Ultimately, this remains hypothetical.

The international web of reassurances had also extended to Australia and New Zealand. For instance, the Colonial Office in London communicated to the two Dominions the government's understanding of events in a message on 11 August, stating the following:

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the President of the United States to the citizens of the Republic … presented in the Senate', 19 Aug. 1914; see also Link, *Wilson, Struggle for Neutrality*, 195-6.

[86] Link, *Wilson, Struggle for Neutrality*, 194. In this context, the Americans also rejected a Chinese approach for intervention regarding the anticipated Japanese takeover of the Kiaochow concession, arguing that this would not be acceptable to Britain. NARA CP, RG59, M367, roll 141, 763.72/531, Bryan to Peking, cable, 20 Aug. 1914.

[87] Link, *PWW*, vol.30, 387, Remarks at a Press Conference, 17 Aug. 1914.

[88] PA AA, R 21301, fol.39, Bethmann Hollweg to Zimmermann, AA, cable, 17 Aug. 1914.

[89] It is worth noting that the British government was aware of the German position, at least at this late stage, which is evidenced by an intercepted cable from Arthur Zimmermann, Under-Secretary of State at the German foreign ministry, to the German embassy in Washington for repetition to Tokyo. It reads that the 'East Asiatic Squadron [is] instructed [to] cease hostile acts against England in case Japan remains neutral. Inform Japanese Government.' This message was sent by Grey to Greene in Tokyo on 18 August. See TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.37, Grey to Greene, cable, 18 Aug. 1914.

> Relations are so strained between Japan and Germany that a declaration of war by Japan on Germany seems to be inevitable, but we believe that the action of Japan will not extend to the Pacific Ocean beyond the China Seas, nor extend beyond Asiatic waters westward of the China seas, or to any foreign territory, except territory on the continent of Eastern Asia in German occupation.[90]

After the issuing of the Japanese ultimatum, it was recognised in London that unless a precisely formulated Japanese statement of geographical limitation came forward 'it will be essential that we should be able to give the self-governing dominions some assurance'.[91] It is thus in this light also that the British press bureau release from 17 August can be seen.

Meanwhile in Tokyo, Okuma gave a speech to a group of business leaders on 19 August in which he emphasised that 'Japan's object is to eliminate from continental China the root of German influence' but that, other than that, Japan had 'no design for territorial aggrandisement'.[92] He added that 'operations will not … extend beyond the limits necessary for the attainment of that object [Germany's removal from continental China] and for the defence of her own legitimate interests'. He then 'announc[ed] to the world that [Japan] will take no action such as would give to the Powers any cause for anxiety or uneasiness regarding safety of their territories and possessions'. These formulations were somewhat blurry, but, importantly, specified 'continental China' as a geographical point of reference.

Regarding the clarity of formulation which London had sought, Kato then had a surprisingly candid conversation with Greene, in which he revealed that 'it was not possible for Japan to give an assurance as to the geographical limitation of her action, inasmuch as, for instance, as soon as she declared war on Germany she would have to protect her large traffic passing through the Pacific to Honolulu and San Francisco'.[93] Anticipating astutely that 'the main assurance which [Grey] wanted was one that Japan had no intention to seize territory outside the China seas, such as the German islands

[90] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.479, Anderson, CO, to FO, letter, 11 Aug. 1914, with attached copies of cables CO to GNZ and GGAus, 11 Aug. 1914.
[91] TNA, FO 371/2016, fol.608, Grey to Greene, cable, 16 Aug. 1914.
[92] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.101, Greene to Grey, cable, 19 Aug. 1914. This came one day after Kato wrote to Greene in private that he wished to 'emphasise [the] fact that, in order to avoid all misapprehension at home or abroad, the attitude of the Government rested entirely on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and had not the slightest territorial or other designs'. TNA FO 371/2017, fol.47, Greene to Grey, cable, 18 Aug. 1914.
[93] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.104, Greene to Grey, cable, 19 Aug. 1914.

in the Pacific, which might cause apprehension in Australia and New Zealand', Kato went on to confirm 'that Japan had no such designs' and that he hoped 'this had been made plain in the passage of the Prime Minister's [Okuma's] speech of last night'. While Kato thus anticipated that the Japanese navy might operate as far as San Francisco, which was not implausible given the range of action of the German East Asia Squadron, he at the same time explicitly pointed out that the seizure of the German Pacific was off-limits for Japan, even acknowleding the Australian and New Zealand political position within the context of Anglo-Japanese relations.

However, Kato refused to go public with this. Greene suggested leaving it at that and concluded that 'further insistence in the matter might cause resentment here'. Dyke Acland agreed, writing in a note that 'this is satisfactory - and should allay apprehension both in the Colonies and the U.S.'[94] How sensitive the subjects of public opinion and the control of information channels were to the Japanese was revealed when Tokyo found out about the *Times* article from a few days earlier in which the Press Bureau release had been published. Kato expressed 'surprise' at the publication and felt 'obliged to explain in press here that the Imperial Government had not agreed to limit their action in deference to His Majesty's Government'.[95] This showcased the ambiguity with which the Japanese were approaching the subject, providing guarantees in conversation but refusing to have this translated into an official promise, not wanting to be seen as a cat's paw for carrying out Britain's work. As far as Tokyo was concerned, this was to be a Japanese war fought in Japan's interests. Consequently, the Japanese rejected the British Foreign Office's plan, not least for the sake of the Australasian dominions, to publicise Okuma's statement, which, incidentally, had been meant to be 'public', or whatever Kato understood as such. Japanese insistence on keeping any commitment out of the press, adhered to by London, meant, however, that messages regarding the matter had to be communicated confidentially to Melbourne and Wellington, and it was emphasised 'that no public statement should at present be made'.[96]

[94] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.103, note by Dyke Acland, 20 Aug. 1914.
[95] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.121, Greene to Grey, cable, 20 Aug. 1914.
[96] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.365, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 25 Aug. 1914; ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/2, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 25 Aug. 1914.

Despite the censorship, however, the Australian press voiced its suspicions. *The Age*, a Melbourne paper, asked the following question in one of its articles:

> In view of the intervention of Japan in Chinese waters, the duty of the Australian Commonwealth to plant the British flag on Germany's Pacific Ocean Colonies has acquired a new and sharp significance… That they will be wrested from Germany is certain. But under what flag will they pass?[97]

The mood in Japan was reflected by the Tokyo press. An article in the influential *Kokumin* newspaper claimed that 'England and France have put out their hands and nothing more or less than the seizure of German Colonies in the Pacific is now going on'.[98] 'That we are denied the right to acquire German Territory, while England herself will make these seizures', it criticised, 'is impossible', reflecting the perception in Japan of being regarded as a second-rate power by the Europeans. To what extent the Japanese press had been aware of British occupation plans for the German Pacific is not clear, but Whitehall had at this stage shared its plans for New Zealand's occupation of Samoa and Australia's expedition north to New Guinea and Micronesia with Tokyo. If this was leaked, the article's claim that England was about to 'make these seizures', and possibly insinuating that Japan needed to act in order to prevent such an 'impossible' scenario, would be plausible.

The Japanese leadership was entirely aware of the opportunity that the war was offering, not least with regard to territorial expansion, both in China and the Pacific. The envisaged scenario of the entire removal of Germany from the Far East was only one side of the coin in this context, as it was clear to all sides that the expected vacuum would be filled in some way. Although such an opportunistic stance was not necessarily supported by all key factions in Tokyo, it was gaining the upper hand. In fact, some of the genro – a class of highly influential elder statesmen in the Japanese political system - and opposition parties were not favourably disposed towards going to war at all, whereas the army prioritised China over the Pacific Islands, which had their most supportive lobby in the IJN.[99] Furthermore, territorial expansion had the support of Kato, who had the backing of the military, eager to increase the army and

[97] *The Age*, 19 Aug. 1914, cited in Meaney, vol.2, *Australia and World Crisis*, 63.
[98] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, folder 8, *Kokumin*, 21 Aug. 1914, 'Seizure of Colonies', translated article.
[99] Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, 128.

navy estimates, and who was able to manipulate various channels of influence in his favour.[100]

The ultimatum elapsed on 23 August, and Japan declared war on Germany. On the previous day, Kato had spoken before his cabinet and declared:

> Japan, at this time, is not entering the war because it is obliged to do so by the Alliance. Rather, it considers a resolute decision to embark upon war as an opportune policy for two reasons: the request from Britain, which is based upon the friendship of this Alliance, and the opportunity to sweep up bases in Eastern waters and to advance the Empire's position in the world.[101]

Kato's statement did not mention or reflect the previous assurances given to Britain in private. With regard to the Alliance, he seemed to want to emphasise Japan's freedom of action when he said that Japan was providing a friendship service rather than a treaty obligation, but it was clear that the Japanese needed the Alliance case for war. Thus, the Japanese declaration of war stated that 'our Government and that of His Britannic Majesty, after a full and frank communication with each other, agreed to take such measures as may be necessary for the protection of the general interests contemplated in the agreement of alliance'. Crucially, it made no mention of the geographical scope of the Japanese commitment. What would turn into a race for the Pacific was about to start.

The Japanese motivation was summed up by a surprising correspondence between Jagow and Okuda Takematsu, the Japanese consul in Hamburg. Writing on 15 August, the day the Japanese had decided to issue their ultimatum, Okuda maintained that

> If the [European] powers wear themselves down in decades-long fighting, Japan will be able to develop its national power and might without being disturbed. It can be said that this good opportunity has been sent from the heavens.[102]

Okuda also added that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was thus far only 'of small advantage to us, whereas it is important to England', insinuating that now might have come the time to further exploit the Alliance for Japan's benefit.

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[100] Ibid, 127-8. Kato's biographer stated that the British invitation was 'a godsend for Kato and those who wanted to take Japan into the war'. See Masanori Ito (ed.), *Kato Takaaki*, vol.2 (Tokyo, 1929), 78-80, cited in Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, 127.

[101] Ikeda Kiyoshi, *Nihon no Kaigun* [The Japanese Navy], vol.2 (Tokyo, 1967) 28-9, cited in Mark R. Peattie, *Nan'yo. The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945* (Honolulu,1988), 38, fn 6.

[102] BA Freiburg, RM 5/2292, fols 158-9, Okuda to Jagow, translation of letter, 15 Aug. 1914.

Summarising Britain's role in the events of August 1914, Thomas Millard, an influential American writer on the Far East and unofficial adviser to the Chinese delegation at the PPC after the war, hypothesised in 1916 about two theories for Britain's course regarding Japan's entry into the war - either 'Britain initiated Japan's action, by requesting her aid under the alliance' or 'Japan herself took the initiative, contrary to the real desire of her ally' - and concluded, 'I believe in the latter theorem'.[103]

The European and American initiatives to rein in Japan, either by neutralising the Pacific or by tying Japan into a broader Anglo-French (and even Russian) alliance, had failed, not least because the Japanese were aware of their own strength and leverage and saw no necessity to give in to British or any other government's demands. American and German attempts at neutralising the Far East and Pacific Ocean lacked determination and time, with the possible window of opportunity for a diplomatic solution closing before they had been able to initiate a meaningful dialogue. In London, military necessity, or what was seen as such, prevailed over the reservations expressed in the diplomatic service and the Colonial Office, and the Australasian Dominions' views were virtually ignored. Ultimately, the miscalculation is best summed up by Walter Langley, a British expert on the Far East and Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, who had stated on 13 August that 'we did not at first realise how keen they [the Japanese] were to come in'.[104]

[103] Thomas F. Millard, *Our Eastern Question: America's Contact with the Orient and the Trend of Relations with China and Japan* (New York, 1916), 95.
[104] TNA, FO 350/11, Jordan Papers, Langley to Jordan, letter, 13 Aug. 1914.

Chapter 2
War in the Pacific and its aftermath: August-December 1914

While the Japanese were gradually moving towards becoming a conflict party in the first half of August, the Pacific was being transformed into a war theatre. This led to an often overlooked, yet decisive 'Pacific War' of 1914, by the end of which the German Pacific would be *de facto* divided up between Japan and the British Empire. As it would turn out, the division that this short-lived war in the Pacific brought about would be maintained throughout the greater war and after, remove the German Empire from the Far East and the Pacific and establish a new strategic reality in the wider area, which also heavily affected the United States.

The process was started in London, where an operational mechanism was triggered to cope with the German overseas possessions. The trigger in the Pacific relied on the employment of the Australasian Dominions as crucial cornerstones of Britain's global defence strategy. The plan, devised before the war, had two main elements: to break up the enemy's support and communications network and to drive the enemy's ships from the area in order to remove the threat to trade and troop transports from Australia and New Zealand to Europe. Imperial expansion in the Pacific was not a priority, at least not to Whitehall. A Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) memorandum confirmed these goals retrospectively as 'all operations … to be regarded primarily as designed for the defence of trade and not for territorial conquest – that is that their primary object was to deprive the enemy of his distant bases and coaling stations as well as of his wireless stations'.[1] It also added that 'so far as possible the troops used for the purpose should be such as would not in any case be available

[1] TNA, CAB 38/28/51, CID, Historical Section, 'Report on the Opening of the War', p.11, 1 Nov. 1914. The German communications system consisted of the following stations: a submarine cable at Yap, going out to Guam, Shanghai and Menado in Celebes; high-powered wireless stations at Tsingtao, Yap, Nauru and Apia, with a fifth station at Bita Paka near Rabaul under construction in August 1914; low-powered stations existed at Angaur in the Palau Islands, Truk in the Carolines and Jabor in the Marshall Islands, see Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 21. The CID was an advisory body of the British government which existed from 1902 to 1939. At the outbreak of the war, it continued to provide assistance to government but was then replaced in its active advisory role by bodies with executive powers, starting with the War Council, while still producing relevant memoranda on strategy and the war situation. See H. L. Ismay, 'The Machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence', *Royal United Services Institution Journal*, 84, 534 (1939), 246.

in the main theatre', which meant 'the employment of Colonial and Dominion defence forces, which could be used offensively at short range in their own area'.[2]

On an institutional level, the British government, once it entered the war, established an Overseas Attack Committee within the CID framework, tasked with coordinating and advising on the warfare outside of Europe.[3] On its first day, it recommended that Australia and New Zealand create expeditionary forces to seize German territory in the Pacific.[4] The Colonial Office then requested on 6 August that Australia mobilise forces to occupy German New Guinea, Yap and Nauru, and that New Zealand do the same for German Samoa, to which both agreed.[5] These messages from London were formulated as 'suggestions' and 'consultations', thereby deliberately emphasising the voluntary nature of the Australasian support, even though the British Empire had gone to war as a whole.[6] The plan for the Australians was further specified on 17 August 1914, when the sub-committee stated that 'Rabaul should be seized and occupied by the Australian forces' and that, subsequently, 'subsidiary expeditions should be at once

[2] Although the British overseas war plan looked precise and determined, this was not necessarily replicated by the reality on the ground. Louis argues that 'to Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans, one of the main goals of the war was to destroy Germany's 'place in the sun', thereby securing their own safety', but it is equally true, as Thompson points out, that the Australians lacked preparedness and an attack capability for relevant operations despite this 'unexpected path [having] been opened to the furtherance of our ambition [to lay] the foundations of a solid Australian sub-empire in the Pacific Ocean', as the *Age* highlighted on 12 August. See Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies*, 37, and Roger C. Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific, The Expansionist Era 1820-1920* (Melbourne, 1980), 203.

[3] TNA, CAB 38/28/51, CID, Historical Section, 'Report on the Opening of the War', p.11, 1 Nov. 1914.

[4] TNA, WO 95/5452, print marked 'Operations against Samoa 1914-1915', entry for 5 Aug. 1914; print marked 'Operations against the German Possessions in New Guinea [etc.]', entry for 5 Aug. 1914. Note that the documents refer to the 'Offensive Sub-Committee'. This is the same entity as the 'Overseas Attack Committee'. See also TNA, CAB 38/28/51, Report on the Opening of the War, 1 Nov. 1914. Under the subtitle 'Overseas Attack Committee', it says that it was formed 'for the consideration of combined expeditions in foreign territory' and that 'it was in conception a Joint Naval and Military Committee, with members representing the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and India Office'. For the relevant proceedings of the sub-committee, see TNA, CAB 38/28/45, CID. Proceedings of a Joint Naval and Military Sub-Committee for the consideration of Combined Operations in Foreign Territory, 6 Oct. 1914. The enclosed proceedings are duly dated 5 Aug. 1914.

[5] For the requests to New Zealand and Australia, respectively, see TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.92, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 6 Aug. 1914; fol.93, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 6 Aug. 1914. For New Zealand's agreement to seize Samoa, see TNA, WO 95/5452, print marked 'Correspondence relating to Samoa', GNZ to SSCols, cable, 7 Aug. 1914. For the corresponding Australian reply, see ADM 137/7, fol. 150, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 10 Aug. 1914. In this message, the Australian government informed London that an expeditionary force of 1,500 men was being organised for the task. Note that the Overseas Attack Committee's recommendation from 5 August was for Australia to take German New Guinea and Yap, while New Zealand was to be tasked to deal with German Samoa and Nauru, whereas the Colonial Office request from 6 August allocated Nauru to the Australian expedition.

[6] The sub-committee had formulated this as a recommendation that Australia and New Zealand should be 'invited' to attack the German possessions in question.

sent to seize and occupy Nauru, Yap and Angaur Island in the Pelew Group'.[7] After this, it was maintained, 'further operations should be undertaken with a view to seizing and occupying the mainland of German New Guinea and as many as possible of the more valuable outlying German islands such as Feys Island in the Pelew Group'. The plan was thus to knock out Rabaul, the Germans' colonial centre in the Pacific located in the Bismarck Archipelago, followed by phosphate-rich Nauru and Angaur as well as Yap, the German communications hub.[8] Mainland New Guinea was not an operational priority. As an outlier to the south, Samoa was to be taken by a separate force from New Zealand.

By the time the second instructions were sent from London, in mid-August, the Samoan expedition had already been sent on its way. As a matter of fact, Liverpool had cabled from Wellington as early as 8 August that the Samoan force would be ready to sail within days, to which the Admiralty gave its green light and set about organising an escort.[9] Australian and French naval vessels were ordered to regroup at Fiji to accompany the force from New Zealand safely to Samoa.[10] This was not what Australian planners had anticipated. More specifically, the Australians considered that sending an expedition to Samoa first would delay their own movements to Rabaul 'by fully a month' and postpone their entire expedition.[11] They were right. That being said, the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, created to engage in the operation, was slower to organise than the less complex expedition from New Zealand, even though the Australian government had attached the 'utmost importance to the prompt accomplishment of the projected mission'.[12] The British Admiralty responded

[7] TNA, ADM 137/5, fol.51, Extract from Proceedings of a Sub Committee of the CID, 17 Aug. 1914. The plan was subsequently sent to Australia. TNA, ADM 137/5, fol. 56, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 19 Aug 1914.
[8] Regarding the German phosphate islands in the Pacific, Harcourt had suggested to Munro Ferguson that, as 'Angaur and Feys in Pellew group contain valuable deposits of high grade phosphate', it should be considered to include them in the Australian expedition. NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 Part 1, fol. 186, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 18 Aug. 1914. Meanwhile, the Pacific Phosphate Company, a combined Anglo-German business, had written to the Australian Naval Board and made them aware of the deposits on Nauru. NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0454, 'Strictly Confidential Memorandum for the Naval Board', by [?], PPCo, 13 Aug. 1914.
[9] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.127, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 8 Aug. 1914; fol. 130, SSCols to GNZ, 8 Aug. 1914.
[10] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 52.
[11] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.214, CNB, Melbourne, to Admiralty, cable, 15 Aug. 1914.
[12] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0307, memo. by Millen, Minister of Defence, 10 Aug. 1914. It is worth noting that Australia was in an ambiguous strategic position, expressed by Millen himself, who had written on 8 August that 'it is manifestly undesirable to divert any of the warships from their present mission', which was to clear German ships, if present, from New Guinean waters. His idea was

to an Australian suggestion to reverse the order of operations that it was too late now to change plans.[13] Ronald Munro Ferguson, Governor-General of Australia from 1914 to 1920 (and later also known as Lord Novar), revealed that, on strategic grounds, the Australians considered the prioritisation of the Samoan expedition over the destruction of the German wireless in New Guinea and chasing the enemy's navy from the sea a 'capital mistake'.[14] There were also some in Australia who had questioned the wisdom of the Samoan take-over by a militarily inferior New Zealand altogether. Munro Ferguson wrote later, after a conversation with Andrew Fisher, Australia's Prime Minister since his electoral victory in September 1914, that 'the occupation of Samoa by New Zealand rankles a little' with the Australians, which reflects the intra-imperial competition between the two Dominions.[15] Thus, early seeds of discord had been sown in the British imperial camp.

The British request from 6 August had qualified that 'any territory now occupied must at conclusion of war be at disposal of Imperial Government for ultimate settlement'.[16] Later, when the Dominions were asked to hoist the British flag, they were asked that 'no proclamation formally annexing any such territory should be made without previous communication with His Majesty's Government'.[17] This implied that London was happy with the occupations being carried out by the Dominions, but was reserving a prerogative with regard to any political action that could impact a post-war territorial

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thus to use an armed merchantman to transport troops for landings. Even then, precious naval escorts were needed. Ibid., memo. by Millen, 8 Aug. 1914. Regarding the Australian readiness to provide troops for the New Guinea campaign, see TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.183, CNB to Admiralty, cable, 13 Aug. 1914. It reads that the force 'should leave in about a week', thus around 20 August.

[13] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.214, CNB to Admiralty, cable, 15 Aug. 1914; fol.221, Admiralty to CNB, cable, 15 Aug. 1914. This was first and foremost about the allocation of the battlecruiser HMAS *Australia*, the only British Empire vessel in the Pacific Ocean that could reliably outgun the German opposition.

[14] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/604-5, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, personal, 29 Sept. 1914. William Creswell, Australia's leading navalist, lamented the same in an 'off-the-record' letter to James Allen, New Zealand's Defence Minister. See ANZ, ADBQ 16145 Allen 1/1, M1/14, Creswell to Allen, letter, 26 Oct. 1914.

[15] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/687-91, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 13 May 1915.

[16] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.92, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 6 Aug. 1914; fol. 93, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 6 Aug. 1914.

[17] TNA, CO 616/15, fol.403, SSCols to Munro Ferguson/de Villiers/Liverpool, cable, 18 Aug. 1914. This message was sent to Australia, New Zealand and also to South Africa. The text, otherwise identical, merely substituted the three target territories 'German possessions in Pacific', 'Samoa' and 'German South West Africa', thereby plainly demonstrating London's 'off-the-peg' approach to imperial co-operation in its service.

settlement.[18] Support for these operations came from the French, who made their two cruisers in the area, the *Dupleix* and the *Montcalm*, available to the British China Squadron under Vice-Admiral Martyn Jerram in Hong Kong.[19] The extent of Anglo-French cooperation is epitomised by a French Navy Ministry message to the British Admiralty, asking to order *Montcalm* to 'remain with Admiral Australia [on HMAS *Australia*] as long as you can be useful to him'.[20] Accordingly, the British China Squadron was asked to enter into 'closest co-operation' with the French.[21]

Early operations included the destruction of Yap's wireless station on 12 August by a force from Hong Kong, while Australian ships had arrived off Rabaul on 11 August, but could neither find German warships nor discover the location of the wireless station operating at Bita Paka in the hinterland.[22] The latter force had to leave the area without any operational targets accomplished other than the conclusion that the destruction of the wireless station would necessitate a landing expedition and that no German ships were there.[23] These vessels were then used to escort the New

[18] See, for example, ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/2, GNZ to Governor Fiji, cable, 20 Aug. 1914, according to which the New Zealand government was asked by London to establish a temporary administration for Samoa.

[19] The relevant message was passed from the foreign ministry in Paris through the French consul in Fiji to *Montcalm*. It read: 'Guerre declarée entre France et Allemagne seule. Soutenez Amiral Anglais à Hong Kong capturez tout ennemi rencontré.' TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.80, Bertie, Paris, to FO, cable, 5 Aug. 1914. This co-operation was based on an Anglo-French pre-war plan from February 1914 for conflict with Germany in the Far East. It was entitled 'Eastern Fleet Secret Instructions X' and read: 'As soon as possible, and on receipt of the necessary orders from their respective governments, the allied naval forces combine together for the purpose of co-operation. With this object: - The "Montcalm" and "Dupleix" join the British Squadron.' See NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0355, Macandie, Naval Secretary, to CinC, West Indies Station, letter, secret, 21 Sept. 1915, with attached cable from Rear Admiral Hong Kong to Navy Office, Melbourne, 5 Aug. 1914, attached letter from Jerram, CinC Hong Kong, to CNB, 4 Aug. 1914, and attached 'Memorandum', 'made at Hong Kong', unsigned, 7 Feb. 1914.

[20] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.374, Marine Paris to Admiralty, cable, 26 Aug. 1914. For pre-war Franco-British talks and agreement on co-operation in the Far East and Pacific, conducted in 1913, see Ian Nish, *Collected Writings of Ian Nish*, part 1 (Abingdon, 2013), ch.15: 'Admiral Jerram and the German Pacific Fleet, 1913-1915', originally published in the *Mariner's Mirror*, vol.56, in 1970 under the same title. Nish quotes Jerram, who was not impressed by the French naval assets in the area, as saying: 'the ships they have out here would be very broke reeds to rely on'. Nish, *Collected Writings*, part 1, 164-5.

[21] CAB 38/28/51, 'Report on the Opening of the War', CID, Historical Section, 1 Nov. 1914.

[22] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 11-13, 18. For the Yap operation, see also TNA, ADM 137/1, fols 257-72, George Patey, HMAS *Australia*, Suva, letter, 23 Oct. 1914, with attached report entitled 'War between Great Britain, France, Russia, and Japan against Germany and Austria, 1914. Participation by Australian Seagoing Fleet in the Operations', entry for 12 Aug. 1914. See also Julian Corbett, *Naval Operations*, vol.I, *To the Battle of the Falklands, December 1914* (London, 1920), 143. For the British decision not to cut the undersea cables at Yap, see ADM 137/1, fol. 261, Admiralty to CinC Hong Kong, cable, 17 Aug. 1914.

[23] See Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 14. He writes: 'The [wireless] station was evidently some distance inland, and the search for it might occupy several days; the German squadron (which after all was the

Zealanders to Samoa. When the force arrived off Upolu on 30 August 1914, Apia with its wireless station was surrendered without resistance and the Union Flag was raised over the island.[24] An Australian force, assisted by *Montcalm,* then proceeded to the Bismarck Archipelago again and made landfall at Herbertshöhe, south of Rabaul, on 11 September, setting into motion the seizure of the wireless station, New Britain, and, in subsequent steps, of the entire Bismarck Archipelago and German New Guinea.[25] An important detail of the take-over was that Eduard Haber, the German Acting Governor at Rabaul, signed terms of capitulation with the Australians on 17 September and that the terms referred to 'the whole of the German Possessions in the Pacific Ocean lately administered from Rabaul', meaning the entire German Pacific except Samoa.[26]

The British sweep against the German wireless network also knocked out the station at Nauru on 9 September, but the island was not occupied at this stage.[27] With the successful operation at Bita Paka, all German high-powered wireless stations had been destroyed by mid-September, even though the Germans had improvised repairs for the one at Yap, which would soon be of some relevance.

Australian Squadron's first objective) was still unlocated; the ships were very short of coal and oil, and an early return to the nearest base was desirable.'

[24] TNA, WO 95/5452, Print marked 'Correspondence relating to the Occupation of German Samoa [etc]', Sept. 1915, therein: GNZ to SSCols, cable extract, 2 Sept. 1914.

[25] For a timeline of Australian operations, see TNA, WO 95/5452, Print marked 'Operations against the German Possessions in New Guinea [etc.]', in particular the entries for 12, 13 and 14 September 1914, the latter ending with 'the cordial congratulation of His Majesty's Government on the successful occupation of Herbertshohe, Rabaul and Simpsonhafen'.

[26] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0454, Terms of Capitulation of German New Guinea, 17 Sept. 1914.

[27] TNA, WO 95/5452, Print marked 'Correspondence respecting Military Operations Against German Possessions in the Western Pacific', Nov. 1915, doc. no. 4, CNB to Admiralty, cable, received 9 Sept. 1914. Nauru was occupied by an Australian expedition on 6 and 7 November 1914. TNA, CO 616/20, fols 484, 501-13, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 9 Feb. 1915, with attached message received from the Administrator, Rabaul, dated 13 Nov. 1914, and NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 Part 1, Shepherd, PM's Dept, to GGAus, letter, 19 Nov. 1914.

Postcard, 'Hoisting the Union Jack in Samoa. 30th Aug 1914.', 1914, Samoa, by Alfred James Tattersall. Te Papa, Wellington (GH023108). Retrieved from https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1314343 on 10 Jan. 2017.

Photograph, 'The Fleet, Headed by the Flagship HMAS *Australia*, entering Rabaul on 1914-09-12', AWM, accession Number J03326. Retrieved from https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/J03326, 10 Nov. 2017.

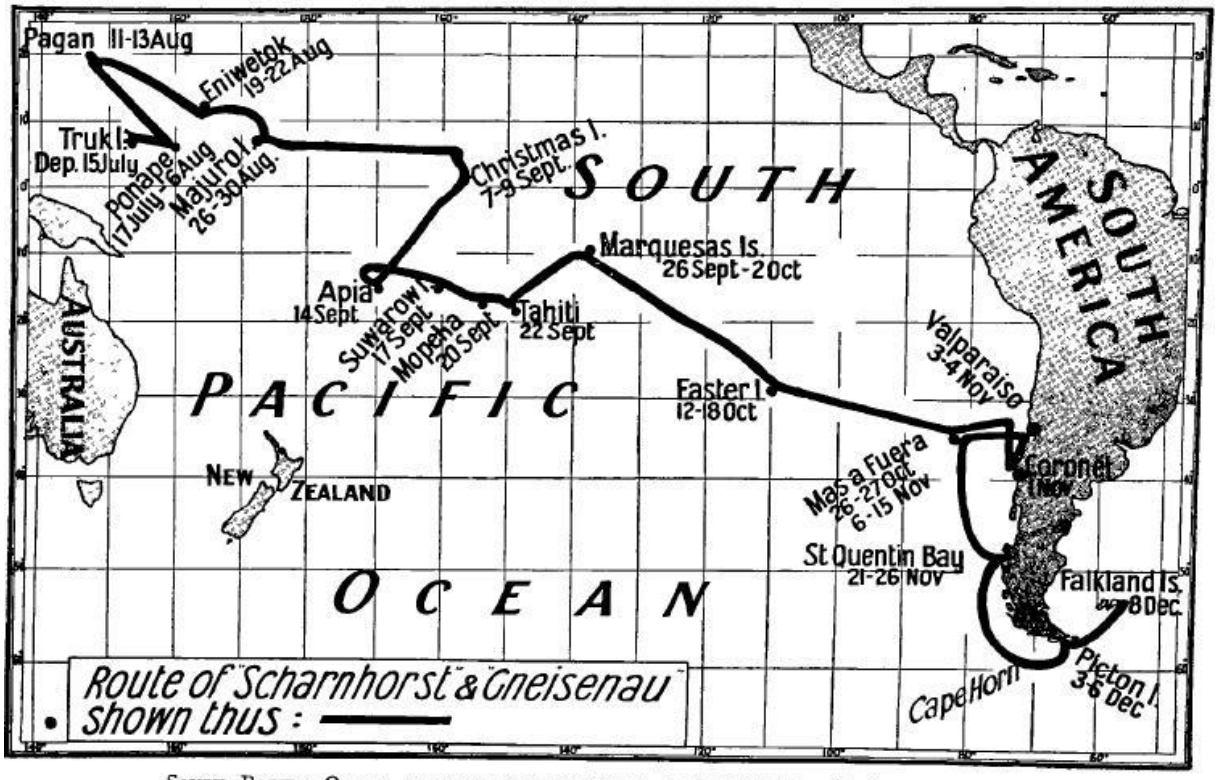
Meanwhile, the Japanese Navy General Staff and the Naval Affairs Division at the navy ministry had identified the new war situation as an opportunity to acquire advance bases in the Pacific for a strategic advantage in a hypothesised future conflict with the United States.[28] The IJN had been keeping vessels ready for action since August with an intervention in Tsingtao in mind and now formed a Japanese South Seas Squadron, consisting of one battleship, two cruisers, two destroyers and three transports, that sailed out of Yokosuka on 14 September. Aware of the sensitivity of any Japanese action in the Pacific away from China, both the Japanese foreign and navy ministries were urging caution against any island landings in order to keep Kato's promise from August about no 'territorial aggrandisement' for the first few weeks of the operations, which were ostensibly meant to drive the German East Asia Squadron away and secure the sea lanes.[29]

With the progression of September, Spee and his ships, having 'vanished into a fog' since early August according to Jose, reappeared.[30] The Squadron had spent August regrouping and recoaling between Pagan Island in the Marianas and Eniwetok and Majuro Islands in the Marshalls, before assuming a decidedly eastward direction of travel at the end of the month.[31] The light cruiser *Nürnberg* was temporarily detached at Christmas Island (present-day Kiritimati) and sent to Honolulu on 1 September to recoal and collect and pass on information if possible, before sailing on to Fanning Island, a vital part of the British All Red Line cable and landing point of its submarine portion from British Columbia to Australia, which its crew cut on 7 September.[32] The

[28] Peattie, *Nan'yo,* 42.
[29] Gaimusho [Japanese Foreign Ministry] (eds), *Nihon gaiko bunsho* [Documents on Japanese foreign policy], vol. 3, Taisho sannen [1914] (Tokyo, 1966), 665-6, cited in Peattie, *Nan'yo,* 41. Prior to the start of Japanese operations deep into the Pacific Ocean, ships had been sent to lay siege to Tsingtao on 27 August. Tsingtao was surrendered by the Germans on 7 November.
[30] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy,* 18. Conversely, the entire German Pacific had also disappeared into a fog as far as Berlin's authorities were concerned; they admitted on 1 September that they had 'no news about our South Seas colonies'. BA Berlin, R1001/2621, RKA to Norddeutscher Lloyd, letter, 1 Sept. 1914. On 19 September, the German naval authorities informed the Kaiser that they had 'reliable information' from Shanghai that Spee was now *en route* to America, indicating that they had no direct communication with him. PA AA, R22396, v. Pohl, Chef Admiralstab der Marine, to Kaiser, letter, 19 Sept. 1914.
[31] This accorded with Patey's hypothesis that the German squadron would end up proceeding eastwards or south-eastwards to the American coast after scraping up as much coal as possible and perhaps calling at Samoa on the way. See Jose, *Royal Australian Navy,* 22.
[32] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.411, Honolulu to Admiralty, cable, 1 Sept. 1914; Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader,* 127-9. Raeder, writing after the war, lamented that *Nürnberg* was only given 700 tons of coal at

Scharnhorst and *Gneisenau* then appeared off German Samoa on 14 September and off Tahiti on 22 September. The British Admiralty shared this vital information with the Japanese and was henceforth certain that Spee was heading for the American coast and therefore away from Australasian and Far Eastern waters.[33] In the process, the Squadron bombarded Papeete after realising that the French had set alight their coal stock. Large portions of the town were destroyed by hundreds of shells and by the subsequent blaze. This strategically ineffectual attack not only significantly depleted the Squadron's ammunition but it crucially revealed Spee's sailing intentions.[34]

Map: Movements of the East Asia Squadron between 15 July and 8 December 1914



South Pacific Ocean, showing the movements of Admiral von Spee's squadron from the 15th of July to the 8th of December, 1914

Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 30.

Honolulu, much less than expected, and accused the Americans of a 'malevolent neutrality' (*übelwollende Neutralität*). On the All Red Line, see also ch.1, fn 10.

[33] Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader*, 136-7. Spee's move at Samoa had been a diversion to confuse the enemy, which it did, but the distance then travelled to the east convinced London that there would likely be no return.

[34] This story later entered French colonial myth. Philippe Bachimon, *Tahiti entre mythes et réalités : essai d'histoire géographique* (Paris, 1990), 222-3. More recently, a comic book series was based on the events. See Didier Quella-Guyot and Sebastien Morice, *Papeete, 1914*, 2 vols (Paris, 2011, 2012).

The news about Fanning Island and German Samoa was received with alarm in Melbourne and Wellington, as both governments were now about to send their troops to Europe. The New Zealand government asked London for 'satisfactory assurance which would restore confidence' when it first heard about the Fanning Island attack, whereas Munro Ferguson warned from Australia about the 'disturbing … failure of Admiral China Station with cooperation of other flags to cope with German cruiser squadron which would become grave menace to the 41 Australian and New Zealand transports'.[35] Fear and anger were at play. Massey's government was particularly worried about the risk of transports being caught out while sailing across the Tasman Sea to Australia with no or inadequate escorts.[36] After New Zealand's administrator in Samoa, Colonel Robert Logan, had informed Wellington about Spee's appearance, some in government threatened to resign if no adequate means of protection were provided.[37] The British Admiralty was asked to assess the situation and claimed, correctly, that it was 'incredible' that the German squadron should sail towards Australia and New Zealand and that 'in these circumstances route is regarded by Admiralty as perfectly safe and we advise [to] proceed'.[38] It was even added that there was 'no need for escort of any kind if they keep well off the track and steam without lights at night'. While the Admiralty's naval analysis was sound, its position, focused on operational targets rather than on the fine print of intra-imperial relations, showed a lack of awareness of the political sensitivity of the subject.[39]

Anxiety about the troop transports increased further when the British discovered in mid-September that SMS *Emden*, a detached German cruiser thought to be in the Pacific with Spee, was causing havoc in the Indian Ocean.[40] When news then arrived

[35] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/2, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 8 Sept. 1914; TNA, CO 616/4, fol.199, GGAus to SSCols, cable, personal and secret, 17 Sept. 1914.
[36] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/3, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 15 Sept. 1914.
[37] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/3, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 17 Sept. 1914.
[38] TNA, CO 616/4, fol.212, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 19 Sept. 1914.
[39] Another interesting aspect of British intra-imperial relations emerged when New Zealand was warned directly from Australia on 24 September, thus without going through Britain, that 'your transports run serious risk and that until you consult Admiralty their sailing should be delayed'. Incidentally, this message was sent by Munro Ferguson - without the knowledge of the Australian leadership. He thereby bypassed both Melbourne and London (he informed the Colonial Office afterwards), which exemplifies the inconsistency and incoherence of the communications and, accessorily, of the political system. ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/3, GGAus to GNZ, cable, personal and most secret, 24 Sept. 1914.
[40] *Emden* was finally sunk on 9 November off the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean, incidentally by a troop escort, the Australian cruiser *Sydney*. See C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War*

about the German attack on Tahiti, the New Zealand government's 'faith in Admiralty assurances' was 'very much shaken', and it refused to send troops without what it considered sufficient protection and even ordered some loaded ships back to Wellington for disembarkation.[41] The British government was forced to organise the detachment of two cruisers, the Japanese *Ibuki* and the British *Minotaur*, and had them sent to New Zealand in order to reassure the government and to accompany the troops safely across the Tasman. When this met with logistical difficulties, and the Admiralty tried to convince the New Zealanders again to sail without an escort, arguing that 'no guarantee can be given of absolute safety in war', Massey himself threatened to resign.[42] London gave in, but the damage was done. The military ramifications of the crisis were also significant: the joint Australian-New Zealand convoy was supposed to sail as one and New Zealand's insistence had the entire operation delayed by a month.[43]

The situation might have been an inconvience to Whitehall, but it was hardly a surprise. In fact, Admiral George Patey, commanding the Australian Squadron, had realised and informed the Admiralty on 1 September that, owing to a lack of ships, a 'convoy of troops to Aden cannot be done simultaneously with occupation of Anguar [*sic*], Yap and Nauru'.[44] This statement did not even mention the naval assets concurrently needed for the control and defence of Australasian waters and the surrounding trade routes and for pushing the Germans out of the Pacific Ocean. The prioritisation of one task necessarily resulted in delays elsewhere, and the prioritisation of troop transports and more specifically the assurance of a safe passage for the New Zealanders was no exception. Raeder wrote about these events that the British Admiralty had been unable to pursue its strategy of removing the German ships

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of 1914-1918. vol. I. *The Story of Anzac: The First Phase: From the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915* (Sydney, 1941, 11th ed.), ch.VI.

[41] TNA, CO 616/5, fol.306, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 1 Oct. 1914; ADM 137/2, fol.30c, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 4 Oct. 1914.

[42] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/3, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 2 Oct. 1914; SSCols to GNZ, cable, 3 Oct. 1914; GNZ to SSCols, cable, 4 Oct. 1914.

[43] TNA, ADM 137/2, fol.29c, SSCols to GGAus and GNZ, cable, 3 Oct. 1914. The convoys eventually left Wellington on 16 October, well protected, and the combined New Zealand and Australian convoy left Albany in Western Australia on 1 November 1914.

[44] TNA, ADM 137/1, fol.103, Patey to Admiralty, cable, 1 Sept. 1914.

from the Pacific when it was faced with local demands from Australia and New Zealand, and it is likely that British navalists would have phrased it in similar terms.[45]

British naval overstretch was soon translated into a new operational scenario. In reaction to the ongoing failure to track and destroy Spee's ships, Patey, from near Rabaul with *Australia*, sought a more systematic approach and cabled the Admiralty on 29 September enquiring about the possibility of a partition of the search zones into a northern Japanese one and a southern Australian one.[46] Simultanously, the Japanese naval command was envisaging 'the gradual lessening of the German sphere of activities [in the Pacific]'.[47] A message was thus sent to the naval attaché in London, positing that 'it would seem advisable to fix the areas over which the Allied Squadrons should patrol, and be able to co-operate in ascertaining the whereabouts of the enemy's ships'.[48] What this meant emerged from one of Greene's messages to the Foreign Office, formulated as a Japanese proposal 'for rounding German Squadron'. It contained precise geographical demarcations:

> (1) British China Squad. Cooperate W. of 140˚ E.
>
> (2) Australian and 1st Southern Squads. Cooperate E. of 140˚ E.
>
> (3) French reinforced by British or Jap. operate E. of 160 W. among Society, Marquesas and Low Islands.[49]

The British Admiralty wrote in reaction to the above that they 'entirely agree with the wish of the Japanese Naval Staff that the operations of all the squadrons available for bringing the Scharnhorst & Gneisenau to battle should be concerted'.[50] It was noted that three squadrons -- two Japanese, and one British and Australian -- were suitable for the task and that the relevant area was thus to be divided into three zones. London suggested the following boundaries:

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[45] Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader*, 172.
[46] TNA, ADM 137/7, fol.702, Patey to Admiralty, cable, 29 Sept. 1914.
[47] TNA, ADM 137/16, fol.197, Chief of Imperial Japanese Naval General Staff to Naval Attaché, London, translation from 7 October of cable, 6 Oct. 1914.
[48] Ibid.
[49] TNA, ADM 137/16, fol.119, History Section Precis, 9 Oct. 1914, containing 'Telegram from Sir C. Greene [to FO], Tokyo', 7 Oct. 1914.
[50] TNA, ADM 137/16, fols 108-10, Admiralty note, undated [probably 7 or 8 Oct. 1914]. It it thus not clear whether the British Admiralty was aware of the demarcations suggested by the Japanese in Greene's cable or whether the Admiralty's (counter-)proposal was made as a reaction to the first, more general Japanese proposal 'to fix the [patrol] areas'.

(1) The Japanese 2nd Squadron to cruise North of the 20 parallel of South Lattitude + W[est] of the meridian of 140˚ East Longitude.

(2) The Japanese 1st Squadron to cruise wherever desirable in the area North of the Equator + East of the meridian of 140˚ E[ast] Longitude.

(3) The Australian Squadron should cruise + search South of the Equator + West of the meridian 140˚ W[est] Longitude to include the French islands.[51]

This British formula turned out to be the one adapted and was communicated to Australia and New Zealand on 9 October. Its effect was the establishment of an operational line in the Pacific between the British and Japanese navies marked by the Equator, thus creating a North-South divide rather than an East-West one, as was suggested by the Japanese, which would have had forces from all navies operate on both sides of the Equator. It can only be surmised that this was done to prevent Japanese ships from operating in New Guinean and Australian waters in large numbers for reasons of expected Australian and New Zealand political susceptibilities, although no such consultation took place and the British Admiralty had so far not shown a great regard for political concerns in the Australasian Dominions. In any case, the Central and the Western Pacific had been divided between Japanese and Anglo-Australian naval forces.[52]

The IJN had by now started to fan out into the Pacific. The initial Japanese South Sea Squadron was tasked with searching the Caroline and Marshall Islands for the German Squadron and with securing the German wireless station on Jaluit, the main base in the German Marshall Islands.[53] It was supplemented by a second force, as laid out above, joining the effort on 1 October.[54]

Jaluit was occupied by the Japanese on 29 September, followed by Yap on 7 October and by Truk in the Western Carolines on 12 October.[55] By 14 October, the Japanese

[51] Ibid. Three more Allied squadrons in the Pacific were identified: one off the North American West Coast, the British South American Squadron, and one consisting of *Ibuki* and *Minotaur*. The former two were to 'wait on the chance of these two enemy cruisers [*Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*] arriving in their areas', whereas the latter had the specific task of sailing to Wellington for New Zealand convoy duty.
[52] Note that the Japapese search area north of the Equator had no Eastern limit, stretching across the entire ocean to the American West Coast, and the Japanese indeed turned out to patrol waters surrounding the Hawaiian Islands and even off the North American West Coast.
[53] Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader*, 162.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy,* 130; Raeder, *Das Kreuzergeschwader*, 168.

occupation of the main islands in German Micronesia was essentially complete.[56] A British request from September, asking the Japanese not to interfere with the planned Australian expedition to the north (and simultanously informing them about it), was thus ignored.[57]

The reason for the latter might be a contradicting agreement the British Admiralty had made with the Japanese navy. Greene wrote *en passant* from Tokyo after the Japanese occupation of Jaluit that the operation had been 'undertaken in pursuance of arrangement agreed upon by the two Admiralties'.[58] Whether this refers to the previous division of naval operational zones from which emerged the Japanese occupation of Jaluit, or whether London underwrote the occupation in advance is not clear from the above, but one way or another, it was, at least, tacitly accepted by the British government as a side-effect of Anglo-Japanese naval co-operation. The Japanese Admiralty, meanwhile, insisted that it 'was a necessary military operation which may have to be resorted to in other islands, and not a political occupation giving rise to any diplomatic controversies', thereby anticipating further similar action.[59] Rear-Admiral Akiyama Saneyuki, Director of the Military Affairs Bureau at the navy ministry, claimed that 'the condition of the enemy [had] changed and the area of warlike operations [had to be] extended'.[60] He also maintained that 'this action [referring to Jaluit]' had been taken 'at the request of the [British] Navy', thereby putting a slightly different spin to what Greene had written, but essentially confirming that the naval understanding between the two countries included sea movements as well as landings. Akiyama also provided a legal justification, possibly in view of an expected post-war territorial haggling, as well as an expression of national self-confidence, by stressing that 'a belligerent is at liberty to occupy any territory belonging to the enemy should it be necessary for the purpose of carrying out warlike operations and need not care what others think of it'. Rear-Admiral Suzuki Kantaro,

[56] Peattie, *Nan'yo,* 43-4.
[57] For the request, see TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.293, note by Langley, 12 Sept. 1914. Walter Langley was assistant undersecretary overseeing the Far Eastern Department at the Foreign Office.
[58] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.406, Greene to Grey, cable, 6 Oct. 1914.
[59] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.436, Greene to Grey, cable, 10 Oct. 1914.
[60] This statement was published in the *Hochi* newspaper on 9 October. NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 513-28, Steward, Secretary GGAus, to Secretary, PM's Dept, letter, 19 May 1915, with attached letter from Greene to GGAus, 10 March 1915, containing attached summary, secret and confidential, 'Japan and Australia: Extracts from Japanese Press, etc.', undated.

the Vice Minister of Marine, also justified the 'present action of our Navy against German possessions in the South Seas' (thus not differentiating between particular islands) and maintained this had been done 'in view of the action of the enemy's fleet in that region'.[61] Kato then informed the British that Yap had also been taken 'in compliance with a suggestion by the British Commander-in-Chief', after it was found by a landing party that the Germans had repaired the wireless station and then destroyed it again.[62] Importantly, Kato inquired 'whether Australians still proposed to take Yap'. In summary, this flurry of Japanese statements, sometimes contradictory, indicated Tokyo's growing confidence as the IJN invaded island after island, while maintaining its line of justification by agreement with Britain and military necessity.

The Japanese press expressed its satisfaction with the way events had been taking shape and some even discussed the value of some of the islands as naval bases in a possible future conflict with United States, an interesting reiteration of recent Japanese naval thinking.[63] The *Nichi Nichi*, a Tokyo daily, considered the government's previous stance of restricting Japanese action to China and the China Seas a 'great failure of Japanese foreign policy' and the taking of Jaluit was greeted as a 'delight' which rectified the tendency of unilateral obligation under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.[64] Another paper, *Jiji*, imagined future peace negotiations and declared that 'in the final settlement of the South Seas question … Japan had of course a preferential right to speak'.[65]

The Japanese sweep across Micronesia also had repercussions, not least of a practical nature, in Germany. With the communications network now entirely in tatters and all main islands and colonial centres occupied, Berlin was cut off from its Pacific empire

[61] Ibid. Equally, this statement appeared in *Hochi* on 9 October. This was a stretch, to say the least. Suzuki would have known that Spee was sailing east from Tahiti. The German Squadron was approaching Easter Island at the time of Suzuki's statement.
[62] TNA, FO 371/2017, fols 439-40, Greene to Grey, cable, 10 Oct. 1914.
[63] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.416, Greene to Grey, cable, 7 Oct. 1914.
[64] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0461, Steward, Secretary, PM's Dept Melbourne, to GGAus, letter, 19 May 1915, with attachment, Greene to GGAus, letter, 10 March 1915, and memo. 'Secret and Confidential. Japan and Australia: Extracts from Japanese Press, etc.', undated. See translated article from *Nichi Nichi*, 7 Oct. 1914.
[65] Ibid. See translated article from *Jiji* of 12 Oct. 1914.

and had to rely on information from neutral countries and the press.[66] The seizures in Micronesia were confirmed by the embassy in Washington, for instance, from where it was reported that the Japanese had officialy acknowledged their action.[67] The German official colonial buletins from late 1914 and early 1915 confirmed this state of affairs, relying on various sources except German ones.[68]

Confusion also reined in Whitehall, but of an entirely different nature. The relevant departments affected by and/or involved in Tokyo's doings in Micronesia (and its effects on British Empire relations) were the Admiralty, the Foreign Office, and the Colonial Office, who were at odds over the government's approach. First, in a remarkable display of deference and symbolic of a shifting war-induced dynamic, the Foreign Office asked the Admiralty 'what answer they wished delivered' regarding Japan's request about the planned Australian takeover of Yap.[69] John Anderson, an Admiralty clerk, wrote back on 11 October that 'it is no longer proposed that Australians proceed to Yap and that the Japanese Government may be asked for continued occupation of Yap by their forces'.[70] On the same day, he forwarded a copy

[66] The German consulate in Seattle, for instance, wrote on 25 September that mail, cable and trade with the German South Seas had been interrupted since the outbreak of war. The *Reichskolonialamt* (RKA), the German colonial office, acknowledged on 28 November that German Micronesia had been occupied, but that intelligence was scarce so far, and requested the German foreign office to ask the Americans for help with obtaining information from the Japanese. See PA AA, R21307, fols 14-16., RKA to AA, letter, 28 Nov. 1914; fols 17-18, AA to US embassy Rome, cable, 5 Dec 1914. The Japanese, however, were unwilling to help, other than to give reassurance that German Deutsche Südseephosphat-AG employees at Angaur were safe, whereas the Americans provided some scarce accounts about Germans being moved and deported across the Pacific, not least via the United States. See PA AA, R21307, fol.143, Note verbale from US embassy Berlin to AA, 14 Dec. 1914; fols 144-5, Gerard to USekAA Zimmermann, letter, 15 Dec. 1914. For the German request and Japanese reassurance regarding Angaur, see PA AA, R 21307, fols 92-3, RKA to AA, letter, 5 Dec. 1914, R 21310, fols 89-90, Bernstorff, Washington, to Bethmann Hollweg, letter, 15 Jan. 1915, with attachment, Bryan to Bernstorff, letter, 11 Jan. 1915.

[67] BA Freiburg, RM 5/2292, fol.205, Reichenau to AA, cable, 7 Oct. 1914, transmitting cable from Bernstorff in Washington, 6 Oct. 1914; fol.207, Rantzau, Copenhagen, to AA, cable, for Admiralstab, 8 Oct. 1914.

[68] Reichs-Kolonial-Amt, *Der Krieg in den Deutschen Schutzgebieten*, 1.-4. Mitteilung (Berlin, 1915), therein: Zweite Mitteilung, subtitle V. Besitzungen in der Südsee. See also BA Berlin, R1001/2621, fol. 14, RKA to Norddeutscher Lloyd, letter, 1 Sept. 1914, claiming: 'dass über die Südsee-Schutzgebiete bis heute noch keine Nachrichten vorliegen'.

[69] TNA, FO 371/2017, fols 439-40, Greene to Grey, cable, 10 Oct. 1914.

[70] TNA, CO 616/10, fols 304-5, Anderson, Admiralty, to USSCols, letter, 11 Oct. 1914, with attached letter Anderson, Admiralty, to USSFO, 11 Oct. 1914. Note that the goings-on at the British Admiralty were not consistently 'pro'-Japanese, as this correspondence and Churchill's statements might suggest. Henry Jackson, a senior naval figure and adviser on overseas campaigns, warned of 'the attitude of the Japanese effectively occupying Yap', without knowing that it was happening on the same day he made this statement. His recommendation 'that the Naval Board, Melbourne, should be informed of the

of the same message to the Colonial Office and informed them that 'the despatch of an Australian force to Yap is no longer necessary in view of the arrangements that have been made with the Japanese Government for the continued occupation of Yap on behalf of the Allied Forces'.[71] This made it seem like a *fait accompli*, by which the Admiralty assumed that the Foreign Office would make the relevant 'arrangements', whereas in reality they were not in place. It is also curious that one of the Admiralty clerks rather than, at least, one of the secretaries, would have been tasked with undertaking the relevant correspondence between the interested political departments in London.

Anderson's assessment was premature, however. Remarkably, Grey had been kept out of the above loop by his own department and, upon hearing 'that the Admiralty are writing to the F.O. to say that no Australian force will be sent to Yap [and] to ask us to ask the Japanese to arrange for the continued occupation of Yap', he replied that 'no action should be taken by the F.O. in this matter without discussion with the C.O.'[72] In his mind, 'the C.O. want[ed] to arrange that the Australians should take over Yap as soon as possible'.

Grey was correct in this assumption, and after consulting with Harcourt, who had not changed his mind at all, he wrote to Greene that 'we recognise the strategical necessity and the service rendered by the Japanese in landing at Yap' but that 'it is still the intention of the Australians to occupy Yap, and we will communicate to you as soon as possible the date on which they are likely to be able to do so'.[73] One day later, the Colonial Office explained to the Admiralty that Yap was to be taken over by the Australians 'for political reasons'.[74]

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importance of occupying this island' was thus not followed. This suggests that Anderson's intervention can also be seen as the Admiralty reacting to a new reality rather than it being the driving force, although the latter interpretation is equally, if not more, justified by the evidence. See entry marked '7-8 Oct 1914' in TNA, WO 95/5452, Print entitled 'Operations against the German Possessions in New Guinea [etc]'.

[71] Ibid.

[72] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.451, Grey to Nicholson, letter, 12 Oct. 1914.

[73] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.447, Grey to Greene, cable, 12 Oct. 1914. See also fol. 446, which contains a letter from 12 October from Eyre A. Crowe, FO, to the CO, forwarding Grey's letter to Greene and revealing that it was sent 'after consultation with Mr. Harcourt'.

[74] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.465, Baynes, CO, to FO, letter, 13 Oct. 1914, with attachments CO to Admiralty, letter, 13 Oct. 1914, and SSCols to GGAus, cable, undated.

Some in the Foreign Office were not entirely convinced of the wisdom of this course of action. Dyke Acland revealed in a handwritten note that he actually agreed with the Admiralty's suggestion to abort the Australian expedition to Yap, but also provided the reasons why the opposite position was now maintained:

> I imagine that American and Australian feeling is so strong that it was considered desirable to get the Japanese to move out as soon as possible from these islands - but I am inclined to the Admiralty view that they should be asked to remain in occupation for the present. Having now decided against that course we had better keep to it and merely say that the ultimate disposal of these islands will of course form part of the settlement after the war.
>
> The S. of S. will no doubt take an opportunity of explaining the reasons for the decision arrived at to the Japanese Ambassador in case there is any strong public feeling in Japan about it.[75]

Support for Dyke Acland's and the Admiralty's view had been formulated by Greene in Tokyo and sent to London. In a similar vein to the former's note, Greene asked whether it would 'be possible without exciting Australian and American sentiment for us to refrain from asking Japan to hand over such islands as she may occupy for a strategic reason to Great Britain at the present juncture'.[76] His argument consisted of two main points. The first one, as if taken from the Admiralty playbook, posited that 'we may still have need of further assistance from Japan and it seems to me therefore that course suggested [by the Admiralty] would be both graceful and politic'. The other point was based on his understanding of domestic affairs in Japan. Greene claimed that the Japanese government was being 'accused of acting under British dictation and of having restricted Japan's operations in deference to our wishes' and that 'public opinion here is beginning to wonder what Japan is going to get in return'. He was convinced that allowing the Japanese to stay in the islands 'would be the best vindication of their [the Japanese government's] policy'.

Greene's message arrived in the middle of the triangular communication between the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, but after the relevant decision had been made, and Grey thus responded to Greene: 'I cannot reverse it now'.[77]

[75] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.455, note by Dyke Acland, 13 Oct. 1914.
[76] TNA, FO 371/2017, fols 459-60, Greene to Grey, cable, 12 Oct. 1914.
[77] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.458, Grey to Greene, cable, 13 Oct. 1914.

Carrying out London's instructions, Greene wrote that 'it is understood that Japanese will occupy island until Australians arrive'.[78]

The episode described in some detail above is relevant for two reasons. First, it confirmed and consolidated the confusion about territorial scope, more precisely about whether specific islands such as Yap or Jaluit were being discussed or German Micronesia as a whole. Greene had written about 'such islands' and Dyke Acland about 'these islands', suggesting they were making reference to the whole of German Micronesia, whereas the main thread of the communication between the political departments involved referred to Yap alone and its takeover by an Australian force at this stage. The second is the revelation that London was mindful of Australian and American perceptions of Japan, but that these assessments and the resulting suggested course of action varied greatly between the departments.

Harcourt now tried to press the Australian government into speedy action, telling Munro Ferguson that 'it is desirable to relieve Japanese as quickly as possible of the task of holding the island [Yap]'.[79] The message was also passed on to Patey, now in Fijian waters on *Australia* and still hunting down *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*.[80] Fixated on this task, Patey posited that he could not spare any of his ships and the Australian Navy Office duly informed the Admiralty in London of this stance, while it 'fully appreciate[d] pressing importance of occupation of Yap by British Force'.[81] The Australians, meanwhile, reiterated that 'these Islands [were] all included in surrender by Governor Simpsonhafen [Haber]', thereby suggesting that since the matter had been legally resolved, haste was not a priority.[82] The same message provided details about the preparations for the Australian expedition into Micronesia, which further emphasised Melbourne's continuing confidence in the operation eventually materialising.

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[78] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.482, Greene to Grey, cable, 14 Oct. 1914.
[79] TNA, CO 616/10, fol.306, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 13 Oct. 1914.
[80] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, Navy Office Melbourne to VAC Suva, cable, 14 Oct. 1914.
[81] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, Navy Office Melbourne to Admiralty London, cable, 17 Oct. 1914.
[82] Ibid. See also for the intra-Australian communication on this between the Naval Board in Melbourne and the Australian administrator in Rabaul, William Holmes: entry for 16 Oct. 1914 in NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Report by Department of External Affairs entitled 'Information re German Possessions in the Pacific from Government Gazettes, Rabaul' and 'Information from Despatches from the Administrator, Rabaul', undated.

Furnished with Patey's fresh evidence, Churchill made another effort to push his agenda, encapsulated in a private letter to Harcourt. In it, he explained, not without a dig at Harcourt, his view of the naval and strategic situation as well as the possible opportunity that a benevolent stance *vis-à-vis* Japan might bring:

> We have no cruiser available for Yap at the present time and much inconvenience would be caused by existing arrangements. There appear to be no military reasons which require us to eject the Japanese at this juncture. I do not gather that the Australasian Governments are pressing us to act. On the contrary it would seem that you were pressing them. The Admiralty would strongly deprecate any action towards Japan that would appear suspicious or ungracious. We are deriving benefit from their powerful and generous aid. They have intimated that their occupation is purely military and devoid of political significance and there I trust we may leave the matter for the present.[83]

The letter indicates how Churchill considered the issue an inconvenience in light of his own war plans and how he wanted it closed along the lines of the current situation, at least with regard to Yap, a stance highlighted by his uncritical and simplistic acceptance that Japanese action was 'devoid of political significance'.[84] His idea was to withdraw all major British and Australasian vessels from the Pacific Ocean to Europe as quickly as possible after removing rogue German forces and leave the policing to the Japanese navy.[85] In the greater scheme of things, the British interest in appeasing Japan went beyond naval necessity. For instance, negotiations had been going on since August about the sending of Japanese ground troops to Europe and for the purchase of Japanese arms. London had assumed the role of a power-broker, negotiating on Britain's behalf and facilitating French and Russian overtures. The British Foreign Office was thus developing its own peculiar approach to keep all those balls in the air without neglecting (or at least not doing so openly) Australasian interests and without

[83] Churchill Archives, Chartwell Papers, CHAR 13/27B/75, Churchill to Harcourt, letter, 18 Oct. 1914.
[84] Robert O'Neill writes about Churchill: 'Japan and events in the Far East in the years 1905-14 played little part in his [Churchill's] thinking and virtually none in his contemporary speaking and writing. His interests were bound up in Europe … In the Pacific he could be generous at the expense of others.' This reflects both an Australian point of view and Churchill's lack of appreciation of the Far East and Pacific theatres. O'Neill's criticism that Churchill was prepared in 1914 for 'Japan [to] be free to take as many of the German territories in the Pacific as it could' is not borne out by the record, however. Robert O'Neill, 'Churchill, Japan, and British Security in the Pacific 1904-1942', in Robert Blake and William Roger Louis, *Churchill* (Oxford, 1993), 276-77.
[85] Churchill also imagined bringing Japanese ships into the Mediterranean and even the Baltic Sea to support the Allied war effort. For his suggestion to bring the Japanese into the Mediterranean, see Churchill Archives, Chartwell Papers, CHAR 13/29/125, Churchill to Grey, letter, 29 Aug. 1914. On his insinuation to the Japanese about the Baltic Sea, see CHAR 13/27A/41, Churchill to Japanese Navy Minister Yashiro Rokuro, cable [Hand-written copy, copied to Grey], 2 Nov. 1914.

offending the Americans.[86] Churchill's formulation of 'deriving benefit from their powerful and generous aid' can thus also be interpreted in this wider context.

The First Lord also mentioned 'existing arrangements' in his letter. This referred to London's request to Australia and New Zealand from August to seize the entire German Pacific. His new stance contradicted this, which he accepted to avoid 'much inconvenience'. Politically, Melbourne and Wellington had essentially been kept out of the loop of the decision-making in London. At least, they were not privy to sufficient detail to have an informed position, and Harcourt's urging was therefore probably not properly understood in Australia. Finally, it is worth qualifying the territorial scope of Churchill's letter. On the one hand, he limited his intervention to Yap and the planned Australian take-over, which, narrowly speaking, is all this particular episode and the surrounding diplomacy was concerned with. However, he also expressed the view that 'any action towards Japan that would appear suspicious or ungracious' should be avoided. While he did not openly request the acceptance of the Japanese seizure of the rest of German Micronesia at this stage, it would soon become clear that this was what he had in mind.[87]

Meanwhile, the misgivings in Melbourne about London continued and Munro Ferguson reported in mid-November of the 'opinion here … that H.M.A. Fleet and the China Squadron … has been singularly ineffective'.[88] This was now a general Australian critique of the British management of naval operations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans with which the Australians were dissatisfied, not least because it had caused the present delay, and would continue to do so.[89] It also led to the Australian military

[86] For how Britain facilitated the sale of 50,000 Japanese rifles to France, see TNA, FO 371/2019, fol.142, Greene to Grey, cable, 28 Aug 1914. For the Russian initiative to bring Japanese troops to Europe, seconded by the French government, see fol.236, Buchanan, St. Petersburg, to Grey, cable, 31 Aug. 1914, and fol.240, Bertie, Paris, to Grey, cable, 2 Sept. 1914. This effort, once more brokered by the British Foreign Office, ultimately came to nought. See Grey to Buchanan and Bertie, cable, 17 Nov. 1914.
[87] As a matter of fact, the British Admiralty was at this stage going along with the Australian invasion plan. See NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, Admiralty to Navy Office Melbourne, cable, 21 Oct. 1914, which suggested that *Pioneer* be detached from the troop convoy at Cocos Island to join the Australian expedition for 'operations proposed [to the north of the Equator]'.
[88] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/1617-22, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 15 Nov. 1914.
[89] The Australian critique was also aimed at the delay in sending the troop transports on their way, caused by New Zealand's refusal to allow its troops to sail across the Tasman without sufficient escort.

leadership reaching out to the New Zealanders directly, without necessarily channeling their views through London.[90]

How much this was justified ultimately depends on the observer's perspective and political, strategic and operational priorities. One element can be singled out, however, procrastination in Melbourne. The Australians themselves realised on 24 October that no reply from the Australian government had so far been sent to Harcourt's pressing cable from 13 October, and the urgency of the matter from an Australian point of view was seemingly only fully grasped by the politicians at the end of the month, when it was insisted upon by the Australian military leadership, both naval and non-naval.[91] It was thus stressed that 'these Islands closely effect [sic] the whole question of the Naval Defence of Australia in the future' and that 'they are of great strategic importance'. James Legge, the Chief of the Australian General Staff, went about putting together a 'Tropical Force' of 200 men for what had now been termed the 'northern expedition'.[92] The Navy Office in Melbourne then informed the Department of External Affairs on 29 October that 'it is intended to despatch military forces from Sydney at an early date to occupy Yap, Pelew, Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands, and remain in possession pending decision as to the ultimate disposal of these possessions formerly held by Germany'.[93] Three days later, the Australian Naval Board gave its approval and requested to 'at once take steps to engage and fit out the vessel or vessels required'.[94] It was also decided to prioritise the expedition over the sweep across New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to accelerate things further.[95]

[90] This is epitomised by Creswell's letter to Allen from 26 October, mentioned above.
[91] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, First and Second Navy Member and Chief of General Staff to The Minister, letter, 26 Oct. 1914.
[92] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, Legge, Chief of General Staff, to Secretary, Navy Office, letter, 27 Oct. 1914. Munro Ferguson passed this information on to London, but still had no date for the northern expedition and thus wrote that 'particulars will be cabled later'. TNA, CO 616/7, fol. 149, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 27 Oct. 1914.
[93] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, memo. by Secretary, Navy Office, for Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 29 Oct. 1914.
[94] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, Percy Hazel for Naval Secretary to Captain-in-Charge Sydney, letter, 1 Nov. 1914.
[95] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, [Pearce] to Petheridge, message marked 'confidential' and 'cancelled', 14 Nov. 1914.

The Australian military authorities, in conjunction with their political arms, the Defence Department and the Navy Office, had now effectively taken over both the military, political and administrative side of the expedition and had undertaken all necessary steps for it to commence. This was confirmed some time later when the Australian Naval Secretary appointed a 'Commissioner [for] the Pacific Islands lately German north of the equator' and thereby divided the administration into two zones, a northern one and a southern one based at Rabaul.[96] Intelligence and geostrategy were also taken into consideration and orders were given for the expedition 'to obtain information which will be of use in considering the future defence of Australasia, from attack, particularly from the Northward'.[97] It was furthermore established, in astounding detail, that 'as an outer line of defence and for giving information of movements of enemy, it is proposed to establish the following system of W/T Stations [geographically located in text]: Yap H.P.; Jaluit H.P.; Fanning; Woodlark I. H.P.; Townsville; Fiji; Samoa. With this system triangulation should be possible (for placing ship's positions)'.[98]

While an Australian war-time strategy for the Pacific was thus gradually gestating and starting to find an expression, Melbourne's considerations were being sidelined in London as Admiralty influence grew. If that was a problem for Melbourne, so was the fact that in Japan 'Australia was hardly recognised as having a geographical claim [in German Micronesia] to consideration', as Greene wrote in a later report.[99] Japan's concern, he advised London, 'lay chiefly with American susceptibility'.

The Americans, too, had their concerns regarding a Japanese presence in the islands between the Philippines and Hawaii, but they only voiced them cautiously. When Washington learned that Jaluit had been occupied by a Japanese force in early October, its diplomats in Tokyo were tasked with clarifying the matter and were told

[96] This was a military appointment, conferred onto Colonel Samuel Petheridge. His political role as the Secretary of the Australian Department of Defence highlights the hybridity of the military and civilian leadership. See NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, [Naval Secretary] to Holmes, Rabaul, cable marked 'cancelled', 24 Nov. 1914.
[97] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, 'Special Orders for Lieutenant-Commander Jackson and Lieutenant Commander Hardy' and 'Orders for Lieutenant-Commander Hardy', undated [Nov 1914].
[98] Ibid.
[99] TNA, CO 418/141, fols 169-74, Langley, FO, to USS, CO, letter, 27 April, 1915, with attachment, Greene to Grey, letter 15 March 1915.

by the private secretary to the Japanese Minister of Marine 'that he thought it likely that [a] small force had been left on the island but that if there was any occupation it was temporary and for military purposes only'.[100] This was an interesting formulation, disguising an admission in a hypothetical. The Japanese embassy in Washington reassured the Americans that 'it may be safely concluded that the action taken by a portion of the Japanese expeditionary squadron … is nothing but a step toward the fulfillment of the expeditionary mission', although it remained unexplained what the latter was consisting of.[101]

After the Japanese occupation of Jaluit, the American naval intelligence complained that 'since that time all news of the Japanese campaign in the South Seas has been held secret by the Navy Department', but that they had reliable information about further planned captures of more islands.[102] A cable from Guthrie then reported on informal Japanese government statements to the press that it regarded the other captures on the same basis as that of Jaluit and that it had been all along acting with the foreknowledge of and in conjunction with Great Britain.[103] Clearly, he was not well informed, but it is remarkable that he did not push for further explanations and simply passed the Japanese narrative on to Washington. The State Department did not insist on further intervention either, and so the Americans remained relegated to the sidelines of what had been discussed and decided between Tokyo and London.

The Japanese press had also fuelled the paranoia regarding the United States since August. A writer in the *Kokumin*, for instance, maintained that the entire American fleet would soon come into the Pacific to realise 'certain ambitious designs in those waters' and 'by strength of arms dominate the different nations of the Pacific' in order to finally 'drive out and slaughter Japan at one blow and declare herself the dominant power in the Pacific'.[104] The *Jiji* warned its readers that 'the attitude of America must

[100] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 185-6, Guthrie to SS, cable, 6 Oct. 1914.
[101] NARA DC, RG 38, entry 98, box 453, C-10-a, no. 4494, 'Official Statement [on Jaluit] by the Japanese Embassy, Washington', 6 Oct. 1914, in monograph 'Japanese Declarations and Assurances Respecting Participation in the European War in the Pacific', published by Asiatic Institute, Nov. 1914.
[102] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, Cotten, Naval Attaché Tokyo, to SecNav (ONI), letter, 19 Oct. 1914.
[103] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 190-1, Guthrie to SS, cable, 20 Oct. 1914.
[104] NARA CP, RG 59, M423, roll 2, 711.94/203, SecNavy to SS, letter, 7 Nov. 1914, with attached ONI report, 4 Nov. 1914, including memo. by Naval Attaché Tokyo entitled 'Japanese Attitude re America', 2

... be closely watched' and that 'no one can tell, really, what position America may take'.[105] Some modest American naval movements in the Pacific in reaction to the outbreak of the war had actually taken place, but nothing suggested any form of serious naval mobilisation.[106] Perceptions in Japan, however, were that the Americans were trying to contain Japanese expansion and might have other ulterior motives, which of itself could justify preemptive Japanese activity in German Micronesia.

American naval intelligence made a sobering assessment of the new situation, claiming that the Japanese attitude to the United States 'has become very unfriendly', and not only in the press but also among Japanese officials 'of highest rank'.[107] Written only days after the Japanese occupation of Jaluit, the report observed that 'the Anglo-Japanese Alliance has been revitalized in a way very satisfactorily [sic] to Japan' with the result that Japan was 'freed from much restraint as regards her relations with America'. It concluded by issuing a serious warning that 'with … the relative freedom of action now possessed by Japan, it can not be said that the situation is free from a certain amount of real danger', that 'it is believed that Japan considers her relations with America to contain possibilities of serious trouble in the future, near or remote', and even that 'many Japanese believe that the United States and Japan are on the verge of war'. In a spiral of suspicion, more alarm was raised some weeks later when it was observed that 'since the occupation by Japanese naval forces of a large number of the German South Sea Islands, much activity has been shown in Japan in regard to these islands in other than a military way' and that the Japanese were sending missions to the islands investigating 'fisheries possibilities, trade opportunities, timber

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Oct. 1914, and translation of article from *Kokumin*, 8 Aug. 1914, 'American Fleet Coming. Atlantic Fleet Spreading Slaughter over the Pacific.' and of article from *Jiji*, 7 Aug. 1914, 'Regarding the Attitude of America'.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Such as the sending of cruisers to Honolulu in August. NARA DC, RG 38, entry 98, box 451, C-10-a, No 4354, Report no. 72 from W, 'Japanese Attitude re America', 2 Oct. 1914. It was also suggested in the Japanese press that its new presence in the Pacific could counteract the threat for Japan emanating from the American presence in Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines. The relevant article phrased it as Japan currently having 'no defence against an attack from the south'. See entry for *Yorozu Choho* newspaper, 7 Oct. 1914, in NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, Guthrie to SS, cable, 8 Oct. 1914, with attached memo. entitled 'The Capture of Jaluit Island, Marshall Islands. Some extracts from comments in the Japanese press', undated.

[107] NARA DC, RG 38, entry 98, box 451, C-10-a, No 4354, report no. 72 from W, 'Japanese Attitude re America', 2 Oct. 1914.

resources etc., and … commercial purposes'.[108] These moves were interpreted as a Japanese '"feeler" to ascertain the attitude of America and possibly England as to the permanent presence of Japan in the South Seas'.[109]

Faced with a lack of official information from Tokyo, American diplomats expressed their unease to their British counterparts and hoped for reassurance through this channel. London was not in a mood for close co-operation, however, and even the Foreign Office took a dismissive stance. This is encapsulated in a note from Dyke Acland, who mocked American suspiciousness about Japan, writing:

> This is very ridiculous of the Americans. These islands have been the chief naval base, coaling station of the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau + Emden, and their seizure was an imperative military necessity.
> According to a Reuter in today's 'Times', the Navy Dept at Tokio have explained that the seizure was done for military purposes and not for permanent occupation.
> No action required - unless the Sec of State mentions the matter to Mr Page.[110]

Equally, the Japanese were not willing to engage in detailed official diplomacy regarding their sweep of Micronesia and maintained that a 'special conclusion of a new understanding with the British government was not called for on this account'.[111] It was also said that 'there is no need whatever to be concerned as to what America's views may be in regard to this affair; for it is not a matter in which anyone acquainted with the principles of International Law would interpose any objection'.[112] Assuming it occupied the strategic as well as the legal high ground, Tokyo was now developing the postulate that any concerns about Micronesia, be they American, Australian, or British, were to be dealt with after the war, but that Japan was now to be treated as a primary claimant.

As November approached, the naval situation in the Pacific Ocean had moved on in line with Allied expectations. Spee had taken his force into Chilean waters and engaged

[108] NARA DC, RG45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, message from W, entitled 'Japanese Activities in the South Sea Islands', 30 Oct. 1914.
[109] Ibid.
[110] TNA, FO 371/2017, fol.402, note by Dyke Acland, 7 Oct. 1914. There is no evidence that this issue was escalated by Page in London, or further mentioned to Spring-Rice in Washington.
[111] Statement by Suzuki, Japanese Vice Minister of Marine, on 9 Oct., NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 513-28, Steward, Secretary GGAus, to Secretary, PM's Dept, letter, 19 May 1915, with attached letter from Greene to GGAus, 10 March 1915, with attached summary, 'Japan and Australia: Extracts from Japanese Press, etc.'.
[112] Ibid.

a British squadron in the Battle of Coronel on 1 November. Unexpectedly, at least to London, it turned into a crushing defeat and did not end the German cruiser presence in the Pacific. At the same time, the Germans were almost out of ammunition by now and, being locked in from the north and from the west, had only one way to go, around Cape Horn.[113] The Australasian troop transports had left Albany in Western Australia on the same day and were being escorted across the Indian Ocean, which enabled Melbourne to tighten its focus on German Micronesia. On 17 November, it informed London that 'two hundred troops and about fifteen naval wireless details will leave Sydney, the 26th November … to relieve Japanese now occupying Yap and other islands north of Equator'.[114] Two days later, George Pearce, the Australian Defence Minister, announced the expedition in the London *Times* and declared that the Japanese government had offered to hand over the captured German island groups and that these would now be held by Australia until the end of the war, when their ultimate disposal would be decided.[115]

These moves triggered diplomatic and political reactions both in London and Tokyo. As it would turn out, Whitehall's uneasy decision from October to maintain the previous plan about the Australian northern expedition was far from the final word. Kato, apparently unaware of the *Times* article and the Australian interpretation of affairs at this stage, added a level of confusion when he informed Greene on 21 November that the Japanese Navy Department had requested the retention of Angaur in the Palaus, thereby singling out this particular island but without mentioning the rest.[116] On the same day, Munro Ferguson laid out the details of the Australian plan and informed the Colonial Office about the final preparations of the Australian expedition for 'Yap, Anguar [*sic*], Saipan, Ponape, Jaluit, Nauru, Rabaul, to occupy islands and land troops

[113] Correspondingly, HMAS *Australia* was ordered to sail to Magdalena Bay off Mexico, whereas Japanese vessels were concentrated in Fijian waters to block any such German move. ANZ, ACHK 16601 G46/1, CNB to NIO Wellington, cable, 18 Nov. 1914. The Squadron was destroyed in the Atlantic by a much more substantial British force at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 December 1914. The German Admiralty had accepted that Spee had nowhere else to go other than making a run home from South America and recommended this course of action to him. BA Freiburg, RM5/4004, fols 284-5, Behncke, Admiralstab, to Pohl, 2 Oct. 1914.

[114] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 part 1, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 17 Nov. 1914.

[115] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.341, handwritten note entitled 'Times Nov. 19, 1914', unsigned and undated.

[116] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol. 281, Greene to Grey, cable, 21 Nov. 1914. The British government subsequently agreed to the Japanese retention of Angaur on 23 November and informed the Australians about this decision. TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.282, Grey to Greene, cable, 23 Nov. 1914; fol. 287, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 23 Nov. 1914.

where necessary' and that it would arrive at Yap around 20 December.[117] From Melbourne's perspective, all was now in place to relieve the Japanese in German Micronesia.

The Japanese understanding, however, was quite different. Inoue was now aware of the article and of the imminence of the Australian expedition and approached Grey. Grey's handwritten note of this conversation reveals that, according to Inoue,

> the Japanese Govt. are occupying Marshall Islands, Mariana Islands, Carolines Islands + Pellew Islands, and that it is their intention to continue the occupation + that the announcement made by Mr Pearce must be under some misunderstanding + that Australian authorities must have confused the question with that of Yap which the Japanese are prepared to evacuate. … The Japanese Govt. think that nothing was proposed except what affects the Island of Yap.[118]

Grey was bewildered by this proposition, as he revealed to Greene a few days later. Inoue seemed to have understood that Grey had somehow committed to leaving all islands, other than Yap, in Japanese occupation for the duration of the war, whereas, to the contrary, Grey thought he had only guaranteed non-interference with the seizure of Angaur and that 'it was embarassing to find that a question was now raised about other islands'.[119]

A discussion between Grey, Harcourt and Churchill took place, and the British government was now faced with a number of options: allow the Australians to sail north to take Yap only; intervene with the Japanese and clarify any previous misunderstandings for a wider Australian takeover; or stop the expedition altogether.[120] Meanwhile, in view of the uncertainty over the question of which of the islands in German Micronesia were at the heart of the matter, London played for time with Melbourne while 'ascertain[ing] what has passed between the Japanese and

[117] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 Part 1, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 21 Nov. 1914.
[118] TNA, FO 371/2018, fols 336-7, handwritten note by Grey, 23 Nov. 1914.
[119] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.318, Grey to Greene, cable, 26 Nov. 1918. For how the Japanese had understood Grey's and Inoue's conversation in London, namely that Grey had suggested that all 'those [islands] which had been occupied by any of the Allied forces should remain in the hands of their present occupants until after the war', see fol.317, Greene to Grey, cable, 25 Nov. 1914.
[120] Dyke Acland suggests in a handwritten note that such a meeting took place. TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.286, note by Dyke Acland, 24 Nov. 1914. See also NLA, AJCP PRO 6333. FO 800/91, fol.481, Grey to Harcourt, letter, 23 Nov. 1914, which refers to a Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 November.

ourselves'.[121] Grey advised Harcourt that 'the Australians must hold their hand somehow till we have come to an understanding with the Japanese', but warned already that 'there are the materials for a tragic row'. [122] Harcourt then cabled Melbourne that 'we think it desirable that the expedition to occupy German Islands should not proceed to any islands north of equator for the present'.[123]

The Australian government, in reaction, defiantly emphasised its stance that Micronesia was 'included in surrender by Governor of New Guinea' and requested an 'early and definite information as to what is now desired'.[124] London now moved to opting for Inoue's comprehensive interpretation of maintaining the territorial status quo as it had emerged from the naval movements of the previous months, and Grey told Greene that the Australian expedition 'will not without further instructions go to Yap or other islands in Japanese occupation'.[125] One day later, and in anticipation of the final verdict, Grey asked Greene to tell Kato that 'all occupation by Australian or Japanese forces should be regarded as temporary pending a final settlement as regards German territory in terms of peace', not least 'owing to strong feeling in Australia', with the latter passage being for Greene's eyes only.[126]

Moving the goalposts even further, the Japanese now wanted to 'naturally insist on retaining permanently all the German islands lying north of equator', but Whitehall only agreed 'to proceed to the end of the war on the understanding ... that all occupation of German territory by Japanese or British forces will be without prejudice to final arrangements' after the war.[127] They also insisted on a legal technicality. Greene reported that the 'Japanese consul-general at Melbourne record[ed] a conversation with Australian marines, and said that impression derived was that when the Australian authorities received the surrender of German Governor-General at Rabaul they imagined that this included surrender of Governments under him such as Angaur, Jaluit, Truk, &c., whereas surrender of these places had been obtained by

[121] NLA AJCP PRO 6333. FO 800/91, fol.481, Grey to Harcourt, letter, 23 Nov. 1914.
[122] Ibid. and TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.286, note by Dyke Acland, 24 Nov. 1914.
[123] TNA, CO 616/8, fol.235, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 24 Nov. 1914.
[124] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 Part 1, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 25 Nov. 1914.
[125] TNA, CO 616/13, fol.226, Grey to Greene, cable, 26 Nov. 1914.
[126] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.345, Grey to Greene, cable, 27 Nov. 1914.
[127] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.396, Greene to Grey, cable, 1 Dec. 1914; fol.398, Grey to Greene, cable, 3 Dec. 1914.

Japanese naval forces'.[128] Although this point was not further explored for now, it is symbolic that the Japanese were resolute in this sphere as well.[129]

Some confusion remained over Yap for some days, which the Japanese continued to offer to return, while the British government had made up its mind about not occupying any islands north of the Equator.[130] The Anglo-Japanese haggling over the spoils in the Pacific had only started and would continue to engage the diplomats during the war and after. Most imminently, however, London owed Melbourne an answer about its expedition. After having kept the Australians in a state of operational limbo for over a week, London's final instructions came on 3 December:

> As Pelew, Marianne, Caroline, and Marshall Islands are at present in military occupation by Japanese, who are at our request engaged in policing waters of Northern Pacific, we consider it most convenient for strategic reasons to allow them to remain in occupation for the present, leaving the whole question of the future to be settled at the end of the war. If, therefore, Australian expedition would confine itself to occupation of German islands south of the equator, we should be glad.[131]

Melbourne gave in to London's demand without resistance, but many questions remained.[132] Some were concerned with the manner London had been communicating (or not) with Australia, while others were technical and touched on the future of Australian Pacific trade north of the Equator. More fundamentally, the future of the relationship between two polities located on opposite sides of the globe was in question, as uncertainty over common interest and mutual trust had been laid bare.

The official British history of the Great War sums up that 'three months after the war began, Far Eastern waters were permanently barred to the enemy' while 'the Japanese were free to take their place in the world-wide combination that had been designed in Whitehall'.[133] This was one way of formulating what amounted to a British emergency in the Pacific, when the Admiralty had proved itself unable to cope with multiple

[128] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.317, Greene to Grey, cable, 25 Nov. 1914.
[129] The legal argument that the entire German Pacific (except Samoa) had been surrendered to Australia and the British Empire by Haber in September would remain Australian policy and would re-emerge under Hughes in late 1918 with the 1919 peace conference approaching.
[130] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.396, Greene to Grey, cable, 1 Dec. 1914.
[131] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, fol.732, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 3 Dec. 1914.
[132] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, fol.733, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 5 Dec. 1914.
[133] Cited in Jonathan Fenby, *The Siege of Tsingtao: The only Battle of the First World War to be fought in East Asia: How it came about and why its aftermath is still relevant today* (London, 2015), 55.

irreconcilable operational demands. In fact, the design turned out to be Japanese as much as British, if not more, while the initial trigger was certainly British. While Britain assumed the role of 'policeman' for the Asia-Pacific, necessity dictated that this role could only be filled by Japan, more or less on London's behalf.[134] In any case, the matter had now been settled until after the (main) war, from which the conflict in the Pacific Ocean was an inconvenient distraction for the British. It was too early to predict what a post-war settlement for the Pacific might look like, with the exception that the Japanese would almost certainly have a significant say in a future deal. In that respect, the British idea 'to localize Japanese activities in order to keep down the bill which they might present at the close of the war', as reported by Chandler Parsons Anderson from the American State Department after a conversation with Grey, had not materialised.[135] In fact, it was contradicting the British Admiralty's desire to increase Japanese involvement.

The price of British home waters defence was paid in the cancellation of the Australian expedition to Micronesia, and although Australians and New Zealanders raised their concerns, they were coaxed into accepting the supposedly provisional situation pending a reckoning at the end of the war. The two Dominions were also at the end of the communications chain. Lacking their own diplomatic services, they were unable to make their voices heard in Tokyo or Washington and had to rely on London to represent their interests.[136] Nevertheless, they managed to expand their territorial ramparts into the South Pacific and extend their zones of influence.

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[134] A report released by the Overseas Attack Committee on 1 November, and thus before the final decision about the cancellation of the Australian northern expedition, described how, within its own workings, 'the naval element became predominant', which was 'natural and inevitable' because 'all the objectives which could have the desired effect upon the war were naval'. The important say of the British Admiralty in Pacific affairs in 1914 was thus a natural extension of British strategy, even though it brought significant political issues with it. TNA, CAB 38/28/51, Report on the Opening of the War, Committee of Imperial Defence, Historical Section, 1 Nov. 1914.

[135] Link, *PWW*, vol.32, 44-50, 'From the Diary of Chandler Parsons Anderson', 9 Jan. 1915.

[136] The one Australian representative in Japan, John Bligh Suttor, was a 'Commercial Commissioner for New South Wales in the Far East' and was based in Kobe. He was never intended to fill a diplomatic role, but did send newspaper clippings and other assessments to Sydney, which were also distributed to the federal government. Melbourne approached London in 1915 to fill the gap to an extent and was then sent information from the British embassy in Tokyo, mostly in the form of translated newspaper clippings. NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, header 'Australia - Japan and', entry for 26 Feb. 1915; TNA, CO 418/141, fol.81, Grey to Greene, cable, 5 March 1915. The first ministerial Australian diplomat, Richard Casey, assumed office in Washington in February 1940. The first New Zealand Minister to

Washington, meanwhile, was keeping busy in late 1914 maintaining the uneasy neutrality stance it had imposed upon itself, which also manifested itself in the Pacific. It was tested when the *Geier*, an obsolete small German cruiser, attempted to link up with Spee's Squadron and was forced to call at Honolulu for coal and repairs in October. When the Japanese caught wind of this, they placed two cruisers just outside the harbour in order to prevent *Geier's* departure. When one of them turned its searchlights on the anchored German ship and sent launches into port, the Americans protested locally and then through the State Department to the Japanese. Lansing even cautioned Chinda Sutemi, the Japanese ambassador in Washington, to 'avert … a situation which might assume a serious aspect'. The Germans also protested to the State Department about allowing the Japanese ships to remain at close distance. Finally, the Americans decided that *Geier* would have to depart or be interned, which turned out to be her fate after a three-week long standoff.[137]

The Americans wanted to prevent similar trouble in the future. Guam, for instance, was informed correspondingly, and when *Cormoran*, a detached German raider pursued by Japanese cruisers, entered Apra Harbor in December, her crew was asked to leave within 24 hours or intern the ship, which they did without trouble, although complications followed in 1915 after a German request to have the ship transferred to San Francisco and Japanese intervention against such a move.[138]

In the arena of big picture politics, however, the Americans lacked a sufficient incentive to become further involved in the Pacific despite the serious warnings issued by its naval intelligence.[139] The contradiction, as well as the American information gap,

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Washington, Walter Nash, assumed office in January 1942, while retaining his government position of Minister of Finance.

[137] For the flurry of correspondence this seemingly trivial affair caused, see NARA CP, RG59, M367, roll 147, 763.72111/527, SecNavy to SS, letter, 24 Oct. 1914, with attached cable Honolulu to SecNavy, 23 Oct. 1914; 763.72111/528, SecNavy to SS, letter, 26 Oct. 1914, with attached cable Honolulu to SecNavy, 24 Oct. 1914; 763.72111/711, Lansing to Chinda, letter, 27 Oct. 1914; 763.72111/552, von Bernstorff, Washington, to SS, letter, 29 Oct. 1914, with reply, 5 Nov. 1914; 763.72111/548, 557, 560 and 567c, Malburn, Treasury, to SS, letters, 28, 30 and 31 Oct. 1914, and Lansing to Treasury, letter, 30 Oct. 1914.

[138] See NARA CP, RG59, M367, roll 147, 763.72111/553, SecNav to SS, letter, 29 Oct. 1914, with attached cable from Acting SecNav, to NavStation Guam, 28 Oct. 1914, and cable from Maxwell, Guam, to SecNavy, 28 Oct. 1914. For further detail and events at Guam in December 1914 and after, see Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 167.

[139] Braisted claims that the United States was the only remaining great power after the outbreak of the war 'comparatively free to dispute with Japan in the Pacific', but this needs qualifying in light of the Americans' above-mentioned lack of intelligence, adherence to a neutrality policy, and lack of

is well encapsulated in a letter from Lyman A. Cotten, the American naval attaché in Tokyo, who wrote after the Japanese take-over of German Micronesia that on the one hand, 'it can not be gainsaid that in the future some of the results of this campaign may bring trouble to both America and England', but that on the other 'the fact that the British authorities seem satisfied with the assurances given by Japan (what ever these assurances are) would seem reassuring as to the ultimate intentions of Japan'.[140] This was all the Americans could rely on for now, and it was highlighted when Kato was interrogated by the Japanese Parliament in December 1914. Asked whether he had at any stage promised the United States any territorial limitations for Japanese action, he categorically stated 'that I have never given any guarantee to the American Government.'[141] In the absence of a formal understanding, this position was factually correct, but the Americans felt misled, as London had when Tokyo had decided to go to war in August.

Kato's justification was that 'operations [in the Pacific] had been much more excessive [*sic*] than had at first been intended' and that Japan had been 'obliged to enlarge these operations in the southern seas' by those circumstances.[142] It had certainly taken time for the Allies to chase Spee out of the Pacific, but in the process, the Japanese had exploited British naval weakness and overstretch in the Pacific and had now removed an inferior Germany from across the ocean. Quietly and quickly, 'military' occupations had been turned into permanent ones and had allowed Japan to significantly strengthen its own geostrategic position.

Despite the enormous setback they had experienced, the informed Germans were still optimistic about their future in the South Seas. Wilhelm Solf, the German colonial secretary, singled out New Guinea as particularly valuable because of its recently found resources of gold and platinum and looked forward to its return, but also expressed optimism that the future peace would bring Germany a 'not unsignificant

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determination to interfere with a dynamic that had almost entirely bypassed Washington. See Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, p.154.

[140] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, Cotten to SecNav (ONI), letter, 19 Oct. 1914.

[141] *FRUS 1914, War Supplement*, 207-9, Guthrie to SS, 18 Dec. 1914, with attached 'Extract from the Parliamentary Supplement to the "Official Gazette"', 10 Dec. 1914.

[142] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.482, Greene to Grey, cable, 16 Dec. 1914.

increase in colonial possessions' beyond the ones it had already had.[143] He acknowledged that the German resistance was futile, but observed in September, and thus while the German Pacific was being overrun by Australian and Japanese forces, that 'fortunately, the destiny of our colonies will not be decided in Africa or the South Seas, but on Europe's battlefields'.[144] This analysis was sound, as any potential leverage for the Germans on the colonial or any other peace question would be decided near to home. Solf expressed his 'conviction, solid as a rock' that Germany would prevail victoriously, 'even over our worst enemy, the English', but little did he know what lay ahead.[145]

[143] BA Koblenz, N1053-44, fols 132-4, *La Stampa*, no.12, 1915, interview given by Solf on 20 Dec. 1914; N1053-109, fol.20, Solf to Hahl, letter, 4 Dec. 1914.
[144] PA AA, R 21303, fol.117, Wolff's Telegraphisches Bureau, Meldung 26 Sept. 1914, containing Solf to Riedel, Deutsche Handels- und Plantagengesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln, letter, 25 Sept. 1914.
[145] Ibid.

Chapter 3
Adapting to the new situation: December 1914-February 1917

In December 1914, when both Australians and Japanese had finalised their sweeps across the German Pacific, the Equator had virtually come to demarcate not only the islands newly occupied by Japan, Australia and New Zealand, but all British island possessions from the Japanese ones in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean.[1] The British went about organising the withdrawal of all useful naval assets from the Pacific and their transfer to Europe, above all the *Australia*, thereby validating their pre-war strategy.[2] Meanwhile, London's Colonial Office took it upon itself to mend relations with the Australians over the cancellation of the 'northern expedition'.

Harcourt thus sent a letter to Munro Ferguson in Melbourne marked 'private, personal and very secret', choosing this peculiar channel instead of the official daily cable.[3] The letter's apologetic content merits a fuller appreciation not only with regard to past events, but also as an indication of developing political attitudes, as Harcourt found 'that I ought to give you personally [underlined in original text] some explanation of the change of our present attitude'.

He then went to explain that

> the original assurances given by the Japanese … were given at a time when we and they believed that their active participation in the war would be confined to the siege and capture of Kio Chao [*sic*]. But later on it was found necessary by us to ask them to extend their activities. Our fleets were so fully engaged in the North Sea, Atlantic, Mediterranean, and in convoy of troops across the Indian Ocean that we could not spare enough to deal with the Pacific. We had, therefore, to call in Japanese aid to assist in the convoy of the Australian forces

[1] After the seizure of Bougainville on 9 December, Holmes declared on 11 December: 'The whole of the late German possessions south of the equator may now … be considered to have been satisfactorily dealt with by my force.' TNA, WO 95/5452, doc.23: GGAus to SSCols, letter, 16 Feb. 1915, with attachment Holmes to Minister of Defence Melbourne, letter extract, 11 Dec. 1914. For the wider area, Greene concluded on 11 December 1914 that the destruction of the German East Asia Squadron 'marks the conclusion of the active operations … in the Pacific'. TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.456, Greene to Grey, cable, 11 Dec. 1914. The British Gilbert and Ellice Islands protectorate actually stretched into the northern hemisphere by a few degrees. They became a Crown colony on 12 January 1916.

[2] Having pursued Spee to South America and rounded Cape Horn, *Australia* reached Plymouth for British home waters duty on 28 January 1915 and became part of the Grand Fleet in February. Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 128, 262-3.

[3] Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Lewis Harcourt Papers, General correspondence, MS Harcourt 468, fols 249-50, Harcourt to Munro Ferguson, letter, 5 Dec. 1914.

> to Ceylon and to undertake (especially after our disaster on the coast of Chili)[4] the hunt for the Emden, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Dresden, &c. …
> It has even been in contemplation (and still is) that the Japanese fleet may be in the future employed in the European theatre of War.
> All this has changed the character of the Japanese participation and no doubt of their eventual claims to compensation. There is a considerable agitation in Japan against the present Govt., on the ground that they are giving much and getting nothing.

Reiterating some of the negotiated results with the Japanese about the future of the islands, he wrote:

> From information which reaches me I have very little doubt that it is the intention of the Japanese, at the end of the War, to claim for themselves all the German islands north of the Equator. Of course, we should absolutely refuse at this present time to make any admission of such a claim.
> Our attitude throughout has been that all these territorial questions must be settled in the terms of peace not before. But it would be impossible at this moment to risk a quarrel with our Ally, which would be the certain and immediate result of any attempt diplomatically to oust them now from those islands which they are occupying more or less at the invitation of the Admiralty.

While these deliberations were descriptive, Harcourt showed the true intention of his letter when he asked Munro Ferguson

> in the most gradual and diplomatic way to begin to prepare the mind of your Ministers for the possibility that at the end of the War Japan may be left in possession of the Northern Islands and we with everything South of the Equator.

Munro Ferguson was thus left to pick up the pieces of recent months and to prepare the ground for the proposed new political map of the Pacific with his government in Melbourne.

Meanwhile, the Australians had a few things to say and questions to ask. Creswell wrote a memorandum 'to place it on record that these islands are only in temporary occupation' and insisted 'that Australian claims in any final arrangement for their disposal may be fully taken into account'.[5] He reiterated that 'these islands were surrendered to the Australian Expeditionary Force on the capture of the seat of Government of the German Pacific Possessions and definitely and distinctly included in the surrender'. The Australians thus made it clear that they were not abandoning their

[4] Harcourt is alluding to the Battle of Coronel. See ch.2.
[5] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0455, memo. by Creswell, 30 Dec. 1914.

claim and were expecting to have a say in any future territorial arrangement regarding the Pacific Islands, and, more specifically, those now under Japanese occupation. Then, in February 1915, the Australian government asked London 'that they may be supplied, secretly, with a full statement of any arrangements or understanding that may have been made between Great Britain and Japan upon this subject'.[6] 'This subject' referred to the 'possible bearing upon future of Australia if Japanese permanently retain possession of all islands formerly German now occupied by them especially Marshalls', but the motive was the perceived obfuscation by London which led to the sudden cancellation of the Australian 'northern expedition' in late November.

The British *volte face* from guaranteeing the Japanese confinement to Chinese waters in August 1914 to the present request about accepting a Japanese presence only a few hundred miles from the Bismarck Archipelago was not fully understood in Melbourne, and uncertainty and surprise then turned into suspicion and translated into political action. Hence, the request was made to gather relevant intelligence ostensibly just for the record, but also to enable a concerted and confident gesture of national self-interest.[7]

London denied the suggestion categorically:

> Your Ministers can rest assured that we have no arrangement or understanding secret or otherwise with the Japanese Government about Islands in the Pacific except that the occupation of all territory conquered during the war by the Allies is to be without prejudice [for] final arrangements to be made in terms peace at the end of the war.[8]

Britain had indeed not entered an understanding with Japan regarding the Pacific at that stage, at least formally speaking, but it must have been recognised that things were not well, as Melbourne was sent (without asking for them) 'copies of all essential

[6] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, Shepherd, PM's Dept., to GGAus, letter, 18 Feb. 1915; Sec GGAus to Sec, PM's Dept., letter, 20 Feb. 1915.

[7] This was also showcased when Munro Ferguson sent a pamphlet entitled 'British Mismanagement in the Pacific' to London on behalf of the Australian government. It had been originally written in 1907 by James Burns, a noted Australian businessman and shipowner and founder of Burns Philp, Australia's main shipping and trading company in the South Pacific. In it, Burns had argued that the British could one day betray Australia for the sake of a colonial agreement in the Pacific with Germany and France. The pamphlet was also sent out to British MPs. See NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/1641-2, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 12 Jan. 1915; Hermann Hiery, *The Neglected War: The German South Pacific and the Influence of World War I* (Honolulu, 1995), 109.

[8] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, fol.998, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 23 Feb. 1915.

telegrams which have been passed between the British and Japanese Governments in relation to this matter' by Harcourt in order to demonstrate 'that there has been no other communication, either verbally or by despatch, dealing with, or committing us upon this matter'.[9] The Colonial Secretary emphasised that 'though the Japanese not unexpectedly hold strong views as to their own claims to some of these islands', Britain had 'resolutely refused to make the slightest admission of their claims'. This was both incorrect and expediently insincere, albeit defensible in the strictest technical way, as Harcourt was contradicting his own and London's expectation that the Japanese were in Micronesia to stay, both during the war and after.

Driven by recent events but reflecting a more general recognition of needing to work together more closely, the Australian and New Zealand governments made an effort to improve relations when Fisher visited New Zealand in December 1914 and January 1915. Previous statements, especially over Australian support of the Samoa expedition, had suggested mutual appreciation and gratitude, but did not advocate streamlining policy.[10] Munro Ferguson observed, sarcastically, that he was not certain he had seen a New Zealander since arriving in Australia.[11] On a more practical note, he added that 'there is little communication between New Zealand and Australia', and he also denounced the Australian decision-making during the New Guinean surrender, which he considered botched and unprofessional because of its 'giving [the] Germans all [the] surrender terms they desired'.[12] Despite, or because of, his negative attitude about Australia's record in New Guinea, Munro Ferguson thought that it 'cannot do harm' to discuss defence matters with New Zealand.

Fisher met Massey on 31 December and thought that the New Zealand Prime Minister was 'quite sincere in his desire for a very full cooperation with Australia in naval

[9] TNA, CO 418/132, fols 226-7, SSCols to GGAus, letter, 23 Feb. 1915.
[10] The Australian Defence Minister Millen, for instance, had invoked Australian 'disinterestedness [in the Samoa campaign] that will certainly be appreciated by that Dominion', whereas Liverpool had expressed his government's 'warm feelings' towards Melbourne over it. NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0307, clipping from *Argus*, 16 Sept. 1914 'With the Fleet'; Fisher to GGAus, letter, 30 Oct. 1914.
[11] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/638-40, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 24 Dec. 1914. Munro Ferguson had been appointed to become Governor-General of Australia in May 1914.
[12] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/641-4, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 28 Dec. 1914, in which he also criticised the extra-legal Australian flogging of German civilians in retribution for their attack on a British Methodist missionary.

matters'.[13] Joseph Ward, the Leader of the Opposition, by contrast, advocated a more cautious approach and maintained that it 'shall be on the lines of the existing position between ourselves and the Mother Country, i.e. I shall be satisfied if New Zealand undertakes to provide a Pacific Navy -- small or great acting in concert with Australia, and free to act in the same way with His Majesty's Imperial Navy'. He added that 'the people [in New Zealand] seem to be less in a hurry than the people of Australia'. What he seemed to convey was the message that an independent New Zealand did not want to risk ending up as a junior partner subordinated to Australian imperatives. It merits emphasising that the tools for co-operation were already in place through the political institutions in London and the Royal Navy and that both countries were strategically safely located, which, in turn, meant that there was no urgency for ever closer relations between them. Aware of this reality, Munro Ferguson suggested some time later that 'Pacific and other matters [were] undoubtedly best negotiated at [the] Colonial Office with both Prime Ministers in London'.[14]

Meanwhile, the Japanese had made their expectations very clear to London before the dust had even settled over the short Pacific war. In mid-December, Kato wrote that 'Japan will naturally claim to retain permanently all German islands lying north of the Equator' and that it will 'not be possible for the Japanese Government to abandon and hand over islands in question to another Power when the time comes for considering final terms of peace'.[15] Greene explained that Kato's intention was not to ask for 'any engagement, but only to say that he would rely on your [Grey's] good offices when the time came to support the Japanese claim'. For now, Greene added, Kato 'wishes to consider the matter settled … until the end of the war', which turned out to be a premature expectation.

The British reaction was ambiguous. Dyke Acland accepted that it was 'out of the question to argue the point with Baron Kato now' and that, ultimately, 'the Japanese

[13] NLA, Novar Papers, box 5, MS696/3856-8, Fisher to Munro Ferguson, letter, 10 Jan. 1915. For more detail on Fisher's trip to New Zealand, see Richard G. H. Kay, 'In Pursuit of Victory: British-New Zealand Relations During the First World War' (PhD thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin, 2001), 126-7.
[14] NLA, Novar Papers, box 4, MS696/2421, Munro Ferguson to Sec, PMAus, cable, 25 Nov. 1915. Prime ministerial cooperation in London between Australia and New Zealand would have to wait until the Imperial War Cabinet meetings in June 1918, near the end of the war.
[15] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.482, Greene to Grey, cable, 16 Dec. 1914.

must have compensation somewhere in the Pacific'.[16] However, he also remarked that, in their 'wide field of work' in the Pacific, the Japanese 'had no losses at sea -- nor did they capture any German ships' and that, originally, the 'avowed intention' of the Japanese had been to 'protect ... "her large traffic passing through the Pacific to Honolulu and San Francisco"' as a defensive measure and not to occupy. Japan's claim would be 'a most distinct prejudice to final [peace] arrangements' and he anticipated that 'there may be grave objection from the American point of view -- to their keeping some, if not all, these islands north of the equator'. To avoid further complications, Dyke Acland concluded that 'in view of our engagement with France + Russia we must decline to be drawn into any engagement of support to any definite Japanese claim when terms of peace are discussed' and that Kato 'is placing us in an impossible position not only vis a vis ... France + Russia ... but also vis a vis the United States'. His colleague Walter Langley also foresaw that 'to support Japan in its desire to annex all these islands would bring us into collision with the United States and no one knows better than Baron Kato that that would not suit us'.[17] The critical stance emerging out of the Foreign Office, which Langley's and Dyke Acland's statements represented, was not surprising, as British diplomats were and would be under pressure to balance the different positions in the international arena. Reconciling American and Japanese interests belonged in that category. Relations with France and Russia, Britain's main partners in the war, were also complicated insofar as that Britain expected that agreeing to special favours for Japan would entail French and Russian demands for the same treatment, possibly by territorial compensation elsewhere in the world.

Conversely, however, Britain signed secret deals with the Russians and Italians in March and April 1915. The Constantinople Agreement promised to give Constantinople and the Dardanelles to Russia, while Rome was guaranteed significant territorial gains from Austria-Hungary in the Treaty of London. They remained secret, but the Japanese eventually found out about them and would later in the war invoke equal treatment from London.

[16] TNA, FO 371/2018, fols 477-9, note by Dyke Acland, 17 Dec. 1914.
[17] TNA, FO 371/2018, fol.479, note by Langley, undated [Dec. 1914].

On Germany, the British Cabinet position found expression during a War Council meeting around the same time, in March 1915. When Grey asked his colleagues about their views on the ultimate fate of the German colonies, Herbert Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, warned against their acquisition by Britain in order to avoid complicating future relations with Germany. Grey agreed but cautioned 'that South Africa and Australasia would never allow us to cede German South-West Africa and the Pacific colonies', which was also Harcourt's view.

Now being 'forced by the possible capture of Constantinople into a premature discussion of the division of the yet unacquired spoils of the whole war', Harcourt wrote a memorandum shortly after the meeting in which he formulated his view on policy.[18] It was aptly entitled 'The Spoils', and he argued that it was 'out of the question to part with any of the territories now in occupation of Australia and New Zealand', but warned that the Japanese occupation of German Micronesia 'will cause great trouble with Australia, especially as regard the Marshall Islands', while the Americans were also 'not likely to be pleased at Japanese extension eastward into the Pacific'. Incorporating the American and Australasian positions had now become a repetitive narrative in British diplomatic diction, but without changing the strategic disposition. Sweeping with an even broader brush, Harcourt also invoked the unresolved New Hebrides question and suggested to either rid Britain of the islands in return for territorial compensation from France in Africa or vice versa as an outcome of the war.

While this showcased Britain's posture as an imperial and global chess-player, Grey's and Kitchener's views were more those of reluctant imperialists, accepting the positioning of Britain as a successor to some of Germany's possessions by sub-imperial political necessity rather than by an expansionist drive.[19]

In Germany, meanwhile, the colonial lobby with interests in the Pacific was finding its voice and was attempting to make itself heard not only with Solf, but also with

[18] TNA, CAB 37/126/27, memo. by Harcourt, entitled 'The Spoils', 25 March 1915.
[19] TNA, CAB 22/1, fol.72r, Secretary's Notes of a War Council, 10 March 1915.

Bethmann Hollweg and parliament.[20] Part of their mission was to put pressure on politicians to maintain the postulate of having the colonies returned as a default negotiating position, but the strategy was also to provide figures and numbers about the value of the German Pacific, which, in turn, could be used to point out to the German government their importance relative to the -- ostensibly prioritised -- African colonies,[21] or, alternatively, to present the enemies with a bill after the war.[22] In case of a favourable outcome of the war, the Pacific lobbyists were positioning themselves with a colonial wish list which included Papua, the Solomon Islands, and 'French

[20] PA AA, R21315, fols 104-19, Eichmann, Senatskommission für die Reichs- und auswärtigen Angelegenheiten in Hamburg, to AA, 17 Sept. 1915, with attached memo., 'Kolonialpolitische Friedensforderungen' by Hamburg Chamber of Commerce. Eichmann mentions that he has sent the memorandum, in which the Hamburg traders urge the Berlin government to claim Germany's Pacific possessions back, to Bethmann Hollweg. The involvement of the city's 'imperial and foreign affairs commission' showcases how tightly connected politics and overseas business were in Hamburg and how attempts were made to influence politics at the centre in Berlin. Alfred Ballin, Germany's most prominent shipping magnate, also made an intervention on behalf of Hamburg's shipping industry with both Bethmann Hollweg and the Kaiser, and also with Tirpitz, arguing the case of Germany's need of a global network of 'strong overseas bases'. BA Freiburg, N 253/222, fols 26-7, Clippings from *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 20 Oct. 1915, and *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 21 Oct. 1915, on annual meeting of *Verein Hamburger Rheder* (Hamburg Shipping Companies Association). In January 1916, Gustav Stresemann, in later years the Weimar Republic's most prominent foreign minister and who shared Ballin's appetite for colonial expansion, seconded him by saying that the Hamburg shipping companies were bearing the brunt of the war like no other and that their concerns were very real and not a 'theoretical utopia', which in itself showcases the weakness of the global trade-oriented political position, located in Hamburg and Bremen, within the national German narrative. BA Freiburg, N 253/225, fols 14-20, memo. for Jagow, 13 Jan. 1916.

[21] For instance, the *Ostasiatischer Verein* (East Asia Association, still existent and currently, in 2018, branding itself as the 'German Asia-Pacific Business Association'), a business lobby group from Hamburg, complained to the *Auswärtiges Amt* about Wilhelm Paasche, Vice-President of the *Reichstag*, about his speech before the *Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft* (the influential German Colonial Society, headquartered in Berlin, Paasche being one of its deputy presidents) in which he claimed that the German Far East and Pacific was now lost and undesirable anyway and that Germany should focus on Africa. PA AA, R21313, fols 20-2, Ostasiatischer Verein to AA, letter, 1 May 1915, with attached copy of letter from Ostasiatischer Verein to Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft, 30 April 1915. Earlier, in September 1914, Bethmann Hollweg had had a *Septemberprogramm* drafted which postulated the creation of a 'coherent central African empire' but did not mention the Pacific and Far East at all. Its relevance is contentious and some view it as a collection of 'ad hoc ideas' rather than a plan. See Wayne C. Thompson, 'The September Program: Reflections on the Evidence', *Central European History*, 11, 4 (1978), 348-54. For its contents, Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, 93, who posits that the programme did constitute a significant war aims guideline in German leadership politics.

[22] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, Neu Guinea Compagnie to Solf, letter, 31 May 1915, with attached 'Eingabe an Reichskanzler' and Denkschrift, signed by Neu Guinea Compagnie, Norddeutscher Lloyd, and others, May 1915. The *Denkschrift* includes a detailed appendix on the German South Seas economy. In it, the author points out that its value should not be based on current statistics, but on future potential and argues that the German plantations in Samoa and New Guinea were among the best in the world, particularly regarding copra, while New Guinea was potentially rich in gold, platinum and oil, and while Nauru and Angaur possessed 45m tons of phosphate of high quality.

Oceania' -- including New Caledonia and Tahiti -- to maximise the usefulness of the Panama Canal.[23]

The Australasian Dominions' interest in the Pacific Islands also had a strong commercial basis, and the various military occupations also had an impact on island shipping and commerce in the Pacific. Burns Philp had a particularly prominent position, and therefore much to win or lose in a war. For instance, the company had had an established trade in the Marshall Islands, now under Japanese control. Frederick Wallin, the company's Islands Department Manager, was touring the Pacific Islands in November and December 1914, when he experienced what he saw as trade hindrances at Jaluit, the commercial centre in the Marshalls, and heard stories from other traders that made him conclude that 'official pressure [was] being brought to bear in favour of the [Japanese] South Ocean Trading Company'.[24] Wallin asked Edward Carlyon Eliot, the British Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate, to intervene immediately, arguing that 'no time should be lost in placing the facts before the proper Imperial and Commonwealth Authorities with a view to harmony of action'.[25] Wallin also wrote to Burns that 'it will never do to let the Marshall Islands slip into the hands of the Japs without a protest', fearing that 'once established in the Marshalls the Japs will extend this influence to the Gilberts even to a greater extent than at present and our business in these parts will be doomed'.[26] He knew that Eliot's letter to London would take months to arrive, so he suggested that Burns use his influence in Australia to raise the issue with the Governor General, the Department of External Affairs and the Naval Board in Melbourne for faster progress.[27]

It is worth noting that the Japanese had come to dominate the trade in parts of German Micronesia, particularly in the Carolines and in the Marianas, in the early twentieth century, and the Japanese *Nan'yo Boeki Kabushikigaisha* (South Seas

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[23] Ibid.

[24] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0461, Wallin, Ocean Island, to Burns, Sydney, letter, 24 Dec. 1914, with attachment Wallin to Eliot, letter, 24 Dec. 1914. This is the same company as the one referred to below, the NBK.

[25] Eliot's letter to the Colonial Office, written on 25 December 1914, arrived in London in late February and is mentioned in TNA, FO 371/2386, fol.18, Just, CO, to FO, letter, 25 Feb. 1915.

[26] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0461, Wallin, Ocean Island, to Burns, Sydney, letter, 24 Dec. 1914.

[27] Other than his business acumen, Burns was also a highly-ranked former military officer, a former member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and a current government adviser on Pacific affairs.

Trading Company, NBK, which Wallin referred to above) developed a near-monopoly in those markets.[28] The Germans remained commercially influential in the Palaus through the *Deutsche Südseephosphat A.G.*, which exploited Angaur for phosphates, and maintained a commanding role in the Marshalls through the *Jaluit-Gesellschaft*, which in turn facilitated Burns Philp's shipping and trade in these islands. However, NBK's activity went beyond the buying of copra and had turned to freight transportation, inter-island mail and passenger services and thus came to have a political element to it, furthering its own and Tokyo's influence in the area. After the conclusion of its occupation of German Micronesia, the Japanese government was thus able to draw on this substantial network.

When Burns took up the matter with Munro Ferguson and complained about 'some difficulties' the Japanese were creating in the Marshalls, the latter used the opportunity to bring up an important agenda item of his own.[29] In his endeavour to bring Australia in line with British policy, he argued that the Japanese had provided indispensable naval support to the British Empire, and that Japanese public opinion also needed to be kept in mind. Burns, who was well connected in Australian politics, agreed with the postulate of territorial compensation for Japan, but took exception to the inclusion of the Marshall Islands.[30]

With this relatively positive feedback in hand, Munro Ferguson approached Fisher 'to discuss confidentially the resettlement of the Pacific'.[31] He warned the Australian Prime Minister that 'nothing could be more prejudicial to the Empire at this moment than to raise a question which might lead to friction between the Allies'. Fisher, after some weeks, responded that the occupied islands south of the Equator 'would leave

[28] Peattie, *Nan'yo*, p.25.
[29] NLA, Novar Papers, box 5, MS696/3863-5, Munro Ferguson to Fisher, letter, 24 Jan. 1915. Munro Ferguson also cabled it to London, where it was communicated by the CO to the FO. At the end of the chain, it reached Greene in Tokyo, who was asked to mention it to Kato privately. TNA, FO 371/2386, fol. 2, Lambert, CO, to FO, letter, 2 Feb. 1915, with attachment GGAus to SSCols, cable, received 1 Feb. 1915; fol.3, Grey to Greene, cable, 14 Feb. 1915. Eliot's letter from 25 December had not yet reached London at this stage. Greene's intervention did not lead to a change in Japanese policy, and Harcourt informed Munro Ferguson in May that Tokyo will not provide a general permission to trade in the occupied islands, but will consider applications on their merit. NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, SSCols to GGAus, 20 May 1915. The Colonial Office then advised the Australians not to push the issue any further.
[30] Munro Ferguson also consulted other close Australian contacts of his, and none 'showed much antipathy' to the Equator as an inevitable dividing line between Australian and Japanese possessions. NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/650-3, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 20 Jan. 1915.
[31] NLA, Novar Papers, box 5, MS696/3863-5, Munro Ferguson to Andrew Fisher, letter, 24 Jan. 1915.

Australia with enough on her hands' and added in passing that 'it would simplify matters were New Caledonia and the New Hebrides under British control', although he confessed that he was actually not enthusiastic about taking over either of the latter two 'on account of the increased expense'.[32]

Others in Australia were seemingly even less interested, which is reflected by a surprisingly dismissive statement by Munro Ferguson, who claimed that 'no one except an odd trader or shipper seems really now to care a jot about [the New Hebrides and New Caledonia]' and that 'equal indifference [existed] as to the future of the Groups North of the Line.[33] From a strategic perspective, Legge admitted that 'no military or other advantage could accrue from the possession by Australia either of Yap or the French Islands'.[34] Pearce, both a military realist and possessing a grasp on seapower, confirmed this view in January 1916, writing that 'these Pacific Islands to the North of the Equator are not of very great value to Australia' and that 'they cannot be of much danger to us because of their distance from us', whereas the German Pacific south of the Equator was of 'strategic value [which] is exceedingly great to Australia as forming a shield to the Northern portions of the continent'.[35] 'Holding of these Islands', he argued, 'will ward off any invasion of Australia by a hostile Power'. The consensus now was that Australia's defence perimeter was not to be looked for in distant islands. Also, Burns Philp was certainly not some 'odd trader' and Munro Ferguson's statement maybe lacks awareness of Burns' influence, but Fisher's and Legge's attitudes also

[32] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/656-60, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 18 Feb. 1915. Fisher picked up the thread of French possessions in the Pacific again in May and told Munro Ferguson about 'the long-standing wish cherished in Australia to be possessed of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides' NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/687-91, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 13 May 1915. Ultimately, nothing came of these conversations and the topic was not addressed again in seriousness until after the war, especially with regard to the New Hebrides. For some detail, see Linden A. Mander, 'The New Hebrides Condominium', *Pacific Historical Review*, 13, 2 (1944), 160.

[33] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/669-72, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 17 March 1915.

[34] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/656-60, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 18 Feb. 1915. Curiously, a memorandum prepared at the Australian Department of External Affairs only days earlier suggested that 'the occupancy by Japan of these [Micronesian] islands has a very important bearing upon the future of Australia inasmuch as they bring the Japanese very much closer to our shores and put them in possession of islands many of which can be turned into a substantial base', thereby seemingly contradicting Fisher and Legge. However, it did not recommend Australian control of the islands. Ultimately, it illustrated the Australian strategic dilemma of maritime defence over a vast area. NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, memo. by Department of External Affairs, 16 Feb. 1915.

[35] AWM, 3DRL/2222/Box 4, Papers of Sir George Pearce -- Series 3/13, Pearce to Hughes, letter, 14 Jan. 1916.

show that he was not entirely off the mark and that an unbounded expansionist rhetoric did not match the political, financial and military realities in Australia.

Nevertheless, imperial sensitivities continued. For instance, when Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott, the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific based in Suva, expressed a favourable opinion about an increase in Japanese trade in the area, which also included the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, a Burns Philp area of activity, it caused a stir in Australia.[36] Sweet-Escott thought that more competition for Australian traders would lead to an increase in the copra price, which would be beneficial to the local economy and the native population.[37] Fisher strongly disagreed with this view and had a complaint sent to London.[38] Some at the British Foreign Office found Fisher's 'indignation at the idea that anyone should be allowed to compete with Australian firms … rather naïve', but this view was not communicated to Australia.[39] Sweet-Escott actually conceded in May 1915 that 'it appears … that all steps are being taken by the Japanese Government to secure the monopoly of trade in [the Marshall and Caroline Islands]' and that Anglo-Australian trade in the Gilbert and Ellis islands 'will suffer' from Japanese trade inroads, as Burns Philp was now indeed forced to pay higher prices for copra to retain trade.[40]. The Japanese government, meanwhile, responded that it was not aware of any obstructionism and that possible problems could have been caused by a misunderstanding.[41] Ultimately, the authorities in London did not want to create further trouble with Tokyo, and the Foreign and Colonial Offices agreed 'not to communicate further with the Japanese Government on the subject at present time'.[42] Melbourne was merely assured that 'a note has been made' of its grievances.[43]

These were thus not taken entirely seriously in London, nor was Australia's suggestion about New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. More realistically, Fisher had postulated

[36] He was also, simultaneously, the Governor of Fiji.
[37] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Bickham Escott to GGAus, letter, 25 Feb. 1915. Note that Sweet-Escott is referred to in the original correspondence as 'Bickham Escott'.
[38] TNA, FO 371/2386, fols 73-4, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 5 May 1915, with attachment Fisher, Melbourne, to GGAus, letter, 23 April 1915.
[39] TNA, FO 371/2386, fol.71, note, author and date unknown, probably June 1915.
[40] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0461, Bickham Escott to GGAus, letter, 21 May 1915, with attachment, Eliot to Bickham Escott, letter, 10 April 1915.
[41] TNA, CO 418/141, fol.86, Greene to Grey, cable, 6 March 1915.
[42] TNA, FO 371/2386, fol.85, Lambert, CO, to USS FO, letter, 15 July 1915.
[43] TNA, FO 371/2386, fol.77, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 28 June 1915.

that an 'external administrative area from New Guinea to the Solomons, inclusive, would suit Australia well' and Munro Ferguson confirmed that 'the trend of opinion here favours the creation of a compact group of Australian Island dependencies'.[44] A 'Greater Australia in the Pacific' narrative was turning into a much narrower version based on the Australian mainland as a defence perimeter with some added nearby islands, which reflected both a pragmatic military and seapower assessment as well as Australia's cultural view of self as a continental non-maritime entity.

Interestingly, these ideas were picked up by the German press, where 'the central role of gaining possessions in the South Seas among Australian war aims' was reflected upon and where it was predicted that 'Australia's voice will not remain without influence on England's decisions to formulate peace demands', the latter being 'more than ever dependent on its overseas possessions'.[45] The same article wondered why the Australians did not recognise the advantage of having 'civilised nations in the Pacific Ocean' serve as a European colonial buffer between their country and Japan. As a matter of fact, Solf himself had been toying with the idea of such a buffer in the shape of a more consolidated German Pacific empire.[46] The RKA had established a dedicated commission to deliberate on the future of the German colonies in late 1915, which assessed that the Japanese southward thrust in the Pacific would not preclude Germany's return there. At the same time, it recommended the acquisition of New Caledonia from France and of Papua from Australia. This followed the suggestions from the shipping and trading lobby from 1915 and seemed to favour a more 'southern' approach to German colonial activity in the Pacific, thereby acknowledging Japanese scheming further north.[47]

[44] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/692-3, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 19 May 1915; MS696/718-21, Munro Ferguson to Harcourt, letter, 11 June 1915.
[45] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, clipping, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 28 Oct. 1916, 'Die Aufteilung der Südsee' by Prof. Alfred Mauer.
[46] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, Solf to Haber, letter, 11 March 1916.
[47] BA Koblenz, N1053-48, fols 149, 153-6, document entitled '2. Kommission. Geheim. Sitzung am 21. Januar 1916'. The final report, after ten sessions, also mentioned the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides as being of interest to Germany. See BA Koblenz, N1053-48, fol.171, doc. entitled 'Die kolonialen Kriegsziele Deutschlands ... Schlussbericht der durch den Erlass vom 14. Dezember 1915 eingesetzten Kommission', [Jan. or Feb. 1916]. Referring to New Caledonia, Solf reiterated in March 1916 that 'the acquisition of this French colonial possession would be of the greatest significance to Germany'. BA Berlin, R1001/2640, fols 55-6, Solf to Haber, letter, 11 March 1916.

Then, in April 1916, the Germans launched a diplomatic initiative to explore a rapprochement with the Japanese. The aim was to remove Japan or Russia or, ideally, both from the war. Jagow had hinted as early as January 1915 that he would let the Japanese keep Kiaochow to get them on board.[48] This was done through the diplomatic channel in Stockholm and the ambassador Hellmuth Lucius von Stoedten, and although the first tentative approach in 1915 remained moot, the same channel was reactivated in 1916, as, in the wider war, the Germans and Allies remained dug in on the Western Front and the Battle of Verdun was progessing at a snail's pace, while a significant amount of German forces was kept bound on the Eastern Front to knock the Russians out of the war militarily. Influential figures such as Max Warburg, a banker, and Hugo Stinnes, an industrialist, became involved in the talks with the Japanese ambassador to Sweden Uchida Ryohei.[49] Gustaf Oscar Wallenberg, the Swedish ambassador in Tokyo, advised the Germans on their strategy.[50] The Japanese were reluctant to undermine their relationship with Britain, but were open to influence Russia for the price of Kiaochow.[51] The Germans were prepared to let Kiaochow go, but not without tangible guarantees, and the mood was further soured when Uchida asked the Germans to also throw their Pacific Islands into a deal.[52] This was escalated to the Kaiser, which shows how important the matter was, and Wilhelm expressed general agreement with the cession of all German possessions in the East to Japan, although questions were raised about the possible retention of a wireless station in the Pacific, and Lucius also pointed out to Jagow that 'the Hamburgers will naturally cry over the loss of the islands'.[53] Even the prospect of an alliance between Japan, Germany and Russia was vaguely discussed between Stinnes and Uchida, but ultimately, the Japanese were unwilling to give in to German demands of a separate peace with them and to jeopardise their position in the Allied camp, offering to act as

[48] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/1, fols H315124-5, Jagow, Gr. HQ, to USS AA Zimmermann, letter, 12 Jan 1915.
[49] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fols H315255-6, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 14 March 1916; fols H315273-4, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 20 March 1916; fol.H315277, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 31 March 1916.
[50] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fol.H315275, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 30 March 1916.
[51] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fols H315280-1 Lucius to Jagow, cable, 1 April 1916; fols H315295-6, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 24 April 1916.
[52] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fols H315306-7, Jagow to Lucius, cable, 26 April 1916; fol.H315309, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 28 April 1916; PA AA, R22396, Jagow to Bethmann Hollweg, cable, 28 April 1916.
[53] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fol.H315326, Lucius to Jagow, cable, 6 May 1916; fol.H315330, Bethmann Hollweg to AA, letter, 7 May 1916; fols H315335-7, Jagow to Lucius, cable, 7 May 1916; fols H315356-9, Jagow to Lucius, letter, 8 May 1916; fols H315377-82, Lucius to Jagow, letter, 9 May 1916.

brokers with London and Paris instead, which finally put the Germans off.[54] Wilhelm commented that 'if no separate peace can be achieved, this whole charade is irrelevant' and that 'we do not need them as middle-men for a general peace'.[55] The Japanese, on the other hand, did not need the Germans for territories they were already in control of and therefore only had a limited incentive to make concessions from their own secure position in the war.

In light of the above, it is plausible to imagine that this might have entailed a future north-south divide between the Japanese and the Germans in the Pacific, as both elements, the German idea of holding a zone in the New Guinea-Solomon Islands-New Caledonia area and a German-Japanese understanding about all islands further north would have added up to such a scenario. However, there is no evidence of discussion at such a detaieeled level, whereas Okuma maintained in April 1916 that 'the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is just as strong today as it ever was'.[56]

Strategic imagination was also on New Zealand minds when a remarkable correspondence was sent from Wellington to London in May 1915. In it, Liverpool put his host government's view on record and voiced its concerns about London's entire defence assessment of the Pacific Ocean and partnership with Japan. Accepting that it was 'impossible to insist' that Japan should give up Micronesia after the war, Wellington demanded that precise safeguards be put in place and that 'it should be definitely agreed that none of the Islands should be fortified, or used as a coaling station, or Naval Base [by Japan]'.[57]

This position looked cautious but rational. What followed, however, was an argument over the moral (and strategic) high ground which provided an insight into the rawness of feelings carried over from the quarrel over troop transports the previous September (which was possibly the emotional equivalent to Australia's aborted 'northern expedition'). Thus, it was argued that 'neither Australia nor New Zealand will ever be

[54] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fols H315391-3, memo. of conversation with Uchida, signed Stinnes, 7/8 May 1916; fols H315402-3, Lucius to AA, cable, 17 May 1916; fols H315408-9, Jagow to Lucius, cable, 18 May 1916.
[55] TNA, GFM 33/3506/9846/2, fol.H315416, Gruenau, GrHQ, to AA, cable, 19 May 1916.
[56] PA AA, R6111, fol.236, clipping, *Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 1916, 'Japan and England: Count Okuma's Statement'.
[57] ANZ, ACHK 16603 G48/20, N/18, Liverpool to Harcourt, letter, 13 May 1915.

convinced that in the future our peril is not from Japan, and the New Zealand Government would only ask the Imperial Government not to adopt the contrary view'.[58] Wellington accepted that London 'was compelled by Imperial exigencies to incur for them [New Zealand] some danger', but warned that if Britain 'tells the New Zealand Government that their views are wrong as to the future danger … then the Imperial Government can never expect assent, but on the contrary must be prepared for bitter resentment'.

The Massey government's insistence points to fundamental differences of strategic outlook, and the gap was indeed unbridgeable. The reliance on Japan as a strategic partner to secure the British parts of the Pacific Ocean and the insistence that the same partner will become the next enemy cannot possibly be moulded into the same political and strategic framework, yet they were for the moment. No immediate reaction was triggered in Britain, and it is difficult to see what it might have been. What this intervention anticipated, however, was an antagonism which would remain simmering below the surface, waiting to reappear at some later point. The communities of strategic interest in the Pacific Ocean had openly drifted apart less than a year into the war.

Some of the issues brought forward in Australia and Germany were also discussed in Japan where some questioned the wisdom of having to maintain a vast island empire. It was argued that this would not only be a logistical challenge, but also a challenge to the relationship with the United States.[59] The *Nichi Nichi* reported for instance that it had learnt from 'diplomatic circles' that the abandonment of the occupied islands after the war had been suggested because they were 'scattered and hard to administer' and 'to show that Japan has no territorial ambitions' and wanted to trade 'openly in all directions'.[60] The latter report is noteworthy as it provides evidence that it had been recognised in Japan, at least by some, that an act of occupation could be perceived as aggressive *per se* by third parties and therefore create problems internationally. On

[58] Ibid.

[59] Britain and Australia were absent from this Japanese discourse, preoccupied with the American presence in the Pacific.

[60] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Norman, British Embassy Tokyo, to GGAus, letter, 14 Aug. 1915, with attached copy of report entitled 'Japan and Australia. Extracts from the Japanese Press May-July 1915', undated. See entry for *Nichi Nichi* from 27 July 1917.

that note, it was also added that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was not in the country's interest and that 'Japan should find a more suitable ally in the future'.

By contrast, a few weeks earlier, the same newspaper reported on the government's expectation to keep German Micronesia beyond the end of the war and wrote that 'the South Sea Islands will remain Japanese for a long time after the war as a basis for Japanese expansion in the South Seas'.[61] Okuma, who had temporarily taken over the foreign ministry in addition to his Prime Ministership after Kato's resignation in August 1915, confirmed this view and likened the islands to 'a stepping stone to the South Seas for Japan', claiming 'that these islands are extremely important and indispensable places for the future southward expansion of the Japanese'.[62]

The *Sekai* magazine occupied a middle ground and cautioned that 'without waiting for the result of the great European War it is impossible to tell what fate will befall the rights acquired by Japan in the South Sea Islands she has occupied'.[63] This argument, as plausible as it might seem, was contradicted by Okuma who was of the opinion that 'in the war now raging Japan is enjoying immunity ... from the unfavourable effects always accompanying a war' and that 'after the end of war the belligerents would need to recover'. Therefore, 'even if Germany should come out successful', it 'cannot send its troops to the Far East'.[64] Furthermore, it would 'not [be] impossible to enter into some kind of arrangement with Germany' in Okuma's view.

There was also a legal formula emerging from the Japanese government, along the lines, first expressed in October 1914, that the occupation of Micronesia was motivated by military necessity only and was therefore not a question of international law. This was now extended by the foreign ministry where it was claimed that 'those things are the result of a war with Germany, and any result is considered the same as

[61] Ibid. See entry for *Nichi Nichi* from 17 June 1917.
[62] TNA, FO 371/2382, fols 428-9, 434-6, Greene to Grey, letter, 6 Sept. 1915, with enclosed memo. 'Japan and Australia: Extracts from the Japanese Press. August and September 1915', undated.
[63] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Greene, Tokyo, to GGAus, letter, 6 Sept. 1915, [sent on to PM and Defence], with attached copy of report on Japanese press: see entry for *Sekai* from 25 August 1915.
[64] Ann Trotter (ed.), *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Part II, *From the First to the Second World War*, Series E, Asia, 1914-39, vol.2, *Japan, 1915-19* ([Bethesda, MD], 1991), 50-1, Greene to Grey, letter, 6 July 1915, with attached 'Extract from the "Japan Times"', 4 July 1915.

the result of a natural accident over which man has no control'.[65] That is, legally speaking, *force majeure*, or an act of God. The statement also referred to the Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908.[66] It was emphasised by the Japanese that the current events did not constitute a violation of the Agreement, as they did not apply to a conflict with a third party.

Whether this was so or not remained unresolved, as the Americans did not invoke the Agreement and continued to maintain their passive stance with regard to the Pacific Islands despite the fact that the 'status quo in the region', mentioned in paragraphs two and five, had clearly been altered by the Japanese. In such a case, the Agreement stipulated, the two sides were to enter into 'communicat[ion] with each other in order to arrive at an understanding as to what measures they may consider it useful to take'. With the Japanese not recognising it had been triggered and the Americans not insisting, the one legal framework providing for dialogue between Tokyo and Washington over territorial change in the Pacific was not tested and remained mute.

Instead, Washington had shifted its diplomatic attention to events in China, the Agreement's other main focus. In January 1915, the Japanese had presented their Twenty-One Demands to the weak Chinese government in order to extend their influence in the north of China, not least after their takeover of Tsingtao. They also wanted to increase their leverage on the Chinese economy and finances, thereby threatening the Open Door to the country. American diplomatic intervention was immediate, including attempts at increasing British pressure on Tokyo.[67]

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[65] NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0461, Greene to GGAus, letter, 30 April 1915, with attachment, memo. entitled 'Japan and Australia: Extracts from Japanese Press, etc. March-April 1915'. See paragraph referring to article in *Japan Advertiser* from 21 March 1915 quoting a Japanese foreign ministry official.

[66] The Root-Takahira Agreement was a short but complex understanding between the American and Japanese governments, which was aimed at averting a drift toward possible war by mutually acknowledging certain international policies and spheres of influence in the Pacific and by providing a framework for the maintenance of the integrity and independence of China and of the Open Door policy there. For the text of the Agreement, see: https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-jp-ust000009-0414.pdf, retrieved 10 Aug. 2017.

[67] Finally, a revised version of the Demands was presented to the Chinese government, with an accompanying ultimatum, which was accepted in May. The Americans had to content themselves with this perceivably 'lighter' version of demands. For a detailed account of how the Twenty-One Demands diplomacy unfolded between January and May 1915, see Roy Watson Curry, *Woodrow Wilson and Far Eastern Policy 1913-1921* (New York, 1968, reprint), 111-29.

That being said, the State Department did not lose sight of the bigger picture of Japanese expansionism in the Far East and Pacific combined. Paul Reinsch, the American Ambassador to China, wrote an interesting note to Bryan in December 1914, claiming

> If the United States should really enter upon a policy of trying to block the development of Japan, and should utilize the hostility of China and the latent but serious fears of Great Britain, Russia, and more especially of Canada and Australia, the results might indeed be very damaging to Japan.[68]

Reinsch was thus suggesting the possibility of reining in Japanese expansionism by creating and employing a greater anti-Japanese alliance, including Australia with its particular interest in the southern parts of the Pacific Ocean, in order to alleviate a variety of anxieties, both over China and the Pacific Islands. It is also noteworthy that he mentioned Australia and Canada separately from Britain, thereby touching upon constitutional questions about the distinctiveness of British Empire polities on the international scene. What was more, he insinuated that Canada and Australia had geostrategic interests of their own that were not in tune with Britain's and that Washington might see both as separate political and strategic units.[69]

Fundamentally, however, the primary line of American defence in the Pacific ran from the Puget Sound to Hawaii and the Panama Canal.[70] American Samoa and particularly Guam were strategically complicated outliers, whereas the Philippines continued to be the defence headache they had previously been, amplified by the new Japanese military presence in Micronesia.[71] The Philippines were also complicated politically. Wilson had offered them the prospect of a 'larger measure of self-government' in December 1914, raising expectations which convoluted their and 'American' defence even further.[72]

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[68] Link, *PWW*, vol.31, 509-13, Paul Reinsch, Peking, to Bryan, letter, 22 Dec. 1914.
[69] For the evolution of the pre-World War I strategic relationship between Australia and the United States, see Russell Parkin and David Lee, *Great White Fleet to Coral Sea: Naval Strategy and the Development of Australia-United States Relations, 1900-1945* (Canberra, 2008), esp. ch. 1.
[70] Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific 1909-1922*, 250.
[71] Ibid. According to this source, the US Navy opposed any future war plans dedicating greater naval means than a minor force to the Philippines.
[72] *FRUS 1914 , War Supplement*, XI-XX, Address of the President, 8 Dec. 1914. The Philippines' path to self-rule was enshrined in the Jones Act of 1916 as a promise of independence 'as soon as stable government' was established, but gave no timetable, which was not helpful for the creation of a sound and holistic American strategy for the Pacific Ocean. Guam and American Samoa, meanwhile, were

Josephus Daniels, the Navy Secretary, had a simple answer to the various strategic challenges the United States was facing in the Pacific and Far East and maintained that 'we should go on just as if there was no war', but this was an impossible fiction.[73] Yet, if procrastination was to be its key ingredient, the Americans succeeded. Earl S. Pomeroy wrote about the period in question that 'there is not clear evidence of … coherent and positive planning, either in Pacific affairs or in Atlantic affairs' and that 'there was no apparent awareness of a plan in those governmental circles that should have been most directly concerned'.[74] American defence planning for the Pacific had been arduous before the war, now it seemed to have temporarily collapsed.[75]

Nevertheless, American naval intelligence remained alert and continued to assess the situation. In a report written in June 1915, for instance, it came to observe 'that these [Micronesian] islands contain a number of excellent harbors, so located as to command practically all the routes across the Pacific and especially to and from the Philippines'.[76] While 'the possession of these islands by Germany in the past appeared more or less dangerous to the United States', it was now thought that 'their retention by Japan is equally if not more dangerous' and that, 'strategically and geographically', this would 'inevitabl[y] tend to create friction between Japan and the United States'. As a solution, the author suggested that Britain take them over after the war, because its 'good behavior towards the United States is, in a measure, assured by the proximity of Canada'. In other words, Britain was considered a more predictable player than Japan and more malleable because of its imperial stake in North America, but was nevertheless also considered a potential enemy. More war-gaming in 1915 came to the conclusion that, if the United States and Japan were to go to war one day, the

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administered by the Navy and would be for decades afterwards, thereby remaining naval assets (or liabilities), rather than colonial possessions *per se*.

[73] Daniels' statement was made before the House Naval Affairs Committee. *New York Times*, 11 Dec. 1914, cited in Earl S. Pomeroy, *Pacific Outpost, American Strategy in Guam and Micronesia* (Stanford, 1951), 54.

[74] Pomeroy, *Pacific Outpost,* 56.

[75] This situation was not remedied during the war, and Guam is a good example. Situated in the middle of the newly-occupied Japanese Micronesian islands, Lieutenant Commander W.P. Cronan, in charge of a survey of Guam in 1916, lamented that 'little can be done for the development of Guam as a Naval Base without an official expression of National Policy to that end'. Gilmer, Governor of Guam, to SecNavy, letter, 18 April 1919, with attachment, memo., 'Estimate of the Situation', 8 July 1916, cited in Pomeroy, *Pacific Outpost*, 58. See also Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific 1909-1922*, 254, 256.

[76] NARA DC, RG 59, M367, roll 51, 763.72/6679, McCauley, NavyDept, ONI, to Patchin, Foreign Intelligence Division, SD, letter, 29 June 1917, with attached copy of letter from McCauley to SecNav, 9 June 1915.

Philippines would fall to the Japanese without any hope of timely relief across the Pacific.[77]

By contrast, one policy element proactively and consistently pursued in Washington was American neutrality. When the *Lusitania*, a British ocean steamer carrying some military cargo but mostly civilians, including Americans, across the Atlantic, was sunk by a German U-boat off the south of Ireland on 7 May 1915, the outcry was enormous, and the event was considered as of sufficient magnitude to trigger an American declaration of war on Germany. Wilson, however, gave his famous 'too proud to fight' speech in the sinking's aftermath and reiterated this stance in late 1915, declaring that the country had 'stood apart, studiously neutral' and that 'it was our manifest duty to do so'.[78] Yet, as events from the recent past had shown, not least those involving *Geier* and *Cormoran* in late 1914, a noble American detachment was not entirely possible and Wilson's moral high ground was shaken when exposed to trouble. Similar events challenging American neutrality included Japanese and British ships being stationed off the entrance to Manila Bay and patrolling Philippine waters in breach of international law.[79] These questions were discussed with the Joint Army and Navy Board in 1916, and Daniels advised, in line with previous *non-possumus* practice, that the War and Navy Departments had 'decided to take no action'.[80]

Action was taken, however, by the Australasian Dominions as well as by Japan to consolidate their respective military administrations in their new territories. To varying degrees, trade and communication links were extended and Germans were gradually being pushed out of the islands.[81] Communication with Germany remained

[77] NARA DC, RG 225, SecNav to SecWar, letter, 1 July 1915, cited in Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: the U.S. strategy to defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis, 1991), 55.
[78] *FRUS 1915*, IX-XXIV, annual Address of the President, 7 Dec. 1915. For an account of Wilson's 'too proud to fight' speech, see Link, *Struggle for Neutrality*, 382.
[79] Allied infractions on American neutrality led the Governor-General of the Philippines, Francis Harrison, recommend in 1916 the closure of the port of Manila to all foreign war vessels, although this was not enforced strictly. NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 165, SecWar to SS, letter, 2 Oct. 1916.
[80] NARA DC, RG 225, Joint Army and Navy Board Records, no.338, Daniels and Baker to Senior Member, Joint Board, letter, 18 May 1916, cited in Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922,* 169.
[81] See, for instance, TNA, FO 371/2382, fols 320-36, Charles Workman, Administrator Nauru, to Bickham Escott, letter, 6 April 1915, with attached copy of report by G.A.W. Stevens, Representative PPCo, 6 April 1915. Stevens' report touches on the removal of Germans from Micronesia and on improved wireless communication and an increased military presence by the Japanese. On the Japanese in Micronesia, see NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, SSCols to GGAus, letter, 28 April 1915, with attached 'Report No. 14 of 1915. W/T Stations in the Pacific Islands.' Regarding Japan's ongoing commercial penetration of Micronesia,

interrupted, and Berlin thus continued to have no direct news from the German Pacific other than the odd message slipping through.[82] German business activity on the spot, on the other hand, carried on, but not everywhere. In Micronesia, the official German colonial bulletin reported in May 1915 that nearly all Germans other than missionaries had been removed by the Japanese, while the German consulate in San Francisco reported that the Japanese were prioritising their own traders over German ones in Jaluit, thereby suggesting that that there was still some level of German trade in the Marshalls in 1915.[83] In special cases such as Nauru, the German members of the Pacific Phosphate Company were also quickly removed.

A particular dynamic developed in Samoa, from where the New Zealanders complained to London in late 1915 that some Germans were getting messages out, past censorship, through the American consul's diplomatic bag and suggested to halt all trade with nearby American Samoa.[84] The Foreign Office advised against such a move, arguing that the 'desirability of preventing it [information] from reaching Germany would hardly justify so drastic a measure which might possibly cause a considerable amount of resentment in the United States', and suggested to appoint a receiver for the accused company, the *Deutsche Handels- und Plantagengesellschaft*.[85] The New Zealanders found this insufficient, not least because they wanted to secure its business for themselves, which led Andrew Bonar Law, now Colonial Secretary, to suggest a 'conservative' liquidation of the company's operations in order to preclude its return after the war and recommended maintaining buildings and signs as outward markers while stripping assets and stocks.[86] Liverpool then found that it was 'advisable to

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the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* reported in May 1916 that whether the Japanese will keep the islands or not after the war, they 'will have a commercial supremacy there not to be shaken', PA AA, R21318, fol.89, clipping, *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, 28 May 1916, 'Japan in the Pacific'.

[82] See the reports from RKA, published as *Der Krieg in den Deutschen Schutzgebieten*, 'Vierte Mitteilung' to 'Achte Mitteilung'. They cover 1915 to early 1917 and appear amalgamated in a single volume at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich marked 'H.Un.App.19 l, Der Krieg in den Deutschen Schutzgebieten 1915-1918'. The eighth *Mitteilung* from 1917 acknowledged that some mail was getting through between the German Pacific and Germany.

[83] PA AA, R21315, fols 249-55, RKA to AA, letter, 29 Sept. 1915, with attached copy of report about Jaluit, by Kruemling, assistant at German Consulate San Francisco, 24 July 1915.

[84] TNA, CO 209/290, fol.99, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 7 Jan. 1916.

[85] Ibid.

[86] NAA, A3932, SC472 Part 7, Print entitled '(Late) German New Guinea' containing: SSCols to GGAus, cable, 1 March 1916. In this cable to Australia, Bonar Law explained the approach he took in Samoa, possibly to be applied in New Guinea. Bonar Law would become Prime Minister in 1922, but had to resign only seven months into his premiership due to ill health and died little later.

suppress and wind up all … German businesses in Samoa', and Logan became proactive about this and introduced a number of wide-ranging measures.[87] Moreover, the German male population was removed in mid-May 1916.[88] When it came to dispossessing the German plantation owners of their property, however, London warned Wellington that it was not possible to give security of tenure before a future peace, thereby dampening New Zealand's speedy ambitions.[89] In their zeal, the New Zealanders had actually banned the sale of all copra from Samoa to the United States despite London's advice, which led to the predicted diplomatic repercussions and was soon reversed.[90] The underlying motive became clear, and had nothing to do with the Germans smuggling out messages, when Liverpool wrote to London warning against American opportunists taking advantage of Samoan trade and even against the Australians strengthening trade position in the islands. The idea was not only to keep the Germans out in the future, but to gain absolute New Zealand exclusivity on Samoan trade from friend and foe, a truly nationalist approach, albeit hinging on London's assistance.[91]

The situation was somewhat different in New Guinea, from where it was reported in February 1916 that only two firms in business were British and all others German.[92] Although the Colonial Office suggested the same regime of liquidations as in Samoa and Petheridge did not lack colonial fervour, the Australians were hesitant about disrupting the commercial dynamic and had Munro Ferguson write to London that

[87] ANZ, ACHK 16581 G26/8, Liverpool to Bonar Law, letter, 22 April 1916, with attachment GNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 21 April 1916; NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 29, 763.72/2828, Mitchell, US Consul Apia, to SS, letter, 24 July 1916, with attachment. The attachment contains all 31 official 'Proclamations' that had been issued to date by Logan. These included a 'Proclamation No.27' of 17 March 1916, stipulating that coconut and copra could henceforth only be exported to British ports, and a 'Proclamation No.29' of 24 April 1916, which made it possible for any business with an enemy share to be wound up and passed on to a liquidator. Also noteworthy is that this document was communicated to the State Department in Washington, which goes to show that, despite its outward inactivity in Pacific Islands affairs during the war, it remained interested and informed about developments on the ground.
[88] PA AA, R 21318, Nachrichtenoffizier Berlin, Meldung, 29 June 1916.
[89] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/20, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 19 July 1916.
[90] For the ban, see fn 87. Even the British Ministry of Munitions became involved and urged to haggle over receiving glycerine from the United States in exchange for the resumption of the copra trade, but it was finally decided to be the wisest course of action by the FO and CO to have the ban lifted without a direct *quid pro quo*. TNA, CO 209/290, fol.196, Beveridge, Ministry of Munitions, to USS FO, letter, 26 April 1916; fol.274-6, Crowe, FO, to USS CO, letter, 11 July 1916; fol.305, FO to Ross, San Francisco, cable, 15 July 1916; fol.323, FO to Page, letter, 25 July 1916.
[91] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/20, GNZ to SSCols, cable, 26 July 1916.
[92] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/10 Part 2, memo. from PM's Dept to GGAus, 24 Feb. 1916.

there was 'doubt whether liquidation or restriction [of] legitimate business of firms could be justified'.[93] For most purposes, therefore, local German traders and plantation owners were allowed to continue their activities but forced to trade with and through Australia.[94] Regarding plantations, the Australian cabinet proclaimed in June 1916 that 'no lands [in New Guinea] should be sold until [the] question of occupation [is] decided'.[95]

The Japanese, meanwhile, had declared that 'the intercourse of foreign vessels generally, except those which have continued from the time of the German regime, is ... not permitted' in Micronesia, and then, in late 1915, introduced permissions from the Navy Ministry in Tokyo or from the regional naval headquarters in Truk necessary for any vessel to land in occupied the islands.[96] This affected German and Australian traders alike, although the Germans had no legal recourse as an enemy, whereas Burns Philp's earlier impression of trade obstacles was now officialised by the Japanese. The British Foreign Office was reluctant to re-open the issue, whereas the Colonial Office contemplated in late 1916 the effect of negotiating with the Japanese and posited that 'nothing substantial is likely to be gained in the Pacific Islands north of the Equator by paper concessions by the Japanese', but that 'any agreement made by us to do or not to do certain things south of the line would ... by increasing the danger of diplomatic pressure from Japan, be more likely to embarrass than to help us'.[97] It was thus recognised in London that the Japanese could actually afford to be more generously 'free-trading' in the Pacific Islands than the British Empire, as they were able to dedicate greater resources in terms of shipping and trade, while most British and

[93] Ibid.; NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, memo. by Minister of Defence, 'Trade by British Subjects with the former German Possessions in the Pacific now in Japanese Occupation – Japan's Attitude', 28 March 1917, memo. initialled 'M.L.S.', dated 17 April 1917, and memo., 'Promoting British Interests in New Guinea', undated. NAA Melbourne, MP1582/2, NN, Intelligence Statement no. 5, CNB, signed Naval Secretary, 5 July 1916.

[94] This only changed after the war, when German businesses were eventually liquidated across New Guinea.

[95] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, header 'German New Guinea' [political summary, undated], entry for 8 June 1916.

[96] NAA, A11803, 1914/89/68, Greene to Grey, letter, 7 Oct. 1915, with attached translation of letter from Ishii to Greene, 5 Oct. 1915.
TNA, FO 371/2382, fols 464-7, British Embassy Tokyo to Grey, letter, 15 Nov. 1915, with attached 'Rules for persons going to the islands under occupation in the South Seas' (Japanese Official Gazette of 12 Nov. 1915).

[97] TNA, CO 537/988, CID, Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes, Interim Report, 25 Jan 1917, Appendix (C). Memo. by the CO, initialled 'HJR' and 'HL', 16 Oct. 1916.

Australian merchant vessels were absorbed by the war, and that the effect could be detrimental to the British Empire both politically and commercially.

Similar motives were also at play when the Japanese pushed London in early 1915 to have Australia join the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.[98] Melbourne was not enthusiastic about the prospect of joining, and there was no sense of urgency to deal with the request, but after some time the Foreign Office started pressing the desirability 'on political grounds' in order to show a 'conciliatory attitude' towards Japan.[99] Bonar Law did not disguise the motive that the Admiralty was trying to secure a greater degree of naval assistance from the Japanese to police transport routes across the Indian Ocean to Aden. Okuma emphasised that Australia becoming part of the Treaty would be of 'great assistance' so his government could be 'in a position to justify the necessary expenditure of such an expedition'.[100]

Hughes, Australia's Prime Minister since October 1915, happened to visit Britain in early 1916 and discussed the subject personally. If it was of 'vital importance' to Britain's securing further aid from Japan, Hughes promised, 'we would consider the question of giving Japan the same rights under the Tariff as we gave to any other of our Allies' but also warned that 'Australia would fight to the last ditch rather than to allow Japanese to enter Australia'.[101] Simultaneously, he negotiated a shrewd legal twist consisting in defining 'coast-wise [coastal] trade as including all islands in the Pacific which are now, or may hereafter be, in British possession', using an exemption

[98] Aware of the White Australia policy, the Japanese made it clear that immigration to Australia under the Treaty was not on their minds. TNA, FO 371/2387, fol.54, Honda, London, to Alston, FO, letter, 27 Feb. 1915, with attached translation of despatch from Kato to Inouye, 27 Feb. 1915. The initial Treaty was signed in 1894 and came into force in 1899. While it was a pre-condition to the good relations on which the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance was built, it needs to be distinguished from it. Providing for equal treatment of individuals and businesses from both countries, it originally aimed at ending the tradition of 'unequal treaties' since the 1850s. Its latest embodiment before the war was signed in 1911 and raised the Japanese tariff for British imports to Japan considerably, while, at the same time, providing appreciable reductions for selected products and continuing to offer most-favoured-nation treatment. Nevertheless, it was resented by British business, while being hailed as a political success by the British Foreign Office. See Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915: A Study of British Far Eastern Policy* (London, 1969), 20-1. Crucially, it stipulated that 'the subjects of each of the High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel, and reside in the territories of the other, and, conforming themselves to the laws of the country'. This was anathema to the White Australia policy, and the Canadians, having joined in 1913, had negotiated an exemption from this clause. Moreover, it afforded an exception from the treaty for all coastal trade.

[99] TNA, CO 532/80, fol.355, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 3 Jan. 1916.

[100] TNA, CO 532/86, fols 256-8, W. Langley, FO, to USS CO, letter, 18 Feb. 1916.

[101] AWM, 3DRL/2222/Box 4, Pearce Papers - Series 4/2, Hughes to Pearce, letter, 21 April 1916.

from the Treaty which would exclude the mentioned territories, in this case the entire British and Australasian Pacific Islands, from it.[102] When Grey warned him that 'Japan should also be entitled to define it as including any islands which are now, or may hereafter be, in her possession in the Pacific', Hughes had no objection. The Commercial Treaty was only one topic of conversation in London about what Hughes termed 'the Japanese problem'. Another one was the political control of the Pacific Islands, and Hughes conceded to Grey, as he admitted in a letter to Pearce, that 'we were prepared to consider favourably the Equator as a line of demarcation, giving us control of all islands to the South'.[103]

Munro Ferguson was in the awkward position of a middle man, arguing the Eurocentric London line on defence but also embracing Australian 'yellow peril' preoccupations, and concluded that 'to limit Japanese and British activities to their respective sides of the Equator would probably be the surest safeguard for the continuance of Peace in the Pacific'.[104] Thus, the respective sides of the Equator were being turned into consolidated zones of influence and interest as the war carried on, reflected by monopolistic and exclusive trade practices and by bureaucratic barriers.

Meanwhile in Europe, military engagements had been indecisive, both navally and on land.[105] The British Admiralty's reliance on Japanese support had not dwindled as the Royal Navy was continuously bound up in home waters, and plans were made for another initiative to get additional support from Japan in late 1916. Specifically, the securing of transport routes across the Mediterranean and the patrolling of the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans from the Cape was in question, and the Japanese were to be asked to put some destroyers at Malta, as well as two cruisers from Singapore to the Cape, which, once again, showcased Britain's global approach to operations,

[102] TNA, CAB 37/147/30, Grey to Greene, letter, 11 May 1916. Importantly, Britain's Pacific Island possessions were so far not covered by the Treaty, and Hughes wanted to make sure that it would stay that way, while the Japanese plan was to bring the entire British Pacific into its scope. See NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, Steward, GGAus Office, to PM, letter, 7 March 1916, with attachment Greene, Tokyo, to GGAus, letter, 4 Feb. 1916, entry for 27 Jan. 1916.
[103] AWM, 3DRL/2222/Box 4, Pearce Papers - Series 4/2, Hughes to Pearce, letter, 21 April 1916.
[104] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, MS696/808, Munro Ferguson to Bonar Law, letter, 6 March 1916.
[105] The Battle of Jutland, the largest naval engagement between the British Grand Fleet and the German *Hochseeflotte,* took place on 31 May and 1 June 1916 and was inconclusive, leaving Britain and its Allies with control of the world's oceans beyond the Baltic and the south-east North Sea. Total naval victory was not attempted for the remainder of the war.

planning and thinking to deal with a world war. The Admiralty thus approached the Foreign Office on 18 December 1916, which, in turn, wrote to Greene in Tokyo, advising the latter that 'His Majesty's Government are of opinion that, in the present stage of naval operations, the Japanese Government might afford some additional assistance to the Allied cause' and instructing him to approach the Japanese 'at once' about the two above requests.[106]

The Japanese, in turn, were busy watching the United States and the presidential election in November 1916. Wilson was promoting himself on a peace ticket, pledging to keep the country out of the war. Paradoxically, his administration was moving closer to it because of political change elsewhere. This included David Lloyd George's ascendancy to the premiership in Britain in December, immediately followed by the streamlining of his cabinet for the war, from which emerged the War Cabinet and the Imperial War Cabinet (IWC). In Germany, Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg had been elevated in August 1916 to establish a military quasi-dictatorship. The French had also condensed their war government and reduced its size from 23 to 10 ministers in December 1916. Moreover, Washington's neutral stance had taken an increasingly pro-Allied bias over the years with the provision of food, materiel and loans, culminating in the quasi-takeover of British and French war-lending by J.P. Morgan, the New York bank, in October 1916. The Americans were thus increasingly committing themselves to an Allied victory because of the financial stake they had by now taken in their side of the war.[107]

After his victory at the polls, Wilson launched a peace initiative in December 1916, reaching out to all sides with the suggestion that 'an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory as a guaranty against its renewal or the kindling of any similar

[106] TNA, FO 371/2690, fol.75, W. Graham Greene, Admiralty, to FO, letter, 18 Dec. 1916; fol.76, Balfour to C. Greene, Tokyo, cable, 9 Jan. 1917.
[107] J.P. Morgan subsequently relinquished its control of British and French loans to the American government when the US entered the war in 1917. Martin Horn, 'External Finance in Anglo-French Relations in the First World War, 1914-1917', *International History Review*, 17, 1 (1995), 51-77.

conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them'.[108] The warring powers, however, were now determined to see the conflict out and prevail and rebuffed Wilson's initiative.[109] In these circumstances it became increasingly difficult for the American administration to stay aloof, which in turn raised Japan's suspicion.

The trans-Pacific dynamic did not remain undetected by Berlin. Ernst Vanselow, a member of the German Admiralty staff, wrote in a memorandum that German colonial ambitions might have to be prioritised in Africa in normal circumstances, but that a 'completely altered political constellation might improve our position [in the Far East and the Pacific] if this was desired by one of the two powers [Japan and the United States]', which would in turn enable Germany to 'regain our colonial possessions in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago'.[110] Maybe, he argued, it was in Germany's interest 'to facilitate the growing antagonisms in the Pacific Ocean in favour of Japan and against Anglo-Saxonism (*Angelsachsentum).* This was an interesting analysis indeed, the Germans imagining different political conditions enabling an alliance with either side, but instinctively siding with the Japanese against the Anglo-Saxons in order to re-establish their empire in the Pacific.

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[108] *FRUS 1916, War Supplement*, 97-9, SS to Ambassadors and Ministers in Belligerent Countries, circular cable, 18 Dec. 1916, containing President Wilson's Peace Note, 18 Dec. 1916.

[109] Ibid. For a detailed account of the chronology and diplomatic dynamic preceding and following the note's despatch, in particular in the context of the previous German proposal from 12 December, see Arthur Link, *Wilson: Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace, 1916-1917* (Princeton, 1965), chs V-VI. The Americans felt urged to send out an 'explanatory' note on the American peace strategy only three days after the original note, which reflects the misunderstandings so far created. See *FRUS 1916, War Supplement*, pp.106-7, SS to Ambassadors and Ministers in Belligerent Countries, circular cable, 21 Dec. 1916. More explanations followed, in particular to stress to the Allies that the American initiative was not based on German peace conditions. Further toing and froing between the Americans, the Allies and the Central Powers in late December and into January 1917 was inconclusive. The Japanese took particular issue that Wilson had not invoked the colonial question in his peace proposal and with 'the absence of any allusion to the future disposal of the German colonies' in the Allied response to him, formulated without Japanese input. See PA AA, R22206, Zimmermann to AA, cable, 23 Jan. 1917; BA Berlin, R901/54543, fol.91, clipping, *Berliner* Tageblatt, 9 Feb. 1917, 'Das Schicksal der deutschen Kolonien'; NARA DC, RG38, box 451, C-10-a no. 4353, folder 'Anti-Asiatic Move of British Colonies, Various, 1914-1919', incl. clipping, *New York Times*, 4 March 1917, '"Japan Friendly to U.S.": Viscount Motono, Japanese Foreign Minister, Outlines His Country's Attitude Toward Other Nations', reporting on Motono's speech before the Diet on 23 Jan. 1917. Tokyo was thus at odds with the Allies and with Wilson over this.

[110] BA Freiburg, RM 9/8, fols 210-8, memo. 'Gesichtspunkte für die künftige Ausgestaltung des deutschen überseeischen Besitzes', sent to RKA on 9 Sept. 1916.

Further war-gaming was conducted in November 1916 on behalf of the RKA. The 'in-house' report, conducted by the central Schutztruppe command (*Kommando der Schutztruppen*), recommended as its favourite war outcome an expanded African empire while arguing that 'abandoning the South Seas can be coped with'.[111] In another report, Henning von Holtzendorff, head of the Admiralty staff, also invoked the 'probability of losing the South Sea Island area', which would deprive Germany of 'any pillar in the region', but theorised about the importance of wireless communication in some strategic places in the Pacific and a territorial base to fight a naval war from. The first task, he argued, could be fulfilled by having Yap, Rabaul and Tahiti, whereas the latter could be provided by the Bismarck Archipelago and New Guinea, and possibly by Portuguese Timor as an alternative.[112] It is worth noting that, among islands in Japanese possession, only Yap was thus deemed to be a desirable target, while the other areas of interest were in the Anglo-French southern 'zone' and could thus be negotiated with the British and French (and possibly the Portuguese) as a result of the war.[113] Unsurprisingly, it was in the global imagination of German naval circles where the Pacific and the Pacific Islands still figured as a possible, albeit hypothesised, reality, which they shared with the globally operating shippers and traders - ultimately both minority interests.

For now, however, there was a congruence of interest in Anglo-Japanese affairs, and it was growing as Tokyo was seeking binding territorial guarantees from Britain before America went to war and increased its political influence with Britain, while Japanese military and particularly naval support was as desperately needed as ever.[114] London

[111] BA Koblenz, N1053-48, fols 201-8, RKA, Kommando der Schutztruppen, report entitled 'Koloniale Kriegsziele vom militärischen Standpunkte aus', signed [?], 25 Nov. 1916. Note that the *Schutztruppen* were only present in the African colonies, not in the South Seas. The military forces in Tsingtao were under naval command.

[112] BA Koblenz, N1053-51, fols 27-35, Holtzendorff to Staatssekretär RKA, letter, 26 Nov. 1916, with attachment, Holtzendorff to Reichzkanzler, letter, 26 Nov. 1916.

[113] Holtzendorff added to this idea in another report from December 1916. He pointed out the importance of possessing a radio network with global reach, for which Yap, and New Guinea with the Bismarck archipelago were important cornerstones. The latter, he argued, was also an important place to operate from against Australian trade, thereby including an offensive, raiding, element in his discourse. As an alternative, Holtzendorff reiterated the suitability of Portuguese Timor. BA Freiburg, RM 9/8, fols 237-45, memo., 'Kriegsziele der Marine', Holtzendorff, 19 Dec. 1916.

[114] The 'last-minute' sentiment among the Allies was voiced expressly by the French, whose ambassador in London Cambon confirmed that 'it is important to settle this question [the Japanese claim in China and the Pacific] before the United States enters the war'. MAE, NS Japon, 88, fol.189, Cambon, London, to Briand, cable, 12 Feb. 1917.

had made a strategic assessment of the situation in the Pacific in a report from within the CID, where a 'Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes' had been established.[115] It confirmed the existing divide between British (including Australian and New Zealand) possessions and Japanese possessions along the Equator.[116] Specifically, it referred to 'Australian and New Zealand resentment' but that the Japanese 'should not be disturbed'. The Germans were accused of having used their Asian and Pacific colonies 'to obtain a dominating position in the politics of the world' and for forcing Britain, and this is revealing, 'to keep more ships in China than necessary', thereby interrupting *Pax Britannica*. It continued that New Guinea should be Australian and Samoa should go to New Zealand, while a Japanese presence in the Pacific 'would not seriously affect British interests either by endangering the trade routes or in any other way', as long as the war was successful. Therefore, it 'would be unnecessary and impolitic to insist upon Japanese evacuation'. Similarly, Greene argued from Tokyo that this was an opportunity to 'strengthen friendly relations … as well as position of Minister of Foreign Affairs … who is ready and anxious to help Allied cause', which would hopefully lead 'to the whole-hearted participation of Japan in the new and wider field of co-operation', but he also foresaw 'outside diplomatic or strategical problems, say, with America or Australia'.[117]

Tokyo then asked London through Greene:

> Having regard of peace conference some future date, Japanese Government consider the time has come to approach HMG with a view to obtaining an assurance from them of their willingness to support Japan's claims in regard to disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and possessions in islands north of the Equator on the occasion of such a conference.[118]

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[115] It was appointed by Asquith on 8 August 1916 and tasked with finding solutions to questions of territorial changes as a result of the war. It would eventually produce four relevant reports. Louis, *Germany's Lost Colonies*, p.70.

[116] TNA, CO 537/988, CID, Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes, Interim Report, 25 Jan. 1917.

[117] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.95, Greene to Balfour, cable, 27 Jan. 1917.

[118] Ibid. Lansing, the American Secretary of State since June 1915, reported in September 1917 that Ishii, now Japanese foreign minister and previously ambassador in Paris, 1912-15, had mentioned to him during their negotiations in Washington that he had had a meeting with Grey in London in 1915, in which Grey 'had practically consented in the readjustment of [Asian and Pacific] territory after the war'. This conversation is not in the British FO record, but is not implausible. This would mean that the Anglo-Japanese talks in January 1917 were not a 'first', but rather the continuation of previous conversations about colonial spoils, going back to December 1914 and continuing in 1915. Lansing to Wilson, letter, 25 Sept. 1917, with enclosures I and II, memos of conferences with Ishii, 6 and 22 Sept. 1917; enclosure III, draft letter, undated, in Link, *PWW*, vol.44, 249-56.

Simultaneously, Motono Ichiro, Tokyo's foreign minister since November 1916, instructed Chinda, who had moved to London as ambassador, to tell Arthur Balfour, Britain's foreign secretary since December, that 'it will not be very difficult to move the [Japanese] Cabinet [to increase naval support] if we can get the assurances of the British Government on Shantung Province and the Pacific islands we now occupy'.[119]

Chinda discussed the matter with Balfour and subsequently sent him a summary, expanding on Greene's message from a few days earlier:

> Having ... regard to the utmost importance attached by Japan to the questions of Shan-tung and the German [South Sea] possessions in her occupation, … the Imperial Government deem it essential that an agreement should be reached with the Allies as soon as possible in advance of the formal formulation of their demands in these respects for the presentation to the enemy Governments. In fact, there exists already an agreement between the British, French and Russian Governments in regard to Constantinople and the Dardanelles, and we are further informed of the existence of certain other arrangements among the Allies touching upon the terms of settlement. In these circumstances, the Imperial Government are anxious to obtain an assurance ... that they can rely upon the full support of the British Government when they present to the enemy Governments their demands concerning the Province of Shan-tung and the German South Sea Islands north of Equator which are now under their occupation. It is their intention to ask of the French and Russian Governments for similar undertaking, but they desire to approach first ... the British Government.[120]

What this revealed was not only that the Japanese were exploiting Britain's military predicament, but also that they were aware of the territorial 'arrangements' that had been made among the Allies in Europe and now demanded an equal treatment.[121]

Motono wished 'to do a deal with us in the political arena', as Greene phrased it: extended naval support against the guarantee of territorial spoils after the war. Greene added, however, that 'as regards naval assistance itself, I can hardly believe that Japanese Government will hesitate to grant it in any case'.[122] This turned out to be correct when the Japanese agreed on supplying the desired cruisers and destroyers on

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[119] Morinosuke Kajima, *The Diplomacy of Japan, 1894-1922,* vol. III, *First World War, Paris Peace Conference, Washington Conference* (Tokyo, 1980), 190, 220.

[120] TNA, FO 371/2950, fols 146-9, Chinda, note, 2 Feb. 1917, with attachment, memo., dated 2 Feb. 1917, of statement by Motono in conversation with Chinda from 26 Jan. 1917.

[121] Motono was referring to the Constantinople Agreement from 1915. By 'certain other arrangements' among European powers, Motono certainly meant the 1915 Treaty of London, referred to further above.

[122] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.95, Greene to Balfour, cable, 27 Jan. 1917.

2 February and before Britain had formally replied to the Japanese request.[123] While it was thus not quite as straightforwardly *manus manum lavat*, the connection was unmistakable.

Unlike the situation in October and November 1914, the Australasian Dominions were being consulted this time, and the Colonial Office liaised with them.[124] In the case of New Zealand, Massey and Ward were in London at the time, having been in Europe since October 1916.[125] They then extended their stay to attend the IWC and the Imperial War Conference and were present when events were unfolding in January and February 1917.[126]

An official cable was sent to Wellington nevertheless, as well as to Melbourne, written in a remarkably apologetic tone and reminiscent of Harcourt's private letter to Munro Ferguson from December 1914. Thus, Walter Long, Britain's new Colonial Secretary, explained that '[HMG] had intended to address a full despatch to you on the subject of the disposal of the German Colonies in the Pacific and if possible to discuss matter with your Prime Minister and they much regret that the urgency of the matter compels them to raise the question in this form'. Britain was still 'very unwilling to give any pledge to Japan before peace negotiations', he pointed out, but the 'Admiralty are very anxious to secure some additional light cruisers in South Atlantic to deal with enemy raiders and additional destroyers to cope with submarines in the Mediterranean'. Now came the crucial part: 'Japan was very recently asked by [HMG] for naval assistance in this direction, and for this reason they desire to be in a position to give some undertaking if necessary showing that they are willing to meet wishes of Japan as regards Islands North of Equator.' Australia and New Zealand were asked

[123] Motono stressed, however, that 'he hoped that HMG would take the latter [Japan's decision to meet Britain's request for naval assistance] into favourable consideration in dealing with that desire [Japan's request of British guarantee regarding Shandong and Pacific Islands]', see: TNA, FO 371/2950, Greene to Balfour, cable, 2 Feb. 1917.

[124] TNA, FO 371/2950, fols 124-5, SSCols to GNZ, cable, 2 Feb. 1917; fols 129-30, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 1 Feb. 1917. Both were identical, other than the last sentence sent to New Zealand, see below. Lloyd George had told the House of Commons on 19 December 1916 that 'the time has come when the Dominions ought to be more formally consulted as to the progress and course of the War'. While the frame of reference of this statement was his establishment of the IWC, it can also be seen as indicating a 'maturing' relationship with regard to political relations and communication in general.

[125] For their arrival in Britain, see *Times*, 9 Oct. 1916, p.10, 'Dominion Ministers in London. New Zealand and the War. Views of the Visitors.'

[126] Their main objective was to secure an improved contract from Whitehall for New Zealand farmers, particulary meat farmers. For an account of their stay, see Kay, 'In Pursuit of Victory', 134-53.

whether they were 'prepared to acquiesce' for Britain to give 'some pledge on the subject'. The cable sent to New Zealand added that 'Mr. Massey has seen this telegram and expressed favourable opinion'.

This coincided with a statement Ward had made only days earlier and in reaction to the recent peace proposals. The press deemed this 'the first public utterance regarding the fate of the German colonies' and Ward was credited as saying that 'he saw with regret that the magnificent Entente Note to President Wilson had not referred to the captured territories' and warning that 'Australia and New Zealand, whose blood had won the colonies in the Pacific, were determined that they would never go back to the enemy' and that 'they would never be content with a reversion to pre-war conditions.'[127] Only days later, and overlapping with the Anglo-Australasian communication over being approached by Japan, Long publicly proclaimed that 'no man [should] think that these [Pacific] colonies will ever return to German rule' and that that 'our Oversea Empire will not tolerate any suggestion of the kind'.[128] This was intra-imperial appeasement at work.

In the midst of this, the Americans had broken off diplomatic relations with Germany on 3 February following the latter's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, and the British War Cabinet found that 'the possible entry into the War of the United States of America increased the necessity for an early decision in regard to Japan and Shantung and the occupied German islands north of the Equator, in order to avoid negotiations on the subject with another Power'.[129]

Long sent another cable to Australia and New Zealand on the same day, emphasizing the importance of the matter:

> In considering request of Japanese Government I wish to bring to attention of your Government the following considerations ... Apart from naval assistance, which has been of considerable use to the Admiralty the Japanese have rendered both to ourselves and to the Russians great service in supplying guns, munitions etc. Besides the importance attached by us to the continuance of this help I think I ought to add that one of Germany's chief endeavours has

[127] *Otago Daily Times*, 29 Jan. 1917, p.5, 'The Conquered Territories. Must not go back to the Enemy. Sir J.G. Ward Strikes the Note.', London, 27 Jan. 1917.
[128] TNA, CO 532/91, fols 195-7, SSCols to GGSA, cable, 8 Feb 1917, clipping, source unknown, 'The Future of German Colonies', and GGSA to SSCols, cable, 6 Feb. 1917.
[129] TNA, CAB 23/1/54, WC 54, Minutes of a Meeting, 5 Feb. 1917.

> been and is to detach Japan from the Allies, and we must do all we can to frustrate this policy. Any answer which could be interpreted as unfavourable to the aspirations of the Japanese would react inevitably on their general attitude, and have a most unfortunate effect on the general course of the war.[130]

The pressure the Dominions were put under to agree to the Japanese request seems extraordinary, invoking that they might be bearing a responsibility for Japan possibly going rogue and thereby for the general outcome of the war, and it is also interesting that the War Cabinet's thoughts about the United States entering the war were not mentioned. But it is also worth noting that London felt obliged to receive the green light from Melbourne and Wellington before sending a formal agreement to Tokyo.

Liverpool confirmed on 6 February that 'my Government agree with views expressed by Massey re Pacific Islands'.[131] The Australian response was more complicated, and Munro Ferguson cabled that the 'Commonwealth Government will carefully abstain from saying or doing anything likely to strain or make difficult the relations between HMG and Japan either in regard to the future partition of the Pacific or in regard to trade or any other matter', but that Hughes was to 'lay before you the views of the Commonwealth Government at length' when in London again.[132] This created irritation, and the Foreign Office thought that 'the Australian Govt. have not understood the urgency of a decision'.[133] Long's following intervention yielded the desired answer from Australia, but one without enthusiasm: 'No objection to giving to Japan some such pledge as referred to in your telegram of 8th February.'[134] He explained to his War Cabinet colleagues that 'there was considerable anxiety in the Dominions lest the British Government should sacrifice the interests of the Dominions or give up their conquests for purely European objects'.[135]

Balfour then instructed Greene to inform the Japanese that '[HMG] accede with pleasure to the request of the Japanese Government for an assurance that they will

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[130] TNA, FO 371/2950, fols 151-3, Lambert, CO, to USS FO, letter, 6 Feb. 1917, with attachment, SSCols to GGAus and GNZ, cable, 5 Feb. 1917.
[131] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.158, Fiddes, CO, to FO, letter, 7 Feb. 1917, with attachment no.1, Liverpool to Long, cable, received 6 Feb. 1917.
[132] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.162, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 7 Feb. 1917.
[133] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.161, handwritten note marked 'JDF', 8 Feb. 1917.
[134] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.179, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 8 Feb. 1917; fol.174, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 10 Feb. 1917.
[135] TNA, CO 532/91, fol.231, Extract from Minutes of WC Meeting, 12 Feb. 1917.

support Japan's claims in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and possessions in Islands North of the Equator on the occasion of a Peace Conference' and that it was 'understood that the Japanese Government will, in the eventual peace settlement, treat in the same spirit Great Britain's claims to the German Islands South of the Equator'.[136] Tokyo obliged, and both countries had a territorial agreement in place in all but name. What was disguised as a quid-pro-quo to incentivise the Japanese towards greater naval support took the shape of a rash deal before the Americans entered the war, the agreement's other, if not the main motivator.

The Tokyo government wanted the case to be as secure as possible before the international community and also approached the French and Russian governments and even the Italians to give their consent. All three acquiesced after having previously been briefed by London about the outcome of its own negotiations.[137] Their motivations were varied. The French expected their rights in Yunnan and their railway connection from that region into Indochina to be protected, whereas the Russians expected being given heavy artillery.[138] The Italians were included in the web of arrangements by the guarantees they had been given in 1915.

Thus, by March 1917, the Japanese had their own 'Treaty of London', a quasi-formal territorial guarantee sanctioned by all main Allied war parties, and Long summed up that 'the Pacific question … is gradually settling itself'.[139] In reality, it was not quite so, as any colonial settlement had to hinge on the outcome of the war.[140] Also, the Americans were on the war's horizon, and their political impact, which the recent dealings were designed to precautionarily undermine, was yet to be tested.

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[136] TNA, FO 371/2950, fols 198-9, FO note, 14 Feb.1917, with attached memo., FO, handed to Japanese Ambassador London, 14 Feb. 1917.

[137] MAE, NS Japon, 88, fol. 192, Regnault, Tokyo, to Briand, letter, 8 Feb. 1917; fols 199-200, memo. by de Margerie, 25 Feb. 1917; fols 218-9, Briand to Cambon, London, letter, 19 March 1917. MAE, Série E, Australie, 6, fol.6, French Embassy Tokyo to MAE, cable, 1 March 1917; fol.7, MAE to French Embassy Tokyo, cable, 6 March 1917; fol. 8, Russian Embassy Tokyo to Japanese Foreign Ministry, letter, 5 March 1917; fol.9, Japanese Foreign Ministry to Russian Embassy Tokyo, letter, 8 March 1917; fol.10, memo. by Japanese Embassy, Rome, for Italian Foreign Minister, 23 March 1917; fol. 11, note on acceptance by Italian Foreign Minister, undated.

[138] MAE, NS Japon, 88, fols 197-8, Briand to Tokyo, London, Rome, Washington, Peking, cable, 24 Feb.1917; fols 199-200, MAE memo., 25 Feb. 1917, unsigned.

[139] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, fols 1397-1407, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 15 Feb. 1917.

[140] Bethmann Hollweg had anticipated that, in accordance with Bismarck, 'our victories on the continent will secure us colonial possessions'. This was taken from a speech to parliament on 5 April 1916. See BA Berlin, R901/56354, clipping, *Deutscher Kurier*, 22 May 1917, 'Die Kriegsziele des Reichskanzlers'.

Chapter 4
Peace, tension and war again: February to December 1917

What the events of February 1917 had revealed were paradoxes. The Japanese felt obliged to use their navally dominant position to extract assurances which, in turn, were meant to mitigate their perceived weakness *vis-à-vis* the United States.[1] Britain, meanwhile, was relying on a partner with whom its Australasian Dominions and, indeed, Britain itself had a troubled relationship.

Some in Whitehall had been voicing their concern about Japan since the beginning of the war. This now culminated in a memorandum Balfour wrote for the Imperial War Conference, which was about to start in March along with the IWC.[2] While he touched upon a range of topics to do with Japan, the memorandum essentially had two main narratives, one apologetic and vindicatory, the other uneasy and anxious. The former was represented by statements suggesting that '[German] intrigues had to be thwarted, and the only possible way of doing so was to recognise Japan's privileged position in the Far East, and leave to her the initiative in the conduct of all questions affecting the Allied interests'.[3] Another example is that 'British policy towards Japan during the war has, from the nature of things, been determined by necessity' and that the war had absorbed 'all British energy into the West and led to an indefinite condition of impotence in the Far East'. This claim was a segue into the second narrative, encapsulated by declarations that the Anglo-Japanese relationship had 'during a long period [been] determined ... by fear', that the Japanese had become the

[1] The Japanese were still the strongest naval power in the Pacific, even more so than at the beginning of the war, after the British Empire had withdrawn all big ships from the Pacific. The Americans did not have a strong presence either and had their main fleet in the Atlantic. However, they passed a significant piece of legislation, the Naval Act of 1916, also called the 'Big Navy Act'. Wilson had decided to build 'incomparably, the greatest Navy in the world' over a ten-year period with the intent of making the U.S. Navy equal to any two others in the world, so far the British standard. Among its stipulations, the Act specified the construction of 16 capital ships and 30 submarines. This caused great anxiety in Japan, and the Japanese reacted by matching this number of 16, which incidentally corresponded with their pre-war tentative 'eight-eight' construction programme (eight battleships and battlecruisers each). This, in turn, led to the Americans deciding to build even more capital ships, which they could afford much more easily than the Japanese. This arms race was only resolved at the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-22, see Epilogue.

[2] Britain had invited some members of its empire, notably the Dominions, to talk about the conduct of the war and future of imperial relations. The Conference was the war-time equivalent of the Imperial Conferences and met from 21 March to 27 April 1917, whereas the IWC sat from 20 March to 2 May.

[3] Trotter, vol.2, doc.242, memo. on Anglo-Japanese Relations, March 1917.

'Prussian[s] of the Far East -- fanatically patriotic, nationally aggressive, individually truculent, fundamentally deceitful', and that 'it is impossible to find any common ground between the ideals and aspirations of the [British] Empire and those of our Japanese Allies'. Balfour chose strong language, and both narratives reflected the uncertainty in Britain about Japanese motives.

They did not reflect, however, the successful naval cooperation between the two countries which was now in its third year. Thus, navally speaking, it continued to be business as usual, albeit under much greater pressure for Britain after the Germans resumed their unconditional submarine warfare.[4] John Jellicoe, First Sea Lord since November 1916, spoke before the IWC in April 1917 and urged it to reduce overseas British naval commitments even further because they were throwing an 'intolerable strain on the Admiralty'.[5] This, it was clear, was only possible with continued Japanese support, which remained a crucial element in Britain's global concept of naval war.

A particular feature of both the Conference and the IWC in 1917 was the Australians' absence. Domestic political turmoil after a conscription plebiscite in 1916 had led to a split in the Australian Labor Party, and the expelling from it of Prime Minister Hughes. This prompted a call for a new parliamentary election (May 1917) which in turn meant that Hughes could not travel to London himself, and he did not trust anyone else to represent the country. Harcourt, no longer colonial secretary, but still taking a keen interest and still in personal correspondence with Munro Ferguson in Australia, feared that 'nothing will be done … about the future administration of the German Islands in the Pacific' without the Australian representatives at the table.[6]

This statement reveals both that, at least, the subject was to be discussed, and Australia's significance in the debate. The agenda for the Conference included an item entitled 'The Pacific Question', and New Zealand's delegation took it upon itself to represent the Australasian political and strategic position in London, although Munro

[4] The German campaign, in its unconditional form, had been stopped in 1915 under American pressure following the *Lusitania* attack. For a detailed account, see R.H. Gibson and Maurice Prendergast, *The German Submarine War 1914-1918* (Penzance, 2002 reprint, original from 1931), chs 6 and 8. Another authoritative, but more recent account, is Paul G. Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Annapolis, 1994), chs 10 and 11.
[5] TNA, CAB 23/40/12, IWC 12, Minutes of a Meeting, 26 April 1917.
[6] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/1416-7, Harcourt to Munro Ferguson, private letter, 14 March 1917.

Ferguson wrote in a draft cable that the Australians found it 'undesirable N.Z. Premier s'd speak for Australia'.[7]

Nevertheless, Ward, New Zealand's deputy leader since August 1915, made an emphatic intervention. Claiming 'no interests connected with the Empire anywhere … have been so neglected as the interests in the Pacific' and complaining that, since in London, 'I have met many people who have no notion of what the Pacific means', he reaffirmed a call for the Western Pacific to be British and white. He located the 'next great struggle of civilization' in the Pacific Ocean, insisting a coming battle between 'white' and 'yellow' would determine the 'supremacy of the world'.[8] Ultimately, though, Ward did not mind whether whiteness was sustained beneath a British or an American flag. This did not so much contradict his professions of loyalty to Britain as reveal the degree to which Ward's priorities lay in the region.[9]

Ward's second main point was on Samoa. He warned that 'we will display the very strongest opposition to any suggestion that this territory should revert to the enemy' and cautioned against its potential as a naval and aviation base if used against British territory in the Pacific, in particular in conjunction with the technological advances expected in the future.[10] To emphasise the gravity of his concerns, Ward compared Samoa to Ireland under a German flag and warned that Australia, New Zealand and Fiji would 'curse the British generation that allowed it to be done [Samoa being returned to Germany]'. Finally, he urged those 'at the heart of the Empire' to think 'a great deal' about the Pacific. Ward's discourse thus registered two positions, one anti-Japanese, the other anti-German. The first, based on the recent awareness of defence shortages

[7] NLA, Novar Papers, MS696/2602, Draft cable for SSCols, by MF, [Feb. 1917].
[8] NAA, A11803, 1917/89/977, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 3 Oct. 1917, with attached proceedings at Imperial War Conference from 30 March 1917, 'The Pacific Question'. Ward cited the work of an as yet obscure American newspaper editor, Frank Knox, and in particular a piece of his from 1912 entitled 'Problems of the Pacific'. Knox was a strong advocate of American military intervention in the war and became Navy Secretary under Roosevelt in 1940.
[9] Born in Australia and with a career in New Zealand, but with Irish roots, Ward was a product of two 'regionalisms'. Also, it can be hypothesised that Ward's attitude to and notion of race was regionally inflected, stretching across the entire Pacific to the United States, and was thereby based on the Pacific/the Pacific Rim, or a part of it, as a space of whiteness.
[10] He phrased it as 'not too much to suppose that for a certainty you will have a huge development under water and in the air'. This reflected the recent German achievements in long-distance operations, such as a U-boat mission reaching the American East Coast in October 1916, which Ward would have been aware of, and anticipated future developments and the use of the weapon in the Second World War. See further below for some detail on advancements in U-boat technology between 1914 and 1918.

and on race ideology, expressed deep anxieties against a perceived geopolitical and cultural threat, whereas the second reflected uncertainty about what a post-war deal would bring, and lack of confidence in London's commitment to securing one in New Zealand's favour.[11]

Maurice de Bunsen from the British Foreign Office had prepared for such criticism.[12] With regard to the recent guarantee given to Japan, he pointed out that Britain had 'intimated to her [Japan] that her claim should not descend south of the Equator'. He continued that this was 'an important act of policy which will be something to guide us when peace comes'. At a stroke, de Bunsen's rhetoric had shifted the goalposts and now assumed the Equator as the Anglo-Japanese new normal negotiating position. And there was more from him, worth quoting in full:

> I think it is very much felt that there must be considerable friction, and conflict even, between Japan and the United States with regard to Pacific questions. I think it is hoped that we shall be in very much the position of friend of both parties -- we can say that even more to-day than we could before, owing to the recent action in the United States -- and of holding the balance between their aspirations in the Pacific, and when the conflict appears imminent we hope to be able to step in and avert it by giving friendly advice to both sides.

This was either a statement about a Pacific inevitably dominated between Tokyo and San Francisco/Washington that was of limited interest to London and not worth fighting for, or a rhetorical surrender, effectively admitting that all Britain had to offer against the two new giants was 'friendly advice'. Maybe it was both, but this was a Euro-centric view. Invoking American and Japanese 'aspirations in the Pacific' without mentioning British ones could easily be read as Britain not having any. 'Japanese ambitions', de Bunsen added, 'may be restrained by the lessons of this War', but he had to admit that 'we cannot absolutely ... put all the dots on the "i's"'.

[11] On 'the centrality of racial thought in the colonial nation-building project' in the to-be-Dominions, see a recent publication by Cornelis Heere, ''That racial chasm that yawns eternally in our midst': the British empire and the politics of Asian migration', *Historical Research*, 90, 249 (2017). Expanding on ideas of 'vulgar racism' and a 'vision of race solidarity', see John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: the Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2012), 397-9.

[12] NAA, A11803, 1917/89/977, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 3 Oct. 1917, with attached proceedings at Imperial War Conference from 24 April 1917.

War-time co-ordination was not dealt with by the Conference but by the IWC, as were the terms of a possible post-war peace arrangement.[13] The Australians thus missed out on being consulted on both levels. The IWC had a report prepared on 'possible terms [of] peace' by Leo Amery, a staunch proponent of imperial unity who had been appointed Assistant Secretary to both the IWC and the War Cabinet.[14] Amery reflected on Germany and its colonialism and pointed out that there were two German policies, a Middle-European one and one of sea power and expansion at the expense of the British Empire. The latter, he argued, certainly with satisfaction, was 'for the moment defeated'. If Germany was in a position to recover its colonies or even add to them, however, Amery expected that it would secure them better against conquest and establish bases for submarines and raiders. Stereotyping Germany, he predicted that if it had to surrender one of the policies, it would surrender colonial expansion, as the Middle-European policy corresponded with German 'instincts', whereas colonialism had 'no great historical tradition [in Germany]'. This view is relevant, as it was later used, among other justifications, to make the 'cultural' case for formally ridding Germany of its colonies. His other discourse was on imperial defence. He stressed that the 'self-governing Dominions ... are still far too thinly populated to be able to cope by themselves with any serious naval or military menace' and that their 'seas should be kept clear of hostile naval bases'. The aim for the British Empire 'in one word [was] security'. Advocating some version of forward defence, Amery's stance was strikingly proactive and contrasted with de Bunsen's dovishness.

The IWC had now formed a 'Committee on Terms of Peace', which included Massey. Regarding territorial aims, its work was informed by the previous findings of the CID's Sub-Committee on Territorial Changes. A report summarising its meetings struck a similar tone to Amery's, referencing 'arrangements to be made about the Retention or Surrender of Conquered Territory either with our Allies or (in the Last Resort) with the Enemy'.[15] While the reciprocal Anglo-Japanese guarantees from February were acknowledged, a greater part of the report was dedicated to Germany. The British

[13] TNA, CAB 23/40/9, IWC 9, Minutes of a Meeting, 12 April 1917.
[14] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 105, MS 1538/16/ 3576, IWC, 'Notes on possible terms of peace', Amery, 11 April 1917, printed May 1917.
[15] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 105, MS 1538/16/ 3574, IWC, Report of Committee on Terms of Peace (Territorial Desiderata), 28 April 1917, includes 'Minutes of the Committee of the [IWC] on territorial desiderata in the terms of peace', from five meetings in April 1917.

position towards Germany was thus outlined as follows: 'The retention of the German islands and colonies in the Pacific south of the Equator, in order to eliminate all possible future naval bases in this region, is required for the security of the British Australasian Dominions' who have 'legitimate claims' to them. Moreover, a contingency plan for 'the event of an unsuccessful termination of the war, and the necessity of the restoration of some portions of her lost territories to Germany' was discussed and the 'importance of making no restoration to Germany in the Pacific' was stressed. The Germans were thus to be kept out of the Pacific perpetually whichever way the war ended. Massey's involvement in the Committee's work had borne fruit.

However, after the IWC reviewed the report, the wording became more circumspect. Although the importance of the security of the Empire was emphasised and German colonialism described as 'aggressive and directed against the British', the conclusion drafted by Lord Curzon, an inner War Cabinet member in his capacity as Lord President of the Council, and Austen Chamberlain, the India secretary, stated that the 'Imperial War Cabinet, in accepting the Report of the Committee as an indication of the objects to be sought by the British Representatives at the Peace Conference and of their relative importance, rather than as definite instructions from which they are not intended in any circumstances to depart, notes that the demands of the British Empire will require to be correlated at the Conference with those of our Allies'.[16] It seems that the British Government, once exposed to scrutiny, was not willing to commit itself to a narrow post-war policy, to which it could be held accountable. The use of soft formulations, not least the wording of the report being an 'indication', is telling and was meant to give British negotiators flexibility for the anticipated negotiations, be it with Allies, enemies or Dominions.

Thus, ultimately, the one policy statement the Australasians (as represented by the New Zealand delegation) expected but did not get was a British promise towards the retention of the occupied German Pacific south of the Equator. Massey acknowledged as much before parliament in Wellington after his return, maintaining that 'there is a difference of opinion with regard to the German colonies, though not in Australia or

[16] TNA, CAB 23/40/13, IWC 13, Minutes of a Meeting, 1 May 1917.

New Zealand.'[17] His concern was that 'these islands are allowed to become … pawns in the political game, and are given back at the end of war', which his long visit from autumn 1916 until late spring 1917 had not dispelled.

The community of interest (or maybe perceived destiny) was once more defined as existing more intimately between Australia and New Zealand than with the mother country. Massey formulated this as follows on a different occasion: 'here we are in the South Pacific, two nations, one race, one language, one in defence; our interests are the same, our sympathies are the same … We must act together for the purpose of seeing that those islands [of the Pacific] do not pass under German domination'.[18] David Buddo, a senior politician and MP in New Zealand, went further and advocated 'a close and intimate alliance with Australia', and Massey also agreed with 'the necessity of Australia and New Zealand coming more closely together'.[19]

The dilemma Britain was facing is reflected by some of Long's statements. On the one hand, he had promised the Australasians ahead of the IWC that they would retain the German colonies. This stance was confirmed by the American ambassador Page in London. An outsider to the British system, but not unfamiliar with it, he opined that 'Britain will be unable to return [the] German colonies, which Australia will not permit'.[20] On the other hand, Long admitted in a letter to Australia that it was 'not easy to discuss [the] future [of the German Pacific islands] at all until the Government here is in a position to know what the final terms of the peace will be'.[21] This was a catch-22, impossible to resolve until late in the war, as German defeat was becoming predictable. Without this certainty, the British government was unwilling to commit itself in 1917.

It was also around this time that the French contemplated their possible claims in the Pacific as a result of the war. This was initiated by André Ballande, an MP from Gironde, the area around Bordeaux with its maritime history, and a businessman with commercial interests in the Pacific, who lamented that the French had not participated

[17] NLNZ, *NZPD*, vol. 178, House of Representatives, 3 July 1917.
[18] NLNZ, *NZPD*, vol. 178, House of Representatives, 17 July 1917.
[19] Ibid.
[20] *FRUS 1917, War Supplement 1*, 41-4, 763.72119/488, Page to SS, cable, 11 Feb. 1917.
[21] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/1416-7, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 14 March 1917.

in the 'provisional occupation, not even of Samoa' and wrote a memorandum about the 'Future Carve-up of the German Pacific Ocean colonies' that suggested that the French at least take Samoa as a war spoil.[22] The MAE took on the conversation and contacted the Navy Department to explore what the French had done in the Pacific during the war that they could throw into future negotiations.[23] The *Marine* certainly had an opinion and explained how *Montcalm* had participated in the Australasian landings in Samoa and New Guinea in 1914 but complained that the Australians had a 'tendency to [subsequently] ignore' the fact that the French had helped them.[24] The conversation then did not move on from the ministerial level, but provides an interesting parallel to the political workings in Germany where the Pacific business and naval lobby with its particular, non-mainstream agenda was also trying to make itself heard at the political centre.

Meanwhile, the American administration had declared war on Germany on 6 April to 'make the world safe for democracy'. Despite its ramifications for British strategy in the Pacific, this earthquake of an announcement was not taken up during official proceedings by the IWC, and it was at the War Cabinet level where some thoughts were framed, and where the views of the Australasian Dominions were voiced by the Colonial Secretary. The possibility of a defensive naval alliance between the United States and Britain, and even a triple alliance including Japan, were discussed, but it was finally concluded that

> it would be very inadvisable to do anything at the present stage of the war that could give the Japanese any justifiable ground for suspicion, and so upset the present situation in the Pacific. This view was endorsed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, who pointed out that Australia and New Zealand, which had originally assented with some reluctance to the Japanese request for our support in the matter of the Pacific islands north of the Equator, were now satisfied both with the arrangement and with the general attitude of Japan, and

[22] MAE, 1914-1940, A. Paix, 78, fols 143-5, Ballande to MAE, letter, 8 Feb 1917, with attachment, 'Note sur le partage éventuel des Colonies Allemandes de l'Océan Pacifique', undated; fols 164-74, Ballande to MAE, letter, 7 April 1917. Ballande's business interests in the Pacific included shipping, trade and mining (nickel), focussing on the New Hebrides and New Caledonia in particular. See Robert Aldrich, *The French presence in the South Pacific, 1842-1940* (Basingstoke, 1990), 119-21, 131.
[23] MAE, 1914-1940, A. Paix, 78, fol.157, MAE to Marine, letter, 18 March 1917; fol.158, MAE to Ballande, letter, 20 March 1917.
[24] MAE, 1914-1940, A. Paix, 78, fols 159-61, Marine to MAE, letter, 30 March 1917.

> would no doubt be seriously disturbed by anything that would endanger the safety of the Pacific.[25]

This statement reflects Britain's reluctance to disturb the fragile diplomatic balance and understanding London had by now created not only with Japan, but also with Australia and New Zealand, although the latter two greeted the Americans into the war with enthusiasm and would have been supportive of an Anglo-American alliance, not only for Britain's reasons, but for their own.

From New Zealand, Alfred Winslow, the American consul-general in Auckland, wrote that 'I was given to understand [by Governor Liverpool] that the New Zealand people were delighted with the turn events had taken, and that every facility possible would be given to Americans and American interests from now'.[26] This zeal was shared by Auckland's deputy mayor who struck a racial tone in calling the new transpacific ally 'our American cousins' while exclaiming that 'all Britishers would welcome the Stars and Stripes flying at [the] side of the Union Jack'.[27] Winslow foresaw a turning of the page after New Zealand's grudge about Washington's previous absence from the war (and its latest peace initiative[28]) and predicted 'that from now on the general anti-American feeling that has been so strong in this country will begin to fade away. The officials have been cordial for the past year or more, but the people in general have not'. He concluded euphorically that '[this] will strengthen my hands here very greatly ... and means much for Americans in this part of the world'. The *Auckland Star* added that 'Japan … will have more respect for an America that is more prepared for war than America has been', suggesting that it saw the United States as a potential guarantor for New Zealand's security against Japan.[29]

The Australians even discussed the sending of American warships to Australian waters, and Creswell thought that 'entirely apart from the material assistance that American

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[25] TNA, CAB 23/2, fols 178-83, WC 142, Minutes of a Meeting, 22 May 1917.
[26] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 38, 763.72/4604, Winslow to SS, letter, 17 April 1917, with attached newspaper clippings from *Auckland Star*, 13 April 1917 and *NZ Herald*, 16 April 1917.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Massey's take on Wilson's peace initiative from December 1916 is reflected in a statement he made to New Zealand soldiers in Britain, expressing his hope that 'the Wilson peace proposals would be turned down, or the soldiers' hardships would have gone for nought'. *Grey River Argus*, 27 Dec. 1916, cited in James Watson, *WF Massey: New Zealand* (London, 2010), 66-7.
[29] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 38, 763.72/4604, Winslow to SS, letter, 17 April 1917, with attached newspaper clippings from, *Auckland Star*, 13 April 1917 and *NZ Herald*, 16 April 1917.

vessels could give at this time, the diplomatic effect would be enormous'.[30] The American consul in Melbourne, William Magelssen, with whom Creswell had shared his views, saw an 'opportunity to regain the confidence and win the lasting gratitude of a Nation and a people who are no doubt destined to play an important role in the future of the Pacific' after Australia's 'love and regard for us [had] collapsed as a house of cards' at the outbreak of the war. Magelssen's counterpart in Sydney, Consul General Joseph Brittain, agreed that Australia had taken a very friendly turn towards the United States since the US's entering the war, but warned that sending American cruisers to Australian waters might 'be misunderstood by the Japanese Government and our motive misconstrued' and might further 'cause the Japanese Government to suspect that the Australian Government had not placed full confidence in its sincerity'.[31]

Brittain was certainly right with his analysis, and it is remarkable that the Australian government would consider such an act of non-British diplomacy, but the proposal was taken seriously and escalated to Lansing who replied favourably: 'I believe that good results would follow the proposed visit of the American war vessels to Australia.'[32] Finally, the initiative was not followed through as the Americans were focussing on the naval war in the Atlantic and on improving relations with the Japanese.[33] Nevertheless, it illustrates once more the tentative pursuit of an independent Australasian geostrategic interest from Melbourne and its open reciprocation by the Americans, who were anxious to see Australia as a sovereign power.[34] They had no qualms about bypassing the diplomatic channel through London when the potential of a Pacific

[30] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 41, 763.72/5002, Magelssen to SS, letter, 19 April 1917. Beyond the symbolism, a German naval scare had emerged in the Pacific in 1917. See below.
[31] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 41, 763.72/5001, Brittain to SS, letter, 30 April 1917.
[32] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 41, 763.72/5002, SS to SecNavy, letter, 23 June 1917.
[33] On 12 May 1917, Lansing had suggested to Sato Aimaro, the Japanese ambassador in Washington, that his government send an envoy for discussions across the Pacific, which could 'contribute to the friendly relations between the two nations'. The idea was favourably received by the Japanese, thereby making an American naval expedition to Australia an inconvenient distraction at this stage. See *FRUS 1917, War Supplement 2*, vol. I, 62-3, Sato to SS, letter, 12 May 1917; SS to Sato, letter, 15 May 1917; JapFO to Sato, cable, left at SD by Sato, 23 May 1917; SS to Sato, letter, 23 May 1917.
[34] The discourse, albeit of no immediate consequence, parallels the visit of President Roosevelt's Great White Fleet in 1908 and Prime Minister Deakin's idea of an Australian-US Entente Cordiale for the Pacific in 1909, and was thus following up on earlier tentative attempts at finding common strategic ground between Washington and Melbourne. Meaney, vol.1, *Search for Security in the Pacific*, 163-71, 192-4.

partnership with a British sub-imperial power was explored, but were more concerned with transpacific relations with Japan.

If Australians and New Zealanders were enthused by their American 'cousins' joining the fight against the enemy, the Japanese had their own views. In an awkward piece of diplomacy, John Callan O'Laughlin, former Assistant Secretary of State and now a *Chicago Herald* correspondent, reported to Lansing on a conversation he had had with the counselor and the third secretary at the Japanese embassy in Washington about Japan's feelings about the United States going to war. He wrote about their meeting on 13 April, one week into the war for the Americans:

> The Japanese Government is extremely suspicious of the great war preparations which the United States is making. In conversation with me on April 13th Messrs. Tanaka and Saito said their government was "alarmed". Subsequently they modified this statement by the assertion that "it could not understand" the object of the United States in creating such a vast army. They believed that while a navy is essential to the United States, we can have no use for an army, unless it is to attack Japanese pretensions in the Pacific and Far East. They frankly discredited the view that the United States is fighting for humanity and democracy, and asserted we must have some ulterior motive for our action.[35]

To what extent this view represented the 'official mind' in Tokyo cannot be assessed with certainty. It would seem irrational for the Japanese to entertain a scenario in which the American administration would use its resources and in particular its army, destined for the European theatre, in the Pacific. Others in Tokyo took issue with American naval expansion, a more plausible scenario, and the American Embassy there reported in a press review that Japanese naval captains were credited with expressing fear that the United States would demand for itself the 'domination of the Pacific' after the war, which the current American shipbuilding programme was making more likely in their view.[36] The IJN's preoccupation with the United States also reflects its own aspirations in the Pacific and the Americans' growing potential to thwart them. Similarly, Eugène Regnault, the French ambassador in Tokyo, reported on Okuma's and Kato's preoccupation with being isolated at an after-war peace conference and that some in the press had suggested a more active Japanese participation in the European

[35] NARA CP, RG 59, M423, roll 2, 711.94/259A, Lansing to Wilson, letter, 30 April 1917, with attachment, memo. for the SS by JC O'Laughlin, 19 April 1917.
[36] NARA CP, RG59, M367, roll 33, 763.72/3536, Embassy Tokyo to SS, letter, 22 Feb. 1917.

war to counter the possibility of an estrangement with the Anglo-Americans and an associated risk of losing its colonial gains.[37] According to this source, the Japanese were also concerned about their naval role of currently being the 'guardian of the Pacific', and their standing in the wider war being downgraded if the Americans took over some of these tasks. Motono thus spoke of a new Japanese 'dedication to the common cause'.

Essentially, the Japanese felt much less safe in their bubble of geostrategic security, which they thought might burst under American pressure. Having been sheltered from the war in Europe, the prospect of the Americans now being in the game and soon sitting at the peace conference table had shifted the Japanese diplomatic imagination. What was more, Tokyo also anticipated that London might shift its allegiance to Washington to the point of entering into some form of Anglo-American anti-Japanese compact, as reported by O'Laughlin who pointed out that his interlocuters had told him that Japan was 'dismayed by the closer relations between the United States and Great Britain which our entrance into the war has brought about' and 'fear[s] that one of the results will be [Anglo-American] cooperation in China and consequent action against Japanese ambitions in China and the Pacific'.[38]

This touched on the core of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the cooperation that had resulted from it since August 1914. Despite the war-gaming on both sides of the Pacific and Britain's known unwillingness to side with Japan in case of a future conflict with the United States, there were no indications at this stage that the American administration was contemplating challenging the Japanese position in the Pacific Ocean, let alone going to war with Japan.[39] As a matter of fact, there was a tendency in the opposite direction, reflected by a surprising comment by Lansing on O'Laughlin's memorandum. Responding to a Japanese request that measures of reassurance be put

[37] MAE, NS Japon, 89, Regnault to Ribot, letter, 15 June 1917.
[38] These anxieties were also reflected in the Japanese press. Although the press reaction was reported as 'generally positive', the *Hochi* wrote that the Americans had entered the war only because its end was in sight and in order to participate in the peace conference, while the *Sekai* maintained that the war was a mere pretext for Washington to increase the size of its army and navy in order to challenge Japan at some future time. See NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 37, 763.72/4440, Wheeler, Tokyo, to SS, cable, 20 April 1917.
[39] The Anglo-Japanese Alliance provided a promise of support if either signatory became involved in war with more than one power. Thus, legally speaking, Britain was not obliged to come to Japan's assistance so long as Japan fought the US alone, though its position would be very uncomfortable diplomatically.

in place by the United States, including a commitment not to fortify the Philippines, he claimed that 'if we could only let go [of the Philippines], what a blessing it would be' and that 'Japan would be glad to buy the Philippines if we would sell them to her'.[40] Lansing admitted that the idea was 'one which I wish that we could consider but I fear that it is out of the question'. Lansing's perception of the Philippines as a burden rather than an asset to the United States, incidentally, was not entirely out of step with some views in American naval circles, although their abandonment remained a political impossibility.

Before the Americans had entered the war, and before securing the British guarantee from February, Motono had emphasised that Japan's 'foreign policy is based upon our alliance with England', which was 'the essential guarantee for the maintenance of order and peace in the Far East'.[41] Now, in the summer of 1917, this was truer than ever to Tokyo. Motono told the Diet as much, albeit in somewhat coded language. According to the American Counselor at the Tokyo embassy, George Post Wheeler, Motono 'stated that the Japanese Government has taken properly effective measures to protect Japan's rights and interests in Shantung and the Southern Islands and concluded "[I] am very confident that upon restoration of peace the Allied powers will not object to such arrangements as Japan will deem necessary in order to ensure peace in the Orient"'.[42] Motono was referring to the recent guarantees that the Japanese had extracted, but his assumption was mere conjecture as far as the American administration was concerned. The Japanese had no indication at this stage that Lansing or Wilson were going to support or at least 'not object' to Japan's territorial claims, a situation they hoped the upcoming bilateral talks with the Americans would remedy.[43]

Meanwhile, no longer a neutral power, American action against Germany also extended to the Pacific. When an American naval detachment wanted to seize the now

[40] NARA CP, RG 59, M423, roll 2, 711.94/259A, Lansing to Wilson, letter, 30 April 1917, with attachment, memo. for SS by O'Laughlin, 19 April 1917.
[41] NARA DC, RG38, box 451, C-10-a, no 4353, clipping, *New York Times*, 4 March 1917, '"Japan Friendly to U.S.": Viscount Motono, Japanese Foreign Minister, Outlines His Country's Attitude Toward Other Nations', reporting on Motono's speech before the Diet on 23 Jan. 1917.
[42] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 44, 763.72/5569, Wheeler, Tokyo, to SS, cable, 27 June 1917.
[43] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 44, 763.72/5653, Wheeler, Tokyo, to SS, cable, 14 June 1917. These 'Lansing-Ishii talks' will be explored below.

belligerent *Cormoran* at Guam, its German occupants tried to blow it up. The details of the events are not entirely clear, but nine Germans are known to have been killed in the process, either by the explosion which crippled the ship or by the American marines trying to prevent it, and the incident remained the only hostile encounter between the United States and Germany in the Pacific Ocean. The seizing of the *Geier* at Honolulu occurred without the use of violence, and the ship subsequently entered American service as the USS *Schurz*.[44]

Navally speaking, another string of events created excitement in the Pacific Ocean and beyond in 1917 when two separate German long-distance raiding missions appeared, one coming from the Atlantic around Cape Horn, the other from the Indian Ocean. The former, carried out using a windjammer-turned-merchant raider, SMS *Seeadler*, reached the Pacific in April 1917 after previously capturing eleven ships in the Atlantic. She then sank another three in the Eastern Pacific between 14 June and 8 July 1917, before being wrecked on a reef in the Society Islands in French Polynesia.[45] The latter, undertaken by SMS *Wolf*, reached New Zealand waters in April 1917, then sailed around New Zealand and towards South-East Australia, before continuing north into the Western Pacific and then east back into the Indian Ocean.[46] *Wolf* created greater effect not by capturing and sinking, but by mine-laying, the former leading to 14 losses while the mines caused the loss of another 13 ships, but were of longer-term impact.[47] The Admiralty estimated that nearly 500 mines had been laid by *Wolf* in total,

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[44] Both events are briefly mentioned in Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 267-8.
For more on *Cormoran*, see Kurt Aßmann, Eberhard von Mantey (eds), *Der Krieg zur See 1914-1918, Der Kreuzerkrieg in den ausländischen Gewässern*, vol.3, *Die deutschen Hilfskreuzer* (Berlin, 1937), 110-2.

[45] The story of the *Seeadler* and particularly of its crew did not quite end there, at the island of Mopelia, when her commander Felix von Luckner and some of his crew captured an open boat, which they used to sail across the Pacific. They were apprehended in the Fijian archipelago and taken into captivity in New Zealand, from where they managed to flee on another captured boat. They were captured again at Macauley Island and interned in New Zealand once more. Von Luckner was released after the war and became a war hero in Germany, immortalising his story in his account entitled *Seeteufel*. Another part of the crew captured a French schooner at Mopelia and sailed to Easter Island, where they were interned by the Chileans.

[46] Unlike *Seeadler*, *Wolf* managed to return to Germany to a heroic welcome in February 1918. For an authoritative German account of both ships' operations in 1917, see the relevant chapters in Aßmann/von Mantey, vol.3, *Hilfskreuzer*. Note that *Wolf*'s predecessor was ready to sail on the same mission in February 1916, but was irreparably damaged before departure, which led to the mission's postponement to November 1916. See ibid, 238. Thus, if the previous *Wolf* had remained intact and managed to cross the British blockade, the ensuing emergency in the Pacific might have occurred in 1916.

[47] Among the losses, five captures, between 2 June and 6 August 1917, and three losses by mine, between 6 July 1917 and 26 June 1918, occurred in the Pacific, including in Australasian waters.

including in critical places such as the Cook Strait, Three Kings Islands off the north of New Zealand and Gabo Island on the south-eastern corner of Australia.[48] The last ship lost to a mine from *Wolf* was the Australian *Wimmera*, a passenger steamship travelling from Auckland to Sydney in June 1918, while the mine-sweeping effort lasted well into 1919.[49] The last mine, long detached from its original minefield, was found in Queensland in 1921.[50]

Faced with the danger, the Admiralty was forced to intervene, first and foremost for the security of Australia and New Zealand, but also to keep the transport routes to and from Australasia safe.[51] The timing of the two German expeditions could not have come at a worse time from a British perspective, with naval capacity in Europe stretched to the limits following the renewed German submarine challenge, while the Royal Navy's Australia Station only had one light cruiser, *Encounter*, and three destroyers at the time.[52] As a result, and 'in view of the possible presence of a raider in the Indian Ocean and the possibility of her operating in the South Pacific', the Admiralty told the Colonial Office that it had asked the Japanese 'to send ships to the coast of Queensland' and that the cruisers "Chikuma" and "Hirado" have now been ordered there with instructions from the Japanese Admiralty to patrol the Eastern Coast of Australia and New Zealand waters', of which Wellington and Melbourne were also informed.[53]

The brand-new Australian cruiser *Brisbane* was sent back from the Mediterranean to the Indian and then Pacific Oceans, and together with *Encounter* and the Japanese

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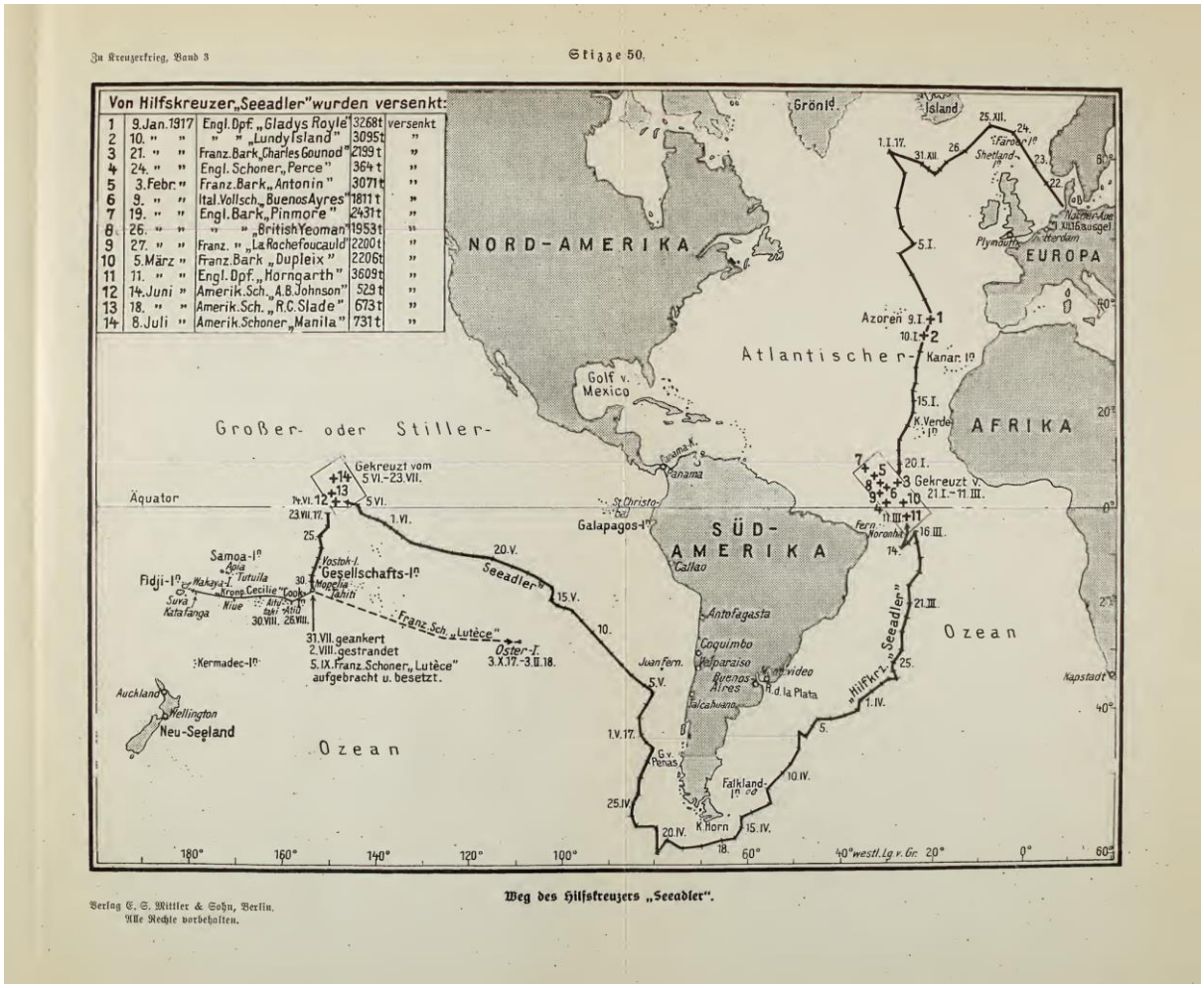
[48] ANZ, ACHK 16601 G46/2, ADM to SNO NZ, cable, 2 March 1918.
[49] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 362-4. For the mine-sweeping effort in New Zealand waters, see Peter Dennerly, 'New Zealand and the Naval War', in John Crawford, Ian McGibbon (eds), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies & the First World War* (Auckland, 2007), 324.
[50] Jose, *Royal Australian Navy*, 364.
[51] Incidentally, *Wolf*'s main operational target after carrying out mine-laying off the coasts of South Africa and British India was to disrupt the Australian wheat transports to Europe. Aßmann/von Mantey, vol.3, *Hilfskreuzer*, 240.
[52] TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.305, Anderson, Admiralty, to USS FO, letter, 29 March 1917.
[53] TNA, CO 616/71, fol.70, Anderson, Admiralty, to USS CO, letter, 19 April 1917. See also TNA, FO 371/2950, fol.328, Greene to Balfour, cable, 13 April 1917. This move came in anticipation rather than as a reaction to both cruisers' presence in the Pacific. *Wolf* arrived south of New Zealand's South Island in mid-April, while *Seeadler* rounded Cape Horn only days later, and thus after the British Admiralty's request for additional Japanese ships had been made. For some of the naval intelligence passing between Britain, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, see NAA Melbourne, MP1582/2, NN, Intelligence Statement no.23, CNB, 12 April 1917; and ANZ, ACHK 16601 G46/2, ADM to NIO Wellington, cable, 16 April 1917.

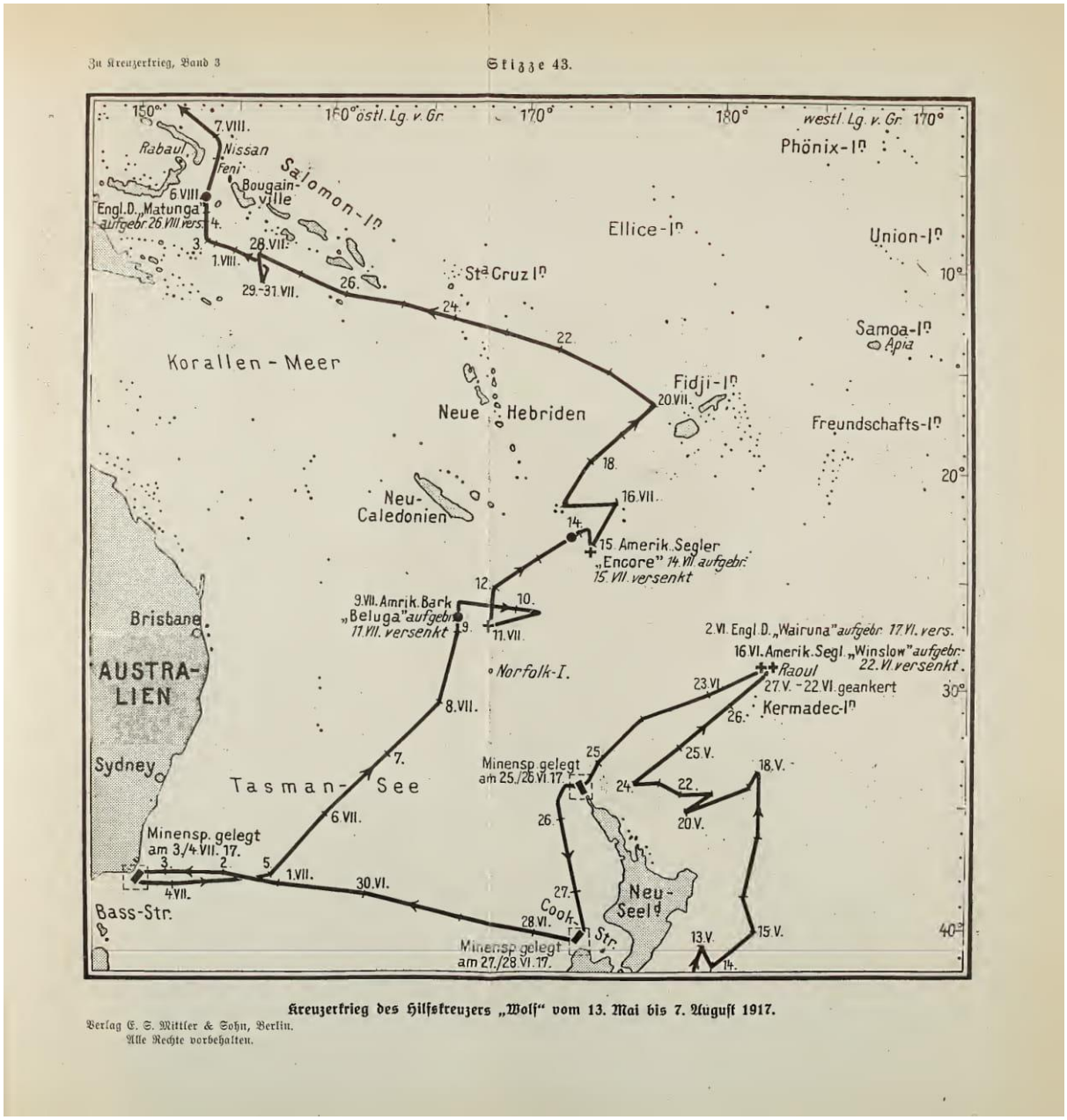
ships, the waters near Australia and New Zealand were kept safe, operating as far as Fiji, although *Encounter* also sailed out to French Polynesia on one occasion to check on *Seeadler*'s wreck-site. Neither the British Admiralty nor the Australian Naval Board knew what was going on in the Pacific in the summer of 1917, confounded by the different directions the German cruisers had sailed from and by missing or incorrect intelligence. The losses incurred from *Wolf*'s mines were at first not properly understood (in one particular incident it was assumed that a sinking had been caused by a boiler explosion), while the escape of *Seeadler*'s crew from the wreck-site in two different directions added to the confusion. While the German raiders did not act in concert and did not cause significant damage, the greatest effect achieved was psychological. Distant Australia and New Zealand had to realise that they could be exposed to the odd German raider slipping through the British naval blockade in Europe and striking suddenly at the other end of the world with deadly consequence. Furthermore, the tying up of resources was significant, as four cruisers were employed in the area through much of 1917, desperately looking for needles in a haystack.

Map: *Seeadler*'s movements between December 1916 and August 1917



Aßmann/von Mantey (eds), *Die deutschen Hilfskreuzer*, illustration no. 50, inserted between pp. 340 and 341.

Map: *Wolf*'s movements between 13 May and 7 August 1917



Kreuzerkrieg des Hilfskreuzers „Wolf" vom 13. Mai bis 7. August 1917.

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Aßmann/von Mantey (eds), *Die deutschen Hilfskreuzer*, illustration no 43, inserted between pp. 280 and 281.

While naval cooperation had reached a new peak, other questions remained contentious. The issue of trade in the Pacific, for instance, temporarily buried in 1915, resurfaced on the diplomatic stage in December 1916 when Burns Philp approached Greene in Tokyo about the possibility of being granted permission to open a branch

office and ten more trading stations in the Marshalls.[54] Motono fell back on the Japanese maxim of reciprocity and agreed that the request was acceptable if 'in the German South Sea Islands occupied by England the same treatment is accorded to Japanese Subjects as to British Subjects'.[55] Burns Philp's main goal was, quite simply, to be given trade access to the Marshall Islands. Political questions of reciprocity or non-discrimination were not considered.[56] Inevitably, the Australian government became involved and asked for non-discriminatory treatment for Burns Philp (and no one else) to import and sell goods into the Marshall Islands and to buy and export goods from there, pointedly confirmed in one of Munro Ferguson's cables to London, in which he explained the Australian interpretation:

> Commonwealth Government trusts that the expression "same treatment to Japanese subjects as to British subjects" in letter from Japanese Foreign Minister of 26th January 1917 means and is limited to those facilities to trade that we asked for Burns Philp and does not mean that in exchange for these facilities Japanese subjects are to have same treatment as British subjects in all other matters within captured German territories under our control as this would mean giving to Japanese subjects in these captured possessions something that we have not asked for British subjects in captured possessions under Japanese control.[57]

The problem was that the Australian view was very narrow, in fact impossibly so in a trade negotiation, whereas Japan applied a universal approach. More toing and froing followed, and the Japanese narrative of reciprocity should have been quite obvious by now, not least as a manifestation of racial equality.[58]

Munro Ferguson cautioned that if Hughes 'presses for new trade privileges north of the Line, Japan will doubtless be willing enough to grant them in order to obtain similar trading facilities in the Southern and Western Pacific' and that a situation could arise which 'would give them the fat and us the lean'.[59] This essentially replicated the Colonial Office position expressed in October 1916 and consolidated the view that free

[54] TNA, FO 371/2949, fols 17-20, Greene to Balfour, letter, 15 Dec. 1916, with attachment, copy of note Greene to Motono, 15 Dec. 1916.
[55] TNA, FO 371/2949, fols 28-9, Greene to Balfour, letter, 27 Jan. 1917, with attachment, Motono to Greene, translated letter, 26 Jan. 1917.
[56] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Shepherd to GGAus, letter, 16 May 1917.
[57] TNA, CO 418/158, fol.41, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 20 May 1917.
[58] For a good example of the Japanese perspective, see TNA, CO 418/164, fol.257, Motono to Greene, letter, 16 June 1917.
[59] NLA, Novar Papers, box 3, MS696/1813-19, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 31 July 1917; box 2, MS696/936-9, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 18 July 1917.

trade in the Pacific would benefit Japan exponentially in the current war situation, with its predominant shipping and trade capacity while Australian resources were bound by the war. It also emerged that the Japanese had the movement of labour in the Pacific in mind, particularly of Japanese workers to New Guinea.[60] Yet, the Australians still thought that a solution was feasible 'of such a nature that ... will protect the rights of the Commonwealth in respect of trade and at the same time prevent any other nationality obtaining an advantage by the immigration of its people in those former German islands now under our control.'[61] More soberly, and realistically, Munro Ferguson analysed: 'I should not be sorry to see Burns Philp & Co. excluded from the Islands north of the Line if thereby we might exclude the Japs from our possessions.'[62]

Despite this, the Foreign Office attempted some diplomatic contortionism to explain the Australian position to Tokyo, but to no avail.[63] The irreconcilable could not be made to fit, and Long quietly concluded on 6 September 1917 that London 'would not propose to pursue the matter'.[64] Once more, an initiative to open up trade across the Pacific was shelved, as steps were being taken to refuse further trade licences to the Japanese in the (British) Gilbert and Ellice Islands during the war, which, in Sweet-Escott's words, 'had the effect of checking the Southward advance of Japanese trade competition in this portion of the Pacific, and of enabling Messrs Burns Philp and the Samoa Shipping and Trading Company (as representing British interests) to retain, and possibly to strengthen their hold of this trade'. 'The Gilbert, Ellice and Union Groups', he concluded, 'form a convenient bridge to span the great distance from the Marshalls to Samoa and Fiji, and it was across this bridge that the Japanese intended to push their trade to the Southern Pacific'.[65] Protectionism was thus taking shape to prevent a perceived Japanese encroachment in a southerly and ultimately Australasian direction. Referring to New Guinea and Micronesia, Edmund Leolin Piesse, one of Australia's top

[60] TNA, CO 418/164, fols 244-5, Greene to Balfour, letter, 12 June 1917, with attached translation of Japanese note from Motono to Greene, 11 June 1917.
[61] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Pearce to Hughes, letter, 4 July 1917.
[62] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/943-7, Munro Ferguson to Long, letter, 27 July 1917.
[63] TNA, CO 418/164, fols 252-3, Langley, FO, to USS CO, letter, 7 Aug. 1917, with attachment FO to Greene, 30 July 1917.
[64] NAA, A2218, 22, PM's Dept, print, 'Papers Prepared in the Pacific Branch', no.VII., by Piesse, 10 Sept. 1920, p.11. The above statement is mentioned in the entry for 6 Sept. 1917 as contained in a letter from Long to Munro Ferguson from 6 Sept. 1917.
[65] TNA, FO 371/3233, fols 181-6, Bickham Escott to SSCols, letter, 24 Jan. 1918, with attachment, Eliot to Bickham Escott, letter, 30 Oct. 1917.

foreign policy analysts and intelligence officers, summed this up after the war that 'in the period from 1914 to 1916, in which restrictions were placed by the Japanese authorities on Australian trade north of the equator, no restrictions were placed by the Australian administration in German New Guinea; while in the period from 1917 to date, in which restrictions have been imposed … in New Guinea, there has been no discriminatory action by the Japanese … in the islands north of the equator'.[66] This stance confirmed, as invoked further above, that the Japanese, once settled into the war and with the benefit of Pacific dominance, were happy to use the tool of free trade, typically used by powerful economies, whereas the Australasians, beyond considerations of race and immigration, were opting for the weapon of choice of weaker or unstable economies, protectionism.

While the Anglo-Japanese trade talks were fizzling out, a different chunk of diplomacy was under way. This did not involve the British, although they were not entirely absent from the talks in Washington between a special Japanese envoy, Ishii Kikujiro, and Lansing. In preparation, the Americans had commissioned an appreciation of the political relationship which also touched on the Pacific Islands, conducted by the Division of Far Eastern Affairs within the State Department. The relevant report did not produce any exciting revelations, instead reiterating received wisdom such as pointing out 'how important they are from a military viewpoint, especially since they cover a large area scattered midway between Hawaii and the Philippines'.[67] It was concluded that 'the permanent retention of these islands by the Japanese would be a distinct menace to the relations between the United States and Japan', but that 'it is of course impossible now to determine what disposition should be made of the islands', and it became evident that the Americans only had a limited grasp of the current situation in the Pacific and had to rely on the British to fill them in.

This was pointedly corroborated by an American request asking Britain whether they

[66] NAA, A2218, 22, PM's Dept, print, 'Papers Prepared in the Pacific Branch', no.VII., by Piesse, 10 Sept. 1920, see p.16 in document.
[67] NARA CP, RG 59, M423, roll 4, 711.94/426, 'Resumé of certain outstanding questions between the United States and Japan', prepared by the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, 20 July 1917, consisting of 'Summary of Contents', 'Prefatory Note', and memo. entitled 'The United States and Japan', dated 12 July 1917.

> have any knowledge of Japanese intentions in the Pacific or whether they have any understanding with Japanese Government as to ultimate settlement there. American islands of Guam and Midway are practically surrounded by Islands which Japanese have captured and are in awkward position as American ships are not even allowed to go to other islands to trade in copra. United States Government do not want to arouse any inconvenient questions but are anxious to know how best to approach the question.[68]

This was curiously reminiscent of the Australian request from February 1915 asking London about a possible 'understanding' regarding the Pacific Islands with Tokyo. Also, it put London on the spot, but the Foreign Office realised that 'we can hardly avoid telling the U.S. Govt. how we stand'.[69] The government thus admitted through Cecil Spring Rice, the British ambassador in Washington, that 'an assurance was … given by [HMG] that they would, on the occasion of a peace conference, support the Japanese claim to all the German Pacific Islands lying to the North of the Equator, the Japanese Government in turn promising to support the British claim to the islands lying to the South of the Equator', but otherwise did not give away much.[70] As with the Australians before, the tone was apologetic, explaining that 'America was not in the war; the Japanese already occupied the Islands in the Northern Pacific; and Australia was quite prepared to see the occupation made perpetual'.[71] Whitehall certainly felt that it had at least some explaining to do to the Americans.

Ishii, meanwhile, had arrived in San Francisco *en route* to the American capital and used this opportunity to point out in a speech that 'had [Germany not been removed from the Pacific] ... the shuddering horrors of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean would today be a grim reality in the Pacific'.[72] He did not need to remind his audience who to thank for this, but added in conciliatory fashion that now 'it becomes the first duty of Japan and the United States to guard the Pacific', although this stance would soon be contradicted.

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[68] TNA, FO 371/2954, fols 475-6, Spring-Rice to FO, circulated to King and WC, cable, 3 Aug. 1917.
[69] TNA, FO 371/2954, fols 474-5, handwritten note by Langley, undated. In May 1917, Balfour had sent Wilson a plethora of 'various Agreements which Great Britain has come to with the Allied Powers', but had omitted to include the agreement with Japan from February. Link, *PWW*, vol.42, 327-42, Balfour to Wilson, letter with attachments, 18 May 1917.
[70] TNA, FO 371/2954, fols 483-7, FO to Spring Rice, circulated to King and War Cabinet, cable, 11 Aug. 1917.
[71] Adding to the obfuscation, London claimed that the Anglo-Japanese understanding, from February 1917, 'was come to in the autumn of 1916'.
[72] NARA CP, RG 59, M367, roll 49, 763.72/6461, Long, San Francisco, to SS, cables, 14 and 15 Aug. 1917.

The talks started in September 1917 and were predominantly concerned with questions over China. Another element dealt with naval cooperation in the Pacific Ocean, while the subject of the occupied Pacific Islands was omitted altogether by the Americans. Ishii thought that 'it would be unfortunate not to consider some of the other questions [other than the Open Door in China] as we had to look forward to a time when the war would be over' and told Lansing what the latter knew already, that the British 'had practically consented in the readjustment of territory after the war; that the German Islands north of the equator should be retained by Japan, while those south of the equator should go to Great Britain'. Lansing responded that he was 'glad to know this', but that he could 'make no comment on such an agreement at the present time'. This was where the matter ended and it was not addressed again during Ishii's stay, at least not officially.[73] That being said, Spring Rice had the impression from the negotiations that 'a vital point in United States and Japanese policy is the exclusion of Germany from East Asia and an outlet on the Pacific'.[74]

With regard to the naval talks between the two parties, there was more substance and urgency. The Americans had already moved some of their ships from the Pacific into the Atlantic.[75] Now, the American quasi-withdrawal from the Pacific was being negotiated. For instance, patrol duties which were currently being carried out by the American cruiser *Saratoga* out of Hawaii would be undertaken by the IJN, so that the former could be released for the Atlantic theatre.[76] The Japanese government desired

[73] *FRUS, Lansing Papers*, vol.II, 432-5, 793.94/594½, memo. by SS of a conference with Ishii, 6 Sept. 1917. Braisted maintains that Motono thought it to be inopportune to press the Americans for an accord regarding the islands at this stage, 'probably because he planned later to confront the United States on the islands' fate with the backing of Japan's allies'. Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 329. This is plausible indeed, as the Japanese had secured guarantees from those powers, Britain and France above all, who would later have a decisive say at the peace conference if the war was victorious and who would have their own colonial interests at stake, thus further facilitating the Japanese case when arguing their own. Nevertheless, it was Ishii's initiative to raise the subject with Lansing and the latter's reluctance to discuss it. Braisted's argument may thus explain Ishii not pushing on after being rebuffed, but not his initial move, suggesting that the Japanese were indeed seeking a comprehensive agreement with the Americans.

[74] TNA, FO 371/2954, fol.161, Spring Rice to FO, circulated to King and WC, cable, 4 Dec. 1917.

[75] Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 292, 335.

[76] Link, *PWW*, vol.44, 413-5, Lansing to Wilson, letter, 20 Oct. 1917, with enclosure I, memo. of conference with Ishii, 20 Oct. 1917, and enclosure II, memo. to accompany the reply of the Japanese Government, draft, 20 Oct. 1917. It should be pointed out that there was also opposition in American naval circles to the downgrading of the Pacific Ocean following the United States' entry into the war, and the consequent withdrawal of ships. The American naval attaché in Peking, for example, cautioned against its detrimental effect on the United States' position in China. Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific,*

the State Department's sanction for the arrangement via Ishii, and the Americans officially requested that a Japanese vessel be assigned to replace the *Saratoga*, which Ishii confirmed on behalf of his government.[77] With the Americans throwing their resources into the war in Europe and virtually abandoning the Pacific, Japan thus maintained its role as the ocean's sole guardian, and consequently, an important military and thereby political role in the war, a logic the Americans now adhered to. The *New York Times* thus commented pointedly in August 1917 that 'the truth is that our safety [in the Pacific] is due to Japan'.[78]

Page shared the good progress of the naval talks with Balfour on 7 November 1917, informing him that

> It might be added … that complete and satisfactory understandings upon the matter of naval co-operation in the Pacific for the purpose of attaining the common object against Germany and her allies have been reached between the representative of the Imperial Japanese navy, who is attached to the Special Mission of Japan, and the representative of the United States navy.[79]

Effectively, the Americans were now part of the global alliance securing the Pacific triggered by London in August 1914. Tokyo and Washington had bilaterally formulated a 'common object' in the war, to defeat the Central Powers in Europe, which was in reality Britain's core strategy, and left the Pacific essentially stripped of American fighting craft.[80] There is no evidence, however, of a concerted strategy for the Pacific Ocean between the three powers. The lack of coordination is reflected by correspondence from British naval intelligence, in which the writer observed that 'the understanding [between Japan and the Unites States] must have been pretty good for the Yanks to leave Hawaii, which swarms with Japs, to be guarded by a Jap ship'.[81] Not

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1909-1922, 337. More broadly, he also warned that 'Japan has thrown all restraint to the winds and is bent on a course of seeing how far she can go, and where it is to end except in trouble I fail to see'. NARA DC, RG 38, entry 78A, box 87, folder 21127-2, E. McCauley Jr, Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence, to Leland Harrison, SD, letter, 26 Dec. 1917, citing message from naval attaché Peking from 19 Nov. 1917.

[77] *FRUS 1917, War Supplement 2*, vol.I, 697, 763.72/7420, Frank L. Polk on behalf of SS to Ishii, letter, 30 Oct. 1917; 697-8, 763.72/7538, Ishii to SS, letter, 30 Oct. 1917.

[78] *New York Times* from 24 Aug 1917, cited in Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922,* p.322.

[79] TNA, FO 371/2954, fol.83, Page to Balfour, letter, 7 Nov. 1917, with attached statement issued to the press by Mr. Lansing, undated.

[80] Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 292. The American Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines, for instance, now only contained one cruiser and three gunboats.

[81] TNA, FO 371/2954, fol.118, [?], Naval Staff, Intelligence Division, to Crichton-Stuart, letter, 10 Nov. 1917.

only does this statement suggest that Britain was not privy to the understanding, it reveals a level of British surprise that Washington allowed the Japanese to take over patrol duties in the Hawaiian Islands, one of America's main strategic assets in the Pacific.

As it occurred, American confidence in Japanese motives was limited despite the success of the naval arrangements and the Lansing-Ishii talks more broadly. Wilson, for instance, had formulated shortly before Lansing met Ishii that 'the possibility of their [the Japanese] attacking the Philippines or some outlying possession ... presented a possibility which could not be overlooked'.[82] This thinking was in line with the general American assumption of the possibility of future war against Japan, reflected over previous years in the various (early) guises of War Plan Orange. In a private correspondence between Wilson and Spring Rice, the latter claimed that 'there is always great difficulty … in getting at the bottom of the Japanese mind' and that the Japanese 'always [had] a strong suspicion … for the West', while Lansing summed up Washington's relationship with Tokyo after the conclusion of his talks as having a 'tendency to distrust each other'.[83] American naval intelligence accused the Japanese of a 'lack of sincere co-operation [with] the Allies' and suspected them of 'thinking of changing sides'.[84]

Nevertheless, a strategy was emerging in Washington that tried to accommodate the Japanese position. This is exemplified by a statement made by Edward Mandell House, the President's chief foreign policy adviser, writing to Wilson in September 1917 in anticipation of the departure to Tokyo of the new American ambassador, Roland Morris:

> We cannot meet Japan in her desires as to land and immigration, and unless we make some concessions in regard to her sphere of influence in the East, trouble is sure, sooner or later to come. Japan is barred from all the undeveloped

[82] Link, *PWW*, vol.43, 172-4, memo. by William Wiseman on conversation with Wilson, 13 July [1917]. During the same conversation, Wilson dismissed fears about 'a successful [Japanese] attack on the Pacific Coast [as] absurd owing to the long distance from the Japanese base'.
[83] Link, *PWW*, vol.45, 392-5, Spring Rice to Wilson, letter, 29 Dec. 1917, with enclosed memo., undated; LoC, Lansing Papers, 1911-1928, vol.31, Lansing to Pinci, letter, delivered 1 Dec. 1917.
[84] NARA DC, RG 38, entry 78A, box 87, E. McCauley Jr, Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence, to Leland Harrison, SD, letter, 2 Jan. 1918, with attached report from Naval Attaché Peking, undated; McCauley to Harrison, letter, 14 Jan. 1918.

> places of the earth, and if her influence in the East is not recognized as in some degree superior to that of Western powers, there will be a reckoning.[85]

It is noteworthy that this stance had previously been formulated in Britain. The relevant memorandum from March 1917 was subsequently shared by Balfour with Wilson. In it, Balfour reiterated a position formulated by Grey, claiming that 'if you are going to keep Japan out of North America, out of Canada, out of the United States, out of Australia, out of New Zealand, out of the islands South of the Equator in the Pacific, you could not forbid her to expand in China' and that 'a nation of that sort must have a safety valve somewhere'.[86] In the accompanying letter to Wilson, Balfour added that 'the great Dominions and the United States of America are naturally, and I think rightly, jealous of Japan's obtaining any footing within their territories'. The two documents are remarkable for a number of reasons. First, the fact that the memorandum was copied by the Americans shows a mutual realisation of Japanese hegemony. Secondly, the above seems to suggest that both Americans and British prefered Japanese expansion into China rather than into the Pacific. Thirdly, it both corroborates and anticipates British actions over protectionism in the British Pacific by claiming that the Japanese would be (or are being) kept 'out of the islands South of the Equator in the Pacific' and can also be read as an approval of Japan's presence in the Pacific islands north of the Equator.

An important difference was not addressed by Balfour, however. From an Anglo-Australasian perspective, Japanese Micronesia was geographically close but 'northern'. But from an American point of view, the trade-off would have to come with a heavy price tag, consisting of an extensive Japanese presence in between the many American possessions in the Pacific.

The way the Lansing-Ishii talks had been conducted and concluded was an indicator that American diplomacy, despite its aloofness towards the war, had finally arrived in it. Nevertheless, Washington's role remained specific. Wilson had insisted on his country's status as an 'associated' rather than an 'allied' member of the conflict, and

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[85] LoC, WW Papers, mf reel 91, House to Wilson, letter, 18 Sept. 1917.
[86] Link, *PWW*, vol.42, 327-42, Balfour to Wilson, letter, 18 May 1917, with enclosure marked 'Confidential: Balfour Memorandum' [Balfour's statement on foreign policy to the IWC], [22 March 1917].

he reiterated, with his country now at war, that 'the strong feeling throughout the [United States] was to play a "lone hand" and not to commit herself to any alliances with any foreign power'.[87] Wilson's claim that 'the U.S. was now ready to take her place as a world power' was associated with this narrative of exceptionalism, but both remained shrouded in ambiguity, even after he gave his annual 'Message on the State of the Union' before Congress in late 1917 and announced his future peace formula: 'no annexations, no contributions, no punitive indemnities'.[88] The idea of 'no annexations' touched on open territorial questions as an outcome of the war, but was not further elaborated on beyond the terminological implication that Wilson was averse to a colonial carve-up among the war's victors. Neither did he explain how his narrative could be reconciled with the fact that the United States was itself a colonial and imperial power.

Nevertheless, the statement was punchy and powerful and created instant apprehension across the Atlantic. Long criticised that the United States' opposition to annexations stemmed from its failure to appreciate the difference between annexing territories as a result of victory and to punish the opponent, and the annexing aimed at the retention of colonies in the interests of good government and the peace of the world.[89] While this statement was sympathetic to the Dominions' interest, Lloyd George had put himself at the forefront of a progressive narrative advocating universal self-determination when he addressed the fate of the German colonies during a speech in Glasgow in June 1917. He maintained:

> When you come to settle who shall be the future trustees of these uncivilised lands, you must take into account the sentiments of the people themselves ... The wishes, the desires and the interests of the people of those countries themselves must be the dominant factor in settling their future government.[90]

While Wilson had not explained precisely which types of territories he had in mind, Lloyd George deliberately spoke about the German non-European 'uncivilised lands', for which, as his remarks indicate, he imagined a degree of self-determination in line

[87] Link, *PWW*, vol.43, 172-4, memo. by William Wiseman on conversation with Wilson, 13 July 1917.
[88] *FRUS 1917*, IX-XVI, Wilson, Annual Address of the President, 4 Dec. 1917.
[89] NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS 696/1467-70, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 28 Dec. 1917.
[90] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 105, MS 1538/16/ 3716, note entitled 'War Cabinet, Extracts from Certain Peace Statements made since January 1917', by Hankey, 5 March 1918, with attached document 'Extracts from Certain Peace Statements made since January 1917', 25 Feb. 1917. The speech was delivered on 29 June 1917.

with the native populations' 'sentiments', even though the process of the 'settling of their future government' was presumably to be undertaken by his and other 'civilised' governments. Such a policy of native self-determination or, at least, genuine consultation, was not on everyone's mind, to say the least, and would not only run counter to the British Colonial Office and Dominions' position, but also to the ideas of those in Britain who were in favour of a global British Empire with an integrated defence scheme.

Amery, for example, shared his thoughts in a memorandum for the Supreme War Council, which had just been established between Britain, France and Italy as a central command to coordinate Allied military strategy. In it, he stated:

> The first interest then of all the British possessions which are not within the immediate radius of action of the main British Fleet, in other words of all the Dominions and possessions which lie around the Indian Ocean from Cape Town round to Dunedin, is to eliminate all potential hostile Naval bases from that region, in other words to eliminate the German colonies. From this point of view the elimination of German East Africa and of the German possessions in the Pacific is a more important consideration than the elimination of the German possessions in West Africa.[91]

On the one hand, this was long-standing British policy, not least based on Britain's strategic priority in India. On the other, Amery was in good company with this argument with the likes of Curzon, who certainly had his critics.[92] With regard to the Pacific, this view reflected the attitude of those, particularly in Australasia, who had held a grudge against London ever since the 1880s for allowing the Germans in.[93]

The Germans' position remained difficult and uncertain, but they had not given up their hope of retaining their colonial empire in 1917, at least those who still thought of it. The German foreign ministry retained an active role and continued to make formal complaints about what it saw as Allied breaches of international law when Germans were being deported from the Pacific possessions or businesses liquidated.[94] But it also

[91] TNA, CAB 21/4, 'The Future of the German Colonies', memo. by Amery, 6 Nov. 1917.
[92] See next chapter fn 29.
[93] The New Guinea conundrum of 1883 is a case in point, where the Queensland colonial government, unhappy about British inaction, tried to pre-empt the German take-over of the territory by temporarily seizing New Guinea for itself. See Thompson, *Australian Imperialism*, chs 4 and 6.
[94] For instance, Australia was accused of a 'blatant breach of [the] treaty of capitulation [from September 1914]' in New Guinea. See NAA, A11803, 1917/89/681, SSCols to GGAus, letter, 19 April 1917, with attached correspondence between FO, Swiss Minister and German Legation Berne, Feb.-April

continued to reach out to the Japanese. The aborted dialogue from 1916 was reinitiated once the all-out submarine war had started in February 1917 and as America was preparing for war. Both the Kaiser and Ludendorff were of the opinion that an understanding with Japan would be of great value and improve the military situation in Europe, and Arthur Zimmermann, the German foreign secretary since November 1916, signalled through Lucius in Stockholm that Germany would still be prepared to negotiate with the Japanese on the same terms as in 1916, which also meant ceding the German Pacific.[95] Zimmermann warned Ludendorff, however, that the Japanese had previously used the negotiations as leverage against concessions from their Allied partners and might do so again, with detrimental effect to Germany.[96] Lucius then concluded in August 1917 that 'Japan is jealously watching its good reputation as an Allied partner' and advised against further attempts to exploit his channel, which ended the matter once more.[97]

Regarding the general desire for the return of the colonies, Solf continued to make relevant statements. Speaking before fellow pro-colonialists in June 1917, he tried to calm their anxieties and promised that 'Germany would insist upon the recovery of her colonies and would make them capable of self-defence and self-support' in the future.[98] The British representative in The Hague, Walter Townley, who transmitted this information to London, maintained that this position 'has been accepted by practically [the] whole [German] press as [the] Government's official pronouncement on [the] subject'. While the German press was indeed reflective and supportive of Solf's discourse, the country's top brass, be it the Kaiser, Ludendorff, or even Bethmann Hollweg, would have easily sacrificed the Pacific against Japanese concessions. Solf, on the other hand, kept the colonies relevant and the discourse

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1917; SSCols to GGAus, cable, 30 Oct. 1917; SSCols to GGAus, letter, 9 Nov. 1917, with attached note from Swiss Minister to Sec. for FA, 5 Oct. 1917 and *note verbale* from AA, 12 Sept. 1917.

[95] TNA, GFM 33/3507/9846/3, fol.H315531, Zimmermann to Lucius, cable, 17 Feb. 1917; fol.H315539, Lersner, Gr.HQ, to Bethmann Hollweg, letter, 26 Feb. 1917; fols H315579-80, Grünau, Gr. HQ, to AA, cable, 28 June 1917.

[96] TNA, GFM 33/3507/9846/3, fols H315543-4, Zimmermann to Lersner, for Ludendorff, letter, 3 March 1917.

[97] TNA, GFM 33/3507/9846/4, fol.H315594, Lucius to Michaelis, letter, 13 Aug. 1917.

[98] NAA, A11803, 1917/89/847, Townley to GGAus, cable, 9 June 1917.

alive, supported by globally minded navalists such as Tirpitz.[99] Thus, when rumours re-emerged in September 1917 that Germany would renounce its Pacific colonies, he spoke out that the reports were false and that he 'considered the maintenance of our entire colonial empire as an indispensable postulate for peace'.[100]

To symbolise his determination, Solf appointed Haber, who had signed off the German capitulation in New Guinea in 1914, as its new governor in absentia. This step was seemingly not coordinated with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, with the latter enquiring about the political meaning of Solf's initiative.[101] The RKA sent a note explaining its intention as to 'document to the international and German public that Germany by no means relinquished its colonies'.[102] This was not a determined strategy supported by the national leadership, but a lobbying at ministerial level. Nevertheless, it was greeted with enthusiasm by the colonialists, first and foremost those with business interests in the Pacific such as the *Bremer Vereinigung für deutsche Kolonialinteressen* and the Hamburg-based *Vereinigung der deutschen Südseefirmen*.[103] The latter also petitioned the *Reichstag* to 'advocate the return of the German Pacific protectorates', to consider the political value of the colonies and to pursue the principle that 'all protectorates that were lost to the enemy during the war must return to our possession at the conclusion of peace', thereby trying to turn the colonial question into a national concern.[104] Solf later sent his thanks for the show of support and expressed his hope that 'the German flag may soon fly again over our fine South Sea colonies'.[105]

This was an optimistic outlook, and one hinging on an increasingly unlikely favourable outcome of the war. 1917 thus ended on an ambiguous note. The Americans had not

[99] Tirpitz had at one stage in late 1916/early 1917 gone on record claiming that 'we need to have them [the colonies] all back', but that 'possible adaptations could be discussed'. BA Freiburg, N 253/154, fols 35-7, summary of conversation between [?] and Tirpitz, undated [late 1916/ early 1917]. Bethmann Hollweg was fighting for political survival in 1917 and was finally forced out by the OHL in July of that year.

[100] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, fol.126, *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 13. Sept. 1917, 'Kein Verzicht auf unsere Besitzungen in der Südsee'.

[101] PA AA, R 21319, fol.326, Lersner, Gr. Hauptquartier, to AA, cable, 23 Dec. 1917.

[102] PA AA, R 21319, fol.327, v.d. Bussche, RKA, to Lersner, cable, 24 Dec. 1917.

[103] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, fol.131, Broeckmann, Bremer Vereinigung, to Solf, cable, 21 Dec. 1917; R901/54535, fol.64, Wolff's Telegraphisches Büro Nr.106, 12 Jan. 1918.

[104] BA Berlin, R1001/2640, fols 133-5, Thiel, Südseefirmen, to Solf, letter, 3 Jan. 1918, with attached 'Denkschrift betr. den hohen Wert der Südsee für unsere Volkswirtschaft', Dec. 1917, submitted to Reichstag (pages 1,3,7,8).

[105] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.64, Wolff's Telegraphisches Buero Nr.106, 12 Jan. 1918.

only entered the war on the Allied side, but also the Anglo-Japanese defence compact for the Pacific, which they had previously only participated in as a benevolently neutral outsider. That also meant, however, that they were putting increased thought into the longer-term ramifications of the Japanese presence in German Micronesia, especially in view of their strategic dilemma of connecting up territories as scattered as the Philippines, Guam and American Samoa. Meanwhile, German overseas imperialism was manifesting itself in speeches and statements, and, to a minimal but not entirely insignificant degree, by pinching two tiny naval needles into the Anglo-Japanese Indo-Pacific. The American military imprint onto the wider war was so far small, but as American troops started pouring into Europe, Wilson's influence on its outcome and the anticipated peace was growing. When he proclaimed his Fourteen Points, he thus also fuelled German hopes for the restitution of its colonial empire in the Pacific.

Chapter 5
Endgame in Europe and uncertainties in the Pacific: January-September 1918

In early 1918, victory in the wider war was still unresolved. The Germans had freed themselves of the Eastern Front after signing an armistice with Russia in December 1917, followed by the comprehensive Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 and a shift of German resources to the Western Front, significantly improving their military situation there.[1] This was counterweighted by the build-up of American troops in Europe, which accelerated quickly in 1918 after a slow start in 1917. By the summer of 1918, over 1,000,000 Americans were actively involved in combat with Germany, with more to follow, which was gradually turning the tide of war in the Allies' favour.[2] The long-sought diplomatic reckoning in the Pacific, as elsewhere, was approaching, and was increasingly tangible.

Into this dynamic came a momentous announcement by the American President. Wilson presented his famous Fourteen Points to Congress on 8 January 1918.[3] While considered progressive and visionary by some, many in Europe wondered what they meant for the outcome and the aftermath of the war and how they could be translated into policy and peace terms.[4] To start with, Wilson proclaimed no less than that the 'programme of the world's peace … is our programme; and that programme [is] the only possible programme'. Wilson's fifth point dealt with colonial claims and is worth citing in full, not least because of its relevance for the later armistice and peace negotiations. It read:

> A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such

[1] B.H. Liddell Hart states that the Germans had 129 divisions in the field on the Western front in March 1917 against 178 Allied divisions. In January 1918, the German figure was 177 and in March 1918, it was 192, whereas the Allied number had dropped after the dispatch of troops to Italy. B.H. Liddell Hart, *History of the First World War* (London, 1997, first published in 1930 as *The Real War, 1914-1918*), 363-4. The Germans thus had a numerical advantage on the Western Front in early 1918.
[2] Robert H. Ziegler, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience (Lanham, 2000)*, 58. The American army in France reached its wartime peak strength of 2m at the end of the war.
[3] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 12-17, Wilson's Address at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress, 8 Jan. 1918. For the genesis of the Fourteen Points, see Lawrence E. Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917-1919* (New Haven, 1963), ch.5.
[4] See, for example, David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War* (London, 2004), 392. For some British reactions, see John Grigg, *Lloyd George: War Leader, 1916-1918* (London, 2003), 386.

> questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

The rest of the speech did not provide further explanation, neither was it followed by publicised details, allowing the different governments and stakeholders to read their interests into the various elements presented in Point Five, while remaining uncertain about Wilson's ultimate plan. Two fundamental principles emerged, although they were not mentioned expressly: the notion of 'self-determination' and Wilson's desire to avoid colonial 'deals' between imperial powers.

Incidentally, there is interpretative evidence on both points from within the American administration. Days before the speech, Frank William Taussig, an adviser to Wilson and later official economic advisor for the government at the PPC, wrote a letter to the President. In his mind, 'the principle of political self-determination, or popular vote, is obviously not to be applied to Hot[t]entots and South Sea Islanders'.[5] Self-determination was thus to apply only according to some 'civilisational' scale in his mind. On the second point, on colonial deals between imperial powers, Taussig had the following to say: 'The Germans are entitled to get back their colonies. The principle of no annexations is applicable in both ways.' For the Pacific, this stance contradicted what Spring Rice had reported back to London, that the Americans (and the Japanese) were in agreement regarding the German removal from the region. Taussig's statement seems to be generic rather than specific, postulating that, regardless of the outcome of the war, there were to be no colonial territorial transfers, but nevertheless reveals the inconsistencies in American policy. While Wilson's address was publicised, these accompanying ideas were not, which is just as well as they would have caused a significant uproar, not only in Britain, but most of all in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Japan.

Another important statement came from Britain, only days before Wilson's address. On 5 January 1918, Lloyd George said in a speech:

> With regard to the German colonies, I have repeatedly declared that they are held at the disposal of a conference whose decision must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants of such colonies. None of

[5] Link, *PWW*, vol.45, 440-1, Taussig to Wilson, letter, 3 Jan. 1918.

> those territories are inhabited by Europeans. The governing consideration, therefore, must be that the inhabitants should be placed under the control of an administration acceptable to themselves, one of whose main purposes will be to prevent their exploitation for the benefit of European capitalists and Governments.
> The natives live in their various tribal organizations under chiefs and councils who are competent to consult and speak for their tribes and members and to represent their wishes and interest in regard to their disposal. The general principle of national self-determination is, therefore, as applicable in their cases as in those of the occupied European territories.[6]

The above is of great relevance for a number of reasons. First, the speech continued in the vein of Lloyd George's Glasgow speech from 1917 with greater detail and terminological clarity, making him the champion of a progressive agenda of national or ethnic self-determination that posterity usually attributes to Wilson. The term 'self-determination' was used publicly by Lloyd George rather than by Wilson at this early stage of the post-war debate. Rather than employing cautious diplomatic wording, as Wilson did, Lloyd George did not hesitate to mention explicitly the German colonies, 'none of [which] are inhabited by Europeans'. This was a radically democratic stance (one would be tempted to ascribe it to Lenin) at a time of nationalist sentiment in India (recognised in the Montagu Declaration of 1917 which promised staged progress to self-government) and elsewhere in the British Empire and of a hard-wired Euro-American perception of different levels of 'civilisation' and cultural maturity across the world. Secondly, Lloyd George's position not only contradicted the older colonial wisdom of the time, but also called into question the British stance *vis-à-vis* both their non-imperial war-time allies as well as the Dominions.

Another twist occurred when Russian diplomacy got involved. Thus, when the Russian war effort collapsed after the October Revolution and the Bolsheviks, newly arrived in power, were suing for peace with Germany in late 1917, the results of their negotiations reverberated as far as Australia. Long tried to explain what had happened in the following message to Melbourne:

> His Majesty's Government are firmly convinced that it is necessary for security of Empire after the war [to] retain possession of German Colonies but owing to

[6] This was Lloyd George's famous Caxton Hall speech. Wilson was deeply impressed by it and even contemplated whether he should go ahead with his own address. See Grigg, *Lloyd George*, 383. For Lloyd George's speech, see *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 4-12, Lloyd George, address before the Trade Union Conference in London, 5 Jan. 1918.

> divergence of opinion amongst Allies it has not been possible to secure general acceptance of this view. During recent negotiations with Germans great stress laid by Russians on right of population of country to determine its future and proposal was made to apply this to German Colonies. There are indications ... in French newspapers that this line of argument will be pressed in Allied quarters.[7]

The Bolshevik anti-imperial discourse was thus making its mark on international negotiations regarding the future of the German colonies, as Russia itself was plunging into a civil war.[8] To respond to this anticipated uncertainty, and the prospect of being faced with claims of colonial 'self-determination' (if not from the colonies themselves, then from the international community), Long advised that the Australian 'Ministers could furnish me with statement suitable for publication if necessary containing evidence of anxiety of natives of German New Guinea to live under British rule'.[9] The same message was sent to Wellington, asking for an expression by 'the natives of Samoa'.[10] It is beyond the scope of this study to dissect the legal and political aspects of 'self-determination', but it is worth pointing out how developments in Russia (and elsewhere) had a bearing on the Pacific question and the international diplomacy dealing with it.[11] Long's own stance continued to be that 'the effect of the return of these colonies to Germany would be disastrous to the future of the Empire'.[12] But it also meant that such a scenario was on the table not only in the Germans' minds, but in the Allies' as well. Contemplating an unfavourable outcome of the war, Massey

[7] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 4 Jan. 1918. The French were also said to have thought that if the Australians wanted to profiteer from the war in the Pacific, 'one has to pay for it', probably referring to dropping levels of recruitment in Australia. This view, expressed in French parliament, was reported in the German press. See BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.61, *Schlesische Zeitung*, 25 Feb. 1918, 'Französische Südsee-Ansprüche'.

[8] Lenin wrote *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* in 1916, published in 1917. One of Lenin's claims was that imperialism had helped cause the war and that change was needed. In reality, however, the Russian postulates of a peace without annexations and indemnities and of national self-determination were fraught with contradictions. The critical case was Ukraine, where a separate Bolshevik republic was established in December 1917. The Russian Bolsheviks subsequently departed from their previously declared principles. Stevenson, *History of the First World War*, 384-5.

[9] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, SSCols to GGAus, cable, 4 Jan. 1918.

[10] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/32, SSCols to GovNZ, cable, 4 Jan. 1918.

[11] Erez Manela provides a cultural narrative in *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York, 2007). For an account of the history of the legal concept of political self-determination, see Antonio Cassese, *Self-determination of Peoples: Legal Reappraisal* (Cambridge, 1995), especially ch.2.

[12] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 105, MS 1538/16/3663, memo. for WC by Long, 2 Jan. 1918.

stated that 'in case of disaster Britain would still remain British, but I am not quite sure that New Zealand would remain under the British flag'.[13]

Long and those in the Colonial Office had realised that they had to build an international case for Australia's and New Zealand's retention of their spoils, and that evidence needed to be gathered to have as good a justification as possible in future peace talks. This was to be achieved by means of collecting indigenous testimony in support of a colonial future under the Union Jack. Regarding New Guinea, Petheridge in Rabaul claimed that self-determination 'would be applicable to colonies settled by a white or civilised population' but that 'such conditions do not obtain in German New Guinea'.[14] He also thought that 'it would be quite impossible to get anything like a reliable expression of their wishes' and that, ultimately, the 'native population [is] indifferent as to future government'. What he did not grasp was the dynamic at play, which required him to produce (or fabricate) something indigenous and supportive of the Australian case for German New Guinea for the international community to see.

John Latham, a Melbourne lawyer and wartime head of Australian naval intelligence, had a better understanding of the implications. In a secret memorandum, he identified the possible factors determining the fate of the German colonies as follows: native interests, the fitness of a nation to be entrusted with natives, the 'equitable considerations' of potential colonial claimants (referring and responding to Wilson), and lastly, 'possibly, the expressed desires of the natives themselves'.[15] Self-determination as expressed by the local population was thus not necessarily on his agenda, whereas Australia's 'fitness' to assume natives' interests was. He remarked:

> In addition to active efforts to promote the interests of the natives, special endeavours should be made to ascertain, tabulate and forward to the Commonwealth Government any facts tending to show that the interests of the natives will be and have been best served by British control. ... [A]ll evidence of pre-war ill-treatment of the natives by Germans ... should be carefully collected. Cases of injustice, cruelty, or carelessness of native rights or disregard of native feelings should be ascertained with all possible corroborative detail.

[13] NLNZ, *NZPD*, vol.182, 225, House of Representatives, 15 April 1918.
[14] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, Shepherd, PM's Dept, to GGAus, letter, 7 Jan. 1918
[15] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 113, MS 1538/19/77-9, memo. by Latham, 16 Jan. 1918.

Moreover, Latham advocated manipulation, asking that 'public expressions of native opinion in favour of the British should be recorded and preserved'. 'Where a favourable result can be relied upon', he continued, 'opportunities for such expressions might be made by tactful officers who understand the native mind and who are acquainted with the leaders of native opinion'. A handwritten remark added: 'where there is any such thing as native opinion'. In effect, he called for a propaganda campaign to discredit German colonialism as much as possible, while emphasising Australian and British benevolence and silencing the indigenous voice unless it could be made to correspond with the political agenda.

Latham also elaborated on the idea of 'equitable considerations'. He thought that 'every possible effort should be made to develop and extend Australian interests' and that

> If, after several years of Australian occupation, it should be the case that German interests are almost as greatly preponderant as before the war, this fact would weaken the Australian claim. A contrary state of affairs, on the other hand, would strengthen that claim.

The German imprint on New Guinea was thus to be reduced, if not eliminated, reversing the previously lenient Australian approach towards Germans and their businesses. This change of policy was not universally appreciated, however, and was not adopted by an Australian government in 'doubt whether liquidation or restriction [of] legitimate business or firms could be justified'.[16] 'Fostering British trade', it was thought, was 'also to be considered', and the Australian government remained pragmatic in this field.

This said, efforts were made to squeeze the Germans out as long as the replacement was Australian and not foreign, particularly Japanese.[17] Sanguine about this, Munro Ferguson reported in January 1918 that Burns Philp had 'succeeded during the war in capturing the copra trade formerly in the hands of the Germans', after their American agent had 'established a new copra market [in the United States] to replace the pre-

[16] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/437, Shepherd, PM's Dept, to GGAus, letter, 22 March 1918, and GGAus to SSCols, cable, 25 March 1918.

[17] For Australian anxieties about Japanese trade infiltration, not least due to Burns Philp's continuous trouble to provide cargo space for the Pacific, see NAA, A3932, SC397, memo., 'subject: Komine & Co. being appointed agents for Nippon Yusen Kaisha', by Petheridge, 11 Jan. 1918, marked 'not approved'.

war European market of the Germans'.[18] He hoped that 'this new branch of the company' would be 'the thin end of the wedge destined to oust German trade from the Pacific Islands'. Out of this emerged a hybrid model, allowing the Germans to stay where necessary and pushing them out where possible, one driven by Australian self-interest rather than by benevolence to German traders and planters.

This had already been achieved in Samoa, although Massey was still nurturing fears that German influence and money might return and be used to 'turn the Samoans from their loyal attitude to and trust in British justice'.[19] He chose to respond to Long's request from 4 January personally and presented London with an account of how the native Samoans, following an inspection in October 1916, were 'openly expressing their pleasure that the British were in occupation'. Logan was cited from a report from July 1917 in which he wrote: 'Everywhere I found the Samoans happy and healthy and pleased to see us and expressing gratitude for being under British rule.'[20] Massey was certain that the 'feelings of the Samoans are correctly represented by the above extracts' and that, if they were asked again, 'the same verdict would be given'.[21] As a – logically inconsistent -- fall-back line, he also argued, as Petheridge had done for New Guinea, that 'the natives themselves have not had sufficient training or education to enable them to appreciate and understand the principles for which the Allies are fighting, or to vote intelligently upon such an important question as the destiny of Samoa'. Moreover, 'such a vote … would be quite contrary to Samoan custom'. The best way to ascertain the desire of the Samoans, according to Massey, would be to consult the local chiefs, but he also instructed Logan to continue collecting 'any evidence that you can give supporting the contention that the natives appreciate and desire to remain under British rule'.[22] Only weeks later, Logan had a response for

[18] NLA, Novar Papers, box 3, MS696/1887-1895, GGAus to SSCols, letter, 8 Jan. 1918.
[19] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/32, memo. for GGNZ by Massey, 8 Jan. 1918.
[20] Ibid; for the slightly altered message that was actually sent by Liverpool, see GGNZ to SSCols, cable, 10 Jan. 1918. The original messages from Logan in Samoa to the Governor(-General) in New Zealand from October 1916 and July 1917 can be found in NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 30 Jan. 1918, with attached copies of cables from GGSA to SSCols, 10 Jan. 1918, GGNZ to SSCols 10 Jan. 1918, and letters Administrator Samoa to G(G)NZ, 23 Oct. 1916, 5 July 1917.
[21] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/32, memo. for GGNZ by Massey, 8 Jan. 1918.
[22] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/32, GGNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 10 Jan. 1918.

Massey: 'The High Chiefs and Chiefs are practically unanimous in wishing to remain under British rule'.[23]

The Germans, meanwhile, were framing their own response to Wilson's Fourteen Points. Using their Netherlands Hague channel, they informed the Americans that they considered Point Five as 'not clear' but acceptable if it was 'in accordance with [the] principles set down by Solf in his recent speech'.[24] The cable does not mention which speech it refers to, but Solf had recently talked about the future of Africa and the German responsibility to continue to 'civilise' the continent for the good of mankind, invoking an international (European) cooperative framework for the process.[25] The German Chancellor, Georg von Hertling, also formulated a reaction to the Fourteen Points and had a particular strategy in mind when addressing a *Reichstag* committee on 24 January 1918:

> I now take up the fifth point, adjustment of all colonial claims and disputes. The practical application in the world of reality of the principle here set up by Wilson will encounter some difficulties. I believe at any rate that it might be left to England, the greatest colonial Empire, to discuss first of all this proposal of her ally. We shall then see what might be obtained by us in peace negotiations, judging from such agreements between England and America, since we shall certainly advocate a readjustment of the colonial possessions of the world.[26]

It is not surprising that Hertling agreed with Wilson on a 'readjustment of the colonial possessions of the world', in view of the fact that Germany only had a small overseas empire, of which it had essentially been dispossessed. The more remarkable element of his strategy was to see Britain (et alia) as having to negotiate the future of its own colonial empire with the Americans under their anti-imperial postulate, which Hertling knew was designed to loosen Britain's overseas rule and resulting global hegemony. Then, a liberal Germany might keep its colonies by following suit, provided that Washington was to be the new *iudex mundi* rather than London. Hertling also boasted a trump card of significant value and made it known that 'public opinion would not let

[23] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 28 Feb. 1918, with attachment GGNZ to SSCols, cable, 11 Feb. 1918.
[24] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 26-7, 763.72119/1120, Garrett, Netherlands, to SS, cable, 13 Jan. 1918.
[25] The relevant speech was given in Berlin on 21 December 1917. See Eberhard von Vietsch, *Wilhelm Solf: Botschafter zwischen den Zeiten* (Tübingen, 1961), 180.
[26] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 38-42, 763.72119/1167, 1168, Speeches by Hertling and Czernin, 24 Jan. 1918, Garrett, Netherlands, to SS, cable, 24 Jan. 1918.

him promise the liberation of Belgium until promises had been made of the restoration of the German colonies'.[27]

Wilson rebuked him, in typical fashion, by asking: 'Is Count von Hertling not aware that he is speaking in the court of mankind ...?'[28] He went on:

> Peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonists. National aspirations must be respected; peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent.

Wilson concluded that '"Self-determination" is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril'. While Wilson's claims and postulates primarily referred to Europe, and to Eastern Europe and the Balkans more specifically (which becomes clearer from the whole text, although he does not mention them), this was a powerful speech with a universalist discourse, as was Lloyd George's in his speech on 5 January, which, it can be argued, Wilson was employing at his own peril.

At the same time, the Americans remained suspicious of Britain's aims, and a navy intelligence memorandum made the claim that

> The tendency of Great Britain to take possession of all odds and ends of territory to which no vigorous claim to other ownership is urged may almost be dignified by the designation of a national policy. The idea seems to have been and still is that even the most unpromising detached ocean rock will, if kept long enough, develop some useful purpose.[29]

The American continental stance and inability to understand British seapower and culture is captured even better in another statement from the same memorandum, claiming that 'It has never been the practice of the United States to acquire outlying islands for the sole purpose of preventing them from falling under the control of possible future enemies'.

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[27] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 49, 763.72119/1191, Garrett to SS, cable, 28 Jan. 1918.
[28] FRUS 1918, *War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 108-13, Wilson, Address to Congress, 11 Feb. 1918.
[29] NARA DC, RG 80, box 168, 2nd endorsement. General Board. B.B. no.414-3, by Charles Badger, 24 Jan. 1918. The critique was not unfamilar in Britain itself, where Montagu derided Curzon in December 1918 that the latter 'for historical reasons which he alone is master, geographical considerations which he has peculiarly studied, finds, reluctantly, much against his will, with very grave doubts, that it would be dangerous if any country in the world was left … to the control of any other country but ourselves, and we must go there, as I have heard him say, 'for diplomatic, economic, strategic and telegraphic reasons''. See Alan Sharp, *The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking After the First World War, 1919-1923* (Basingstoke, 2008, 2nd ed.), 10.

Hertling, meanwhile, made his own grievances heard and accused Lloyd George of having war aims of [a] purely imperialistic nature', while the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* denounced London for wanting to 'create a powerful English belt, stretching from the Cape via Cairo to Calcutta and thence to the Far East and to Australia'.[30] In this instance and at this time, some American and German discourses had become strikingly similar. Germany's anxiety since the turn of the century to contest the hegemony of a 'perfidious Albion' to gain its 'place in the sun', it could be argued, was now also an American view, as the country was forcefully drawn into the world's conflict, to reshape the world to serve its own interests.

The German foreign office took a more nuanced stance and maintained in a detailed memorandum that Germany had no inclination to antagonise the Japanese over the Palaus and Marianas, the former being useful because of their proximity to the Philippines, the latter being close to Japan, and that negotiations would not fail over these, but that 'territories of the Equator and south of it in the Pacific Ocean … could be significant for Germany in the future'.[31] This replicated the previous differentiation and carried the idea from 1917 to rebuild a German colonial empire in the southern Pacific and away from Japanese hegemony over into 1918, thereby seemingly confirming Japanese hegemony in the northern part.

Others, however, wondered what the country would do with any of the colonies if they were returned, now that its global trading and shipping network had been effectively destroyed by the British, thereby expressing doubt that the pre-war situation could be re-established even in favourable circumstances.[32]

This was a valid observation, and was as real as the Japanese determination to hold on to their Pacific islands permanently. The *Hochi*, for instance, made nothing less than a

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[30] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 135-8, 763.72119/1385, Garrett to SS, cable, 25 Feb. 1918; BA Koblenz, N1053-125, fol.49, *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, 28 Feb. 1918, 'Solf und der Kolonialgedanke'.
[31] Hermann Popert (writing under his pseudonym 'Fidelis'), a German lawyer and writer, dissected Solf's colonial stance as it was manifested across five major statements between December 1917 and March 1918, which in itself tells a story of Solf's activity during those months. BA Koblenz, N1053-11, fols 1-8, *Vortrupp-Flugschrift*, 2 May 1918, 'Solf und das koloniale Kriegsziel', by Fidelis. Regarding the AA's position, see TNA, GFM 33/3507/9846/4, fols H315690-705, AA memo. 'Die Grundlagen eines deutsch-japanischen Friedens', unsigned, 26 Feb. 1918.
[32] BA Berlin, R901/56296, fol.41, clipping, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4 Feb. 1918, 'Verzichtfriede und Welthandel', by Cornelius Jacobs, Hamburg.

'Public Announcement of the Will of the Nation' on 'The Mastery of the Pacific. Non-restoration of the South Sea Islands'.[33] In it, the author warned against Germany using its islands in the Pacific, if they were returned, as bases to threaten Japanese trade routes, an identical narrative to the Australian and New Zealand ones. Thus unsurprisingly, the Japanese consul general in Sydney said that 'Japan, Australia and New Zealand [should] claim that the German colonies cannot be returned to Germany'.[34] German diplomats were told the same. In continuation of previous talks in Stockholm, ambassador Uchida indicated to Lucius that a peace claiming the return of the German colonies would be out of the question for Japan, whereas the Japanese embassy in Madrid made it known that Tokyo would refuse to sign a peace that did not include its claim to the German islands north of the Equator and would, in such a case, also decline to become a member of a future League of Nations.[35] Stinnes also became involved again, talking to Uchida once more, who revealed that a long war was good for Japan and that Japan could hold out best in such a conflict.[36] This was in line with what the Japanese had been thinking since August 1914, but Uchida had the benefit of hindsight now, not least regarding how the economy had profited, and it is remarkable how frankly he admitted that the European carnage was and still would be advantagous for Japan.[37] Greene must have seen it similarly when he wrote to Balfour in May 1918 that 'Japan's foreign policy is opportunist first, last, and all the time'.[38]

As a symbolical act, the Japanese established a civilian administration for their South Seas territories in June 1918.[39] The *Japan Advertiser* of 4 July 1918 wrote about the

[33] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, Greene, Tokyo, to Balfour, letter, 6 May 1918, with attached article from *Hochi*, 4 May 1918, 'The Mastery of the Pacific. Non-restoration of the South Sea Islands. Public Announcement of the Will of the Nation.'
[34] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.60, clipping, *Berliner Tageblatt*, 5 March 1918, 'Die Frage der deutschen Südseekolonien'.
[35] PA AA, R 19526, message, 12 April 1918; R 6102, fol.75, Bassewitz, German Embassy Madrid, to AA, cable, 30 April 1918.
[36] PA AA, R 17438, Report on conversation between Hugo Stinnes and Japanese Minister Uchida in Stockholm on 13 April 1918.
[37] On Japan's wartime economic boom, see E. Sydney Crawcour, 'Industrialization and technological change, 1885-1929', in Kozo Yamamura (ed.), *The Economic Emergence of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, 1997), 101-108.
[38] TNA, FO 410/67, fol.7r/v, Greene to Balfour, letter, 24 May 1918. The remarks were made in reaction to press comments about the Japanese Prime Minister not ruling out an alliance with Germany after the war.
[39] It was established by ordinance from 29 June 1918. See NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, Message from 'W' to ONI entitled 'Pacific Islands under Japanese Control, Administration', 18 July 1918.

measure and explained that a Navy Ministry representative had confirmed that 'hitherto the administration of the South Sea Islands under occupation has been carried on by the naval authorities, but as they are not used to civil affairs such as education and industries, they thought it advisable to establish a civil office to take charge of general civil affairs'.[40] While the argument brought forward thus emphasised practicality, this was a clear signal to a domestic as well as an international audience that the Japanese were there to stay.

On the subject of the Germans' potential use of islands in the Pacific as hostile bases, there was a real sense of Allied urgency now. The London *Times* had published an article from its Wellington correspondent entitled 'A calamitous prospect'. It was meant for domestic consumption when outlining Lloyd George's controversy with the Labour Party over self-determination, but also took Massey and Ward, now on their way to Britain, to task:

> The "Imperial picnic" theory is admitted to be inapplicable to a mission which is concerned with so clear and momentous an issue as whether Germany's lost territories in New Guinea and Samoa are to be restored to her, and whether she is to be free to renew and extend her wireless stations in the Pacific, to establish submarine bases and air-fleets, and to compel the free nations in these seas as soon as peace is declared to begin preparing for the next war at least as vigorously as she will herself be preparing.[41]

This scenario, the author claimed, 'a year ago nobody in this country had regarded as conceivable unless as the result of a drawn battle indistinguishable in many of its results from a defeat'.

The Australasians' approaching visit of Britain would certainly not turn into a picnic, neither was the new reality of modern submarines and bombers one. The author's piece thus sheds a fascinating light not only on a deep intra-imperial geopolitical antagonism but also on the perceptions of those technologies, as their sophistication had grown vertiginously within only a few years.

[40] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, Benton C. Decker, ONI, to SD, GB and others, circular message, 2 Aug. 1918.
[41] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.57, clipping, *The Times*, 4 April 1918, 'New Guinea and Samoa. Menace of Return to Germany. Apprehensions in New Zealand', from Wellington.

For instance, the Germans had developed merchant/cargo submarines that were meant to break the naval blockade and had an impressive (non-submerged) range of 12,000 nautical miles at full speed at 10 knots, or a staggering 25,000 nautical miles at 5.5 knots, more than three times the distance from Sydney to Los Angeles. From this, they developed 'U-cruisers', an improved type designed for warfare, which achieved a range of 17,750 nautical miles at 8 knots. Even more advanced types never reached construction. Their operational achievements were ground-breaking, albeit militarily insignificant, including laying mines off the Delaware Capes and Long Island, cutting the underwater telegraph cables connecting New York City with Nova Scotia, and even opening fire in July 1918 on a small coastal town in Massachusetts, making this the only German raid mounted against the United States mainland during World War I and the first time it was shelled by a foreign power since 1846. Prior to this, a much-publicised trans-Atlantic crossing had been undertaken by a 'regular' German submarine fitted with additional tanks in September and October 1916. It entered Newport harbour and sank a number of merchant vessels off the coast before returning to Germany. Although all the above submarines only had limited submerged capabilities, the future long-distance threat across oceans and far from base, which was a plausible scenario in the Pacific, could be easily imagined.[42] Andrew Lambert thus observes astutely about the transition in technology in that period and its implications for the British Pacific that 'von Spee's coal-hungry cruisers were a thing of the past' and that 'the new danger came from large diesel-powered U-boats, stretching around the world to attack shipping lanes linking Britain to Australasia'.[43]

On (heavier-than-air) aviation, advanced versions of Germany's Gotha bomber had proved in 1917 that they had the capacity of flying from Flanders to London and back with a payload, but it was the British Vickers Vimy bomber, coming too late to be used in anger during the war, that became famous for showcasing long-distance potential

[42] Antony Preston, *Submarines: The History and Evolution of Underwater Fighting Vessels* (London, 1975), 53-54, and, with more technical detail and some information on strategy, Gibson/Prendergast, *German Submarine War, 1914-1918*, 216-218.

[43] Andrew Lambert, *Crusoe's Island: A Rich and Curious History of Pirates, Castaways and Madness* (London, 2016), 234. Some contemporary sources warning against future German bases in the Pacific still refer to the use of coaling stations, but this was an uninformed and obsolete scenario by then. On the changeover from coal to oil propulsion in naval surface ships during World War I, see James Goldrick, 'Coal and the Advent of the First World War at Sea', *War in History*, 21, 3 (2014), 322-37.

when a version fitted with extra tanks was flown non-stop across the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland over more than 3,000 kms in June 1919.[44] The Vimy was also used for a flight from Britain to Australia in November 1919, with 23 stopovers between Hounslow/London and Port Darwin.[45] The long-range strategic capacity of these machines was thus still uncertain, although these events coincided with the commissioning into the Royal Navy of the world's first true aircraft carrier, HMS *Argus*, in September 1918, whereas a successful attack had been carried out by British airplanes in July of the same year on a German airship base in Denmark from a converted battlecruiser, known as the Tondern Raid.[46] Lighter-than-air aircraft also saw significant advances during the war, not least regarding range. The German naval Zeppelin *L 59*, nicknamed *Das Afrika-Schiff*, became famous for attempting a long-distance resupply mission to German East Africa.[47] Its mission, started from Bulgaria in November 1917, was aborted over Sudan, and the airship covered nearly 7,000 kms during its four days in the air with enough fuel for another 64 hours flight.

In view of the above, William Watt, Acting Australian Prime Minister after Hughes had left the country to attend the Imperial War Conference in London in 1918, warned that 'any man who offered back to Germany the Pacific Islands was offering a breeding ground within naval striking distance of Australia. Upon this question depended Australia's safety for future generations'.[48]

Overseas, Hughes, accompanied by former Prime Minister Joseph Cook, wanted 'to inform about the dangers a return of the Pacific Islands to Germany would entail'.[49] His first destination was not Britain, however, but the United States, where he had travelled *en route* to meet Wilson and to conduct a public relations campaign unprecedented in Australian foreign affairs. That said, it was Lord Reading, the British Ambassador in Washington, who facilitated the meeting, which took place on 29 May

[44] Peter Kilduff, *Germany's First Air Force 1914-1918* (London, 1991), 68-71; Francis K. Mason, *The British Bomber since 1914* (London, 1994), 95-7.
[45] Meredith Hooper, *Kangaroo Route : the Development of Commercial Flight between England and Australia* (Sydney, 1985), 10, and map behind front cover.
[46] Guy Robbins, *The Aircraft Carrier Story 1908-1945* (London, 2001), 65, 67.
[47] Douglas H. Robinson, *The Zeppelin in Combat: A History of the German Naval Airship Division, 1912-1918* (Henley-on-Thames, 1971), ch.XX.
[48] BA Berlin, R1001/2641, fol.25, Kriegspresseamt, clipping, *Daily Mail*, 21 May 1918.
[49] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.51, report, Nachrichten der Auslandspresse, 5 June 1918, containing a relevant article from the *Morning Post*, 27 May 1918.

1918 and at which he was also present.[50] According to Reading's account, Hughes 'impressed on the President that it was vital to secure to Australia that Germany should never be allowed to hold any part of New Guinea or the Islands of the Pacific' and emphasised 'the necessity of these belonging only to the British Empire and friendly Powers'. Wilson's response was anywhere between ambiguous and non-committal. Reading gave his impression as follows: 'The President was sympathetic and said that he would communicate with those to whom he had entrusted the study of these and similar questions.'[51] Written four days after the meeting with Wilson, Reading's report went on: 'I have not yet seen or heard any comment on his views. Americans are at the moment too intent upon winning the war to think of peace consistently.' Hughes later commented on the meeting in his memoirs as Wilson hearing him 'in silence, listening intently to all I said, but remaining as unresponsive as the Sphinx in the desert'.[52]

Greene presented the American perspective as expressed by their ambassador in Tokyo Morris and explained that the 'occupation of these [Pacific] islands by Japan was a matter of importance to America in as much as they lay astride the direct line from Hawaii to the Philippines', but that this was 'a question which would have to come up for discussion at an eventual Peace Conference'.[53] As between Lansing and Ishii before, the Americans were aware of their geostrategic conundrum but were currently not prepared to discuss the Pacific Islands, or, it seems, any other territorial post-war question as a matter of principle.[54]

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[50] TNA, CO 537/1003, Reading to FO, cable, 2 June 1918. See also Carl Bridge, *William Hughes: Australia* (London, 2011), 54. Reading had advised against the meeting, but to no avail.

[51] At that stage, the Inquiry, a group established by Wilson in September 1917 to develop thoughts and prepare materials for post-war peace negotiations, was in full swing, but this work was not to be shared with Hughes.

[52] William Morris Hughes, *Policies and Potentates* (Sydney, 1950), 229.

[53] TNA, FO 371/3233, fol.196, Greene to Balfour, letter, 18 April 1918.

[54] It is worth noting that despite Wilson's unwillingness to discuss the Pacific with Hughes, American naval intelligence on (at least) one occasion, in July 1918, communicated with Burns Philp's representatives in Honolulu. The unnamed company representative warned the Americans: 'That too much stress cannot be laid on the dangers of the foothold the Japanese are gaining in the South Pacific Islands, and the possibility of the extension of their operations all over the Pacific. Through the medium of the war with Germany, the Japanese Government was enabled to capture the Marianas, Caroline and Marshall Island groups and from these bases to bar out commercial interests in the surrounding island groups. The scarcity of shipping tonnage has given the Japanese an opportunity to launch trading enterprises which ... will be difficult to dislodge or rival when the war is over. The Japanese are already proving a menace to the American and Australian trading companies.' As Burns Philp were classed

To Hughes, however, the Pacific question remained his first and foremost agenda item. Three days after his meeting with Wilson, on 1 June, he gave an emphatic speech in front of the Anglo-American Pilgrims Society of New York, outlining not only his territorial demands, but an entire Australian security policy for the Pacific. Accusing Germany of wanting 'to encircle in her hairy arms the entire world' including 'a great and rich island continent, its fertile shores washed by summer seas, a shining jewel in golden setting, a great country with but 5 millions of people sparsely scattered around its shores', he warned that 'if Germany wins this war, the position of Australia is desperate'.[55] To counter this and future threats, he claimed:

> [T]he position of Australia is such that it is essential to its territorial integrity that it should either control these islands [New Guinea and the surrounding islands] itself, or that they should be in the hands of friendly and civilised nations. ... Very many of them are suitable for coaling stations, submarine bases, and other points d'appui. To allow another nation to control them would be to allow it to control Australia.

This was the 'narrow' forward defence strategy, including islands close to its shores, that had been formulated in Australia over the war years and now found another manifestation before an American audience. It merits attention that Hughes accepted that the islands in question could be 'in the hands of friendly and civilised nations' other than Australia. He explained what he had in mind:

> America, Australia and New Zealand have common interests in the Pacific. And Australia looks to you, her elder brother, to stand by her around the peace table as well as on the field of battle. For if we are to continue to be a Commonwealth of free people, we must have guarantees against enemy aggression in the future. And this involves an Australasian Monroe Doctrine in the South Pacific.

And further on, in a section subtitled 'Hands off the Pacific':

> So we come to you, our great ally, seeking your steadfast and wholehearted co-operation and aid. Hands off the Australian Pacific is the doctrine to which by inexorable circumstances we are committed. And against all predatory nations we shall strive to give this doctrine effect to the last ounce of effort at our

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'reliable informants' by the Americans and these contents were circulated to the State Department, the General Board of the Navy and others in Washington, this is an interesting example of early, common-interest driven (albeit assymetrical) intelligence cooperation between the two countries. See NARA DC, RG 38, box 454, C-10-a, no 4669-A, memo. 'Trade Relations' by Intelligence Office, San Francisco, July 1918; RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, folder 8, Officer-In-Charge, Naval Intelligence Office, San Francisco, to Aid-for-Information, 14th Naval District, Honolulu, message, 24 July 1918; Benton C. Decker, ONI, to SD, GB and others, circular message, 5 Aug. 1918.

[55] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 121, MS 1538/23/2977-91, Speech to [the Pilgrims Society], [1 June 1918].

> disposal. And in this we do not desire Empire, but only security. And so we rejoice that our great ally France has interests in the Southern Pacific, and that Holland, as long as she does not become the agent of Germany, is our neighbour in Java and New Guinea.

What Hughes was asking for, in essence, was that the United States endorse his policy of an 'Australasian Monroe Doctrine' for an 'Australian Pacific'. The American Monroe Doctrine had been designed nearly 100 years earlier to keep European colonialism out of the Americas, and Hughes now wanted what he deemed undesirable elements to be kept away from Australia and out of the Pacific and needed his powerful American 'elder brother' to underwrite his strategic model, but there were important omissions, too.

Significantly, Australia's British 'mother' and her role in Australia's defence were left out of Hughes' speech. What was more, Australia's real defence guarantor since 1914, Japan, was excluded, as was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the legal mechanism that had brought Japan into the war and the Pacific. This was no coincidence but deliberate rhetoric. Indeed, Hughes' generic use of the term 'all predatory nations' seemed to target Japan as much as Germany.

At least, this is how it was understood in Japan. The *Asahi*, for example, published a critical piece in which the author pointed out that 'not only has Japan community of interests with Australia in as great a degree as the United States as regards the peace and balance of power of the Pacific but also she stands in the position of an Ally of Great Britain, the mother country of Australia' and then lamented that Hughes in his speech was not only 'excluding Japan in this connection [but he] even hinted that this country was in the position of future enemy, which was a most regrettable incident from the point of view of the Japanese'.[56] The article even expressed understanding that Australian politicians could 'on occasion be influenced by the hatred of Japan fostered hitherto under the name "yellow peril"', but concluded that it was 'absurd to reject Japan as a supporter of the common interests at the [future] Peace Conference at a moment when she is cooperating against a common enemy'. In another article, the same newspaper warned against the divisiveness of Hughes' discourse, claiming

[56] NAA, A11803, 1918/89/126, Greene to Munro Ferguson, letter, 10 June 1918, with attachments, clipping, *Japan Advertiser*, 4 June 1918, 'Australia wants Monroe Doctrine', and summary of article from *Asahi*, 7 June 1918, entitled 'The Prime Minister of Australia's anti-Japanese pronouncement'.

that Germany was 'eagerly awaiting trouble between Japan and Australia', and maintained that 'whatever the views of Australians may be with regard to the Pacific, to exclude Japan who is at present entrusted with its safeguarding is a palpable impossibility'.[57] The *Taiyo* magazine also lamented Australia's negative views of Japan while '[Japan was] duly exerting herself for Australia's security'.[58]

In the event, Hughes' own government berated him. In reaction to his speech, Watt cabled him that 'Australian statesmen should be as ready to select Japan as co-worker at [the] peace conference as America' while Hughes had 'not only excluded Japan but hinted at Japan as future enemy [of] Australia which insinuation gives very disagreeable impression in Japan' and was a 'sure manifestation of antipathy [of] Australians towards [the] Japanese'.[59] He continued that 'in view of discriminating [Australian] policy generally against Japanese [it would be] desirable for Japan [to] assert her rights in this respect on proper occasion after [the] war'. What this somewhat truncated cable message was trying to tell Hughes was that it might not be helpful to alienate Japan even further (in addition to Australia's already discriminatory immigration and trade regime) in the light of Japan's standing as an allied partner and a regional powerhouse that might feel pushed towards wanting to assert itself excessively after the war after experiencing Australian alienation, or, more broadly, that it was in Australia's best interest to have a good relationship with Japan. It also showcased that the Australian government approached international relations more cautiously and in a more co-operative spirit than its antagonisitic prime minister, a pattern that would be repeated in London and Paris. Hughes, by contrast, was satisfied with his mission, which had 'set out [the] position [of] Australia.' On his way to London soon, he wanted the 'propaganda to continue', but recognised that it was 'absolutely

[57] TNA, CO 418/173, fols 528-531, Greene to Munro Ferguson, letter, 8 July 1918, with attached summarised translation from *Asahi*, 8 July 1918, 'The Question of the South Pacific: German hopes of a split between Japan and Australia'.
[58] TNA, CO 418/173, fols 487-8, Greene to Munro Ferguson, letter, 18 June 1918, with attached resume prepared at British Embassy in Japan of article in *Taiyo* magazine on Japan's present and future relations with Australia, undated.
[59] NAA, CP360/8, 1, Watt to Hughes, cable, 16 July 1918.

essential to Australia's national and commercial interests to be properly represented here in America'.[60]

Not as a direct reaction, but certainly not by coincidence either, the *Asahi* suggested to initiate a PR counter-campaign and for 'the British and Japanese Governments ... to make public as far as possible the decisions arrived at by them with regard to the occupation of former German islands', which reflects Japanese insecurity about Hughes' dealings in the United States and about the guarantee that the Anglo-Japanese deal from February 1917 provided.[61] Although it was not a secret any longer, the Japanese seemingly considered this an opportune moment to make it 'official' with British backing to improve Japan's peace position.

In Britain, feelings were mixed towards Hughes' visit, and this was not only to do with perceptions of his erratic behaviour and his reported deafness. The mood is captured in a letter from Munro Ferguson to the Colonial Office.[62] In a conversation between him and Walter Davidson, freshly arrived as the new Governor of New South Wales, the latter expressed the view that Britain was 'afraid of Australia', while Munro Ferguson thought that there was now a growing tendency in London to 'plain speaking' and that 'the time is past for treating Overseas Dominions like spoilt children'. But Hughes also had supporters, such as the editors of the *Times* who once more agreed with him and supported his Monroe Doctrine for the Pacific which was 'an axiom of security for Australia and New Zealand which must appeal with almost equal force to Western America and to Canada'.[63] This security postulate was

[60] NAA, CP360/8, 1, Hughes, from NY, to Watt, cable, 3 June 1918; A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 963-4, clipping, *Argus*, 3 June 1918, 'Mr. Hughes in New York. Party "All Well." Australia and America. Urgent Need for Representation'. On the propaganda front, one of Hughes' early activities in Britain was to give another speech in front of the London branch of the Pilgrims Society, similar to his New York speech, but with a more pronounced emphasis on a white racial apocalypse, cautioning that 'the Pacific ... is going to be the scene of … many racial problems' and that 'unless people with great ideals, with a love of freedom and with an ample regard of civilisation, become at once responsible for its administration, it may yet lead to a greater war than that which now rages'. See NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 91-3, header 'Australia - Pacific, Interest in' [press summary, 1918]: see entry for '12.7.18. Speech by Hughes to Pilgrim's Club London'. See also NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fol.893, clipping, *Morning Post*, 13 July 1918, 'Pacific Problems. No restorations to Germany. Reliance on America'.

[61] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 91-3, header 'Australia - Pacific, Interest in' [press summary, 1918], entry for: 8 July 1918, therein: summarised translation of *Asahi* article from 6 July 1918.

[62] NLA, Novar Papers, box 1, Munro Ferguson to HM the King, letter, Accession Day 1918 [6 May].

[63] TNA, CO 537/1003, newspaper clippings from London *Times*, 30 May 1918, 'Mr. Hughes at the White House', and 3 June 1918, 'Monroe Doctrine for the Pacific. Future of Ex-German Colonies'.

formulated as a protection against Germany's 'so called "colonies" in the Pacific', which were 'not colonies at all in the British or the French sense, but strategic points where her ships of war or trade might coal or water', and it is easy to see how the article typified a racialised Anglo-Saxon Pacific and therefore implicitly invoked a Japanese threat.

When Hughes arrived in London in mid-June, the IWC had already started, having resumed from the previous year on 11 June in the presence of British, Canadian, New Zealand and South African representatives. Lloyd George reviewed the war situation with a particular focus on the German Spring Offensive, but also talked about war aims and the impact of the growing American involvement in the conflict. In the light of the Americans' planned 'raising of 300,000 fresh men every month for at least nine months', he cautioned those present that 'it is also essential that the British Empire should be adequately represented in that great army next year, not merely in order to achieve the purpose of the campaign, but also in order that the Empire may be able to claim its fair share in the victory which I think is within our grasp if we each of us make the necessary effort, because if ever we come to a Peace Conference the fact that we have great forces behind us will count when we come to a settlement'.[64] This revealed not only that he did not expect the war to end anytime soon, but also that he was worried that an overwhelming American military effort might reduce the British Empire's, including the Australasians', position in peace negotiations, which, ultimately, was to be paid for in blood. While this was certainly a strategy to mobilise more troops from the Dominions, it was undeniable that the Australasians and South Africans had a serious strategic stake in the future peace through their respective occupations of German colonial territory and therefore had more to fight for than France's and Belgium's territorial restitutions alone. They needed a German defeat determined by British guns to maintain their strategic goals of retaining their spoils, and Lloyd George made sure to remind them of it.

Whether Massey needed to be reminded or not, he was well aware of his country's mission, at least according to his own account before the IWC: 'the feeling in New Zealand is this, and it has existed almost from the commencement of the war: We are

[64] TNA, CAB 23/43/3, fols 17-21, IWC 15, Shorthand Notes, 11 June 1918.

going into this war to fight for ourselves. The impression during the Boer War was that we were sending troops to help England. That is not the feeling to-day.'[65] This was a surprisingly candid statement and blunt in its national assertiveness. In some way, it was a declaration of independence. Following Hughes' verbal initiative in Washington and New York to promote an Australian agenda in an Anglo-Saxon country that was not Britain (and with a Pacific coast, which was not a coincidence either), there was a powerful, albeit ambiguous, dynamic of detachment at play. As a matter of fact, and this was no contradiction in his mind, Massey had made it clear in the press that he had faith in Britain and its institutions. He said he was in accord with the Australian position that the German colonies should not go back to Germany, but that he also trusted the British government to follow the tenet 'what the British Empire has won the British Empire must keep'.[66] On another occasion, he shared his belief 'that the Imperial War Cabinet -- on which the Dominions would ... be represented when the war was over-- was well able to look after *British* interests'.[67] These, in Massey's mind, were synonymous with New Zealand's interests, and what those interests would be and who would define them would turn out to be a key question and a reality check between the British imperial centre and periphery. In other words, how much Britishness was left in New Zealand in strategic terms?[68] In any case, it would have to rely on those in the metropole for the peace Wellington desired.

Another significant IWC intervention came from Balfour, while Hughes stayed quiet after his arrival. Explaining Japan's role and relationship, Balfour responded to the Australasian discourse:

> Personally I know there is a great deal of mistrust and jealousy, or fear, I ought to say, of Japan. I do not share that mistrust or those fears so far as the immediate future is concerned …, the next five or ten years. If you ask what will

[65] TNA, CAB 23/43/4, fols 23-29, IWC 16, Shorthand Notes, 13 June 1918.
[66] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fols 866-8, clipping, *Morning Post*, 15 June 1918, 'Pacific Problems. Future of the German Colonies. New Zealand's Attitude'.
[67] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.47, clipping, London *Times*, 20 June 1918, 'Mr Massey on the German Colonies'.
[68] While Australian and New Zealand 'independence' or 'sovereignty' from Britain and its empire is a subject to fill volumes, suffice it to say that New Zealand's, or Australia's, general 'Britishness' was not in question in the late 1910s, although it began to manifest itself differently through the war, which had been a catalyst of a graduated national assertion, not least fuelled by questions of geostrategy. For more on this on Australia, see W.J. Hudson and M.P. Sharp, *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Nation* (Melbourne, 1988) and Carl Bridge and Bernard Attard (eds), *Between Empire and Nation* (Melbourne, 2001).

> happen after that … : Have you any security that as time goes on Japan will not turn out to be the Prussia of the East, as many describe her, my reply is that I have no security, but I do not think it is worth our while to try to penetrate the future. For the present I believe Japan is what she professes to be, a faithful ally, ready to do her best, within what she conceives to be reasonable limits, to aid in the common cause, and I think we can safely call upon her to cooperate with us, and that she will do so, not perhaps to the full extent which we might under certain circumstances hope for, but in a manner which will prove extremely important in redressing the balance of the war.[69]

Note how limited Balfour's trust in Japan was, envisaging peaceful relations only for 'the next five of ten years', despite his representing the institution most involved in the communication with the Japanese, the Foreign Office.[70] He also revisited his portrayal from 1917 of Japan as the 'Prussia of the East', a ruthless, expansionist and untrustworthy power. As long as Japan was a useful and 'faithful ally' in the war, Balfour argued, that was good enough, but it was also surprisingly little in the light of an alliance that was in its seventeenth year. Here was a tacit admission of Britain's global weakness and Japan's usefulness in masking it.

The Pacific Islands issue was not addressed by the IWC for a while, and when it was, in August 1918, the tide of war had changed dramatically. In what came to be known as 'the black day of the German Army', 8 August, German defence lines experienced one of the greatest collapses of the war during the Battle of Amiens, part of an Allied offensive that would ultimately lead to the end of the war itself.[71] The thrust was conducted by British, Canadian and Australian troops and was a great boost to Allied morale, whereas German morale started to falter and later break down. In this spirit, on 13 August, Balfour set the tone by saying 'that he was vehemently opposed to restoring to the Germans any opportunity of creating new submarine bases or levying armies of black troops; that he considered that Australia, New Zealand, and South

[69] TNA, CAB 23/43/7, fols 56-63, IWC 19, Shorthand Notes, 20 June 1918.
[70] For comparison, it took 3 ½ years to build HMAS *Australia* from the day she was ordered, whereas the dry dock at Pearl Harbor took 10 years to complete – not least due to a structural collapse mid-way. A five-year-cycle in terms of defence, security and preparation for war was thus hardly a reassuring quantity.
[71] The Battle of Amiens lasted from 8 to 12 August 1918. The expression 'the black day of the Germany Army' ('der schwarze Tag des deutschen Heeres') was later coined by Ludendorff. See Nick Lloyd, *Hundred Days: the End of the Great War* (London, 2013), chs 3 and 4, covering events from 8 to 20 August, 44-77.

Africa should retain the adjacent German colonies which they had conquered'.[72] He also emphasised, however, that the British government intended to keep its promise to the Japanese of keeping the islands north of the Equator. Now that the Germans were on the defensive in the wider war, Balfour's points had a different, much more commited resonance from after the IWC in 1917, when support for the Dominions was verbally watered down. This was what Hughes, Massey and Jan Smuts, the South African delegate and later Prime Minister, had come to London to secure for their home governments, although Hughes contested the Japanese promise and pointed out (somewhat speciously as we know) that his government had merely been 'notified' about it, but not 'consulted' and that, as a consequence, there was no Australian assent. The question was postponed when Robert Cecil, Assistant Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and one of the architects of the League of Nations, agreed to prepare a memorandum on the subject, which would lead to further altercations with Hughes later on. Otherwise, all were on the same page except Borden, who claimed that 'Canada did not go to war for territorial extension of the British Empire' and contemplated 'to let any of these [German] Colonies pass under the direct protectorate or even the actual ownership and control of the United States'.

One day after Balfour's discourse, it was Massey's, Hughes' and Smuts' turn to share their views. Massey, favouring a *Pax Britannica*, strongly disagreed with Borden's idea of entrusting the Americans with colonies, and certainly not with Pacific ones.[73] 'We do not know', he argued, 'what may happen in the next twenty years; we may even be at war with America'. As 'the South Pacific is practically British now', Massey added, 'we want to keep it British'. This was a far cry from Hughes' 'brotherly' discourse in the United States and New Zealand's own enthusiastic reaction in 1917 to the Americans entering the war, and a view that would certainly have offended Borden. Hughes had one main point to convey, on German New Guinea, asserting that 'all I have to say is …: "If you want to shift us, come and do it; here we are – 'J'y suis, j'y reste'"'.[74] If this stance was challenged, he warned, Australia might not go to war alongside Britain again. What this highlighted, among other things, is reminiscent of what Massey had

[72] TNA, CAB 23/42/1, IWC 30, Minutes of a Meeting, 13 Aug. 1918.
[73] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 119, MS 1538/23/1893, WC 458, IWC 31, Shorthand Notes, 14 Aug. 1918.
[74] Ibid.

said in June: that Australia had gone to war not only for the defence of the mother country, but in its own wider interest.

Finally, Smuts elaborated on German colonial war aims and referred to a statement made by Richard von Kühlmann, the German foreign secretary, who had by now resigned: according to Smuts, Kühlmann had claimed for Germany a colonial empire 'corresponding to our greatness', but otherwise, Smuts shared his impression that 'the Germans have given up the hope of recovering their Asiatic colonies' as 'very little is ever said [in Germany] about … the Pacific colonies'. He added that 'I wish that we in Africa were as safe as Mr. Hughes and Mr. Massey are in the Pacific in this respect'. If he was right, the Australians and New Zealanders had nothing to fear and were unnecessarily ventilating.

Smuts did have a point that the colonies were not a priority in Germany, but they never really disappeared from public or political discourse.[75] Within this discourse, the African colonies, including the *Mittelafrika* idea (a vision to establish a continuous German territory from West to East Africa) figured more prominently in the German imagination than the Pacific, which nevertheless continued to have its particular advocates.

A lively *Reichstag* debate took place in May 1918 in which a conservative German MP, Peter Stubmann, responded to what he claimed were recent expressions about renouncing the German South Seas, or some of it, in order to consolidate (*abrunden*) the German African colonial possessions.[76] Stubmann maintained that 'it will be doubly necessary to warn against the spread of ideas which represent a renouncement of part of what we have previously possessed' and cautioned that the argument of complete colonial retention was not only to avoid a weakening of Germany's bargaining position in the peace negotiations, but that it also stemmed from the intrinsic value of the South Sea colonies, especially with regard to copra and phosphates.[77] Germany, he argued, was in need of their further development and exploitation to secure a

[75] In fact, the *Kolonialraub* discourse was later part and parcel of conservative German thinking in the 1920s and was included in the Nazi propaganda of the 1930s. See Epilogue.
[76] BA Koblenz, N1053-54, fol.308r, Reichstag, 165. Sitzung, 14 May 1918.
[77] Incidentally, Stubmann was politically closely connected to Hamburg and also a member of the regional parliament there, the *Hamburgische Bürgerschaft*.

resource of fat from copra and to generate phosphates as fertilizers for agriculture. As a means of diplomatic leverage, Stubmann suggested that British and Australian prisoners of war could be used. This argument was seconded by another conservative MP, Karl von Böhlendorff-Kölpin, who also mentioned the use of Belgium's occupation as a diplomatic tool to strengthen Germany's colonial case. Critical attitudes towards Germany's *Kolonialpolitik* were also voiced, especially by the left, to the point of arguing that it had significantly contributed to the outbreak of the war, which was being fought between 'imperialists in Germany and in all other countries with whom Germany is at war'.[78]

Parliament was in essence only a consultative body at this stage, but the RKA's position, expressed by Under-Secretary Otto Gleim at the end of the debate, was firm.[79] He referred to a statement made by '[Solf] before parliament on 27 February [1918] and on other occasions that the government wants its colonies back under any circumstance, naturally including those in the South Seas'. This was a clear political message to the people, but the reality was fraught with uncertainty, which Solf himself expressed in a conversation with Ludendorff in July 1918. He admitted that 'it could be doubted whether it will be possible to maintain our position in the South Seas' but posited that the 'highest tenet has to be the return of all … colonies', whereas colonial expansion was now ruled out.[80]

Solf explained his approach:

> It is strategically sound and solely justifiable, without regard to the final outcome [of the war], to continue to insist on their [the Pacific colonies'] return. Regarding New Guinea, the recently discovered wealth in minerals is of additional significance. Moreover, it is entirely possible that the English would ultimately like to see us in the South Seas as a buffer against the Japanese.

He remarked about Ludendorff, a military man, that the latter had 'followed [his] explanations attentively and that he appreciated the presented reasons and the conclusions drawn from them', but there was an obvious disconnect between the two. For a start, Ludendorff and his OHL were operating out of the *Großes Hauptquartier* in

[78] BA Koblenz, N1053-54, fol.309v, Reichstag, 165. Sitzung, 14 May 1918.
[79] Gleim was also an ex-governor of German Cameroon.
[80] BA Koblenz, N1053-54, fols 334-47, memo. of conversation between Solf and Ludendorff, 22 July 1918, with appendix, undated.

Spa in Belgium, from where he was commanding the war on the Western Front, whereas Solf was based at the political centre in Berlin. Political conversations with Ludendorff, the quasi-military dictator who had the Kaiser's ear, it seems, were more akin to audiences than meetings with peers, surrounded by a military setting in a foreign country, which would have set the tone for any talks. Also, Ludendorff was an East German Junker, having grown up on his family's agricultural *Rittergut*. While not uninterested in colonial policy and colonisation *per se*, he saw the future of German expansion and *Lebensraum* in the east of Europe and represented the school of German continental expansion.[81] He was thus the ideological opposite of the outward-looking and globally-oriented shipping and trading stock typically associated with Hamburg and Bremen and represented by Solf in the *Reichskolonialamt*. When Ludendorff advocated an understanding with Japan in 1917, he did this for military reasons in Europe and was prepared to sacrifice the German Far East and Pacific for it. It is thus more than doubtful how much impact Solf's current intervention might have had, but he did what he had to and could do.

On that note, the Germans were still the occupants of Belgium and parts of France in the summer of 1918 and thus had assets they could use as bargaining chips in some colonial restitution. One element invoked by Solf was in very short supply, however. His imagination of a German South Seas buffer to 'ultimately' materialise by British doing would certainly need time, years, for the Anglo-Japanese Agreement to expire for a start, and for new geostrategic constellations to emerge. For now, this was impossible.

Nevertheless, Solf persevered in arguing the case for German colonialism and the goal of colonial restitution as the military situation was deteriorating fast in August, and even elevated its signifiance when maintaining:

> The guaranteeing of our colonial future is not only the aim of our Government and of certain interested groups, but it has also become a national aim of the German people. There is today a lively consciousness spreading extensively among the working class, to the effect that the maintenance of our colonial possessions is a vital question of honour for Germany as a great Power and that

[81] For Ludendorff's thoughts on German colonisation of Eastern Europe as expressed during the war, see Manfred Nebelin, *Ludendorff. Diktator im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 2011), 194.

> our colonial war aim takes second place to no other war aim in national importance.[82]

This was a pretentious claim about the priorities of a starving nation – in particular the working class who suffered the most from the Allied naval blockade of Germany.

One very outspoken opponent of the Germans' assumption that they were still qualified to possess colonies turned out to be Lloyd George. With no more mention of self-determination and his previous criticism of the global colonial order, he was now pushing for a punishing and deterring peace. At the IWC, he claimed:

> Germany has committed a very great crime against humanity, and you want to make it impossible for any nation to be tempted to repeat that offence, and the first thing you have to do is to show that any nation which attempts that will combine such forces in other nations against them as to make it impossible for them to succeed. When you come to impose terms upon that country, I think they must be terms which will be tantamount to a penalty for the offence. You have, I think, to deal with nations as with individuals in that respect. You must say to a nation which offends: Your punishment is assured; you will not succeed; and your punishment will be a severe one; and when any nation gets tempted in future to attempt an operation of the same kind, their statesmen will say: Well, see what happened to Germany when they attempted the same thing 20, or 50, or 100 years ago.[83]

The bearing of this stance on the colonial question was as follows:

> Now I should like to apply that to the consideration of the German colonies. I think the first thing that matters is that they should not go back to Germany ... We have all heard the stories of how badly they have treated the natives. That is not a thing we ought to forget, but that is not the main reason. The main reason is, we should say to Germany: There you are, you have plunged the world into this horror, and you have got to be properly punished, and you must be stripped of all your Empire in the future. You will not be trustees of either black or white until you have learned something of the arts of civilisation, and how to behave decently in the society of nations. That is the first thing you have to do, and until you do it you have to be deprived of the Empire either of black, white, or yellow. I am sure that is the first thing we ought to consider.

This was the strongest expression of British thought on this issue so far. Not emphasising self-interest or security needs, as Australia and New Zealand had done, Lloyd George exhibited a profoundly moral stance and made it known that Germany had forfeited its place at the colonial table until it learnt 'something of the arts of

[82] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 119, MS 1538/23/2006, Western and General Report, no.83, week ending 28 Aug 1918. Solf's statement was reported to have been made at a speech on 20 August.
[83] TNA, CAB 23/43/13, WC 459, IWC 32, Shorthand Notes, 15 Aug. 1918.

civilisation'. He had reached a guilty verdict, and the colonies were one price to be paid for being convicted.

But he was much less clear about the ramifications of his judgment:

> Now, having come to that conclusion, the next is: What are you to do with the German colonies? Well, I do not know that we need ticket ourselves as Imperialists or otherwise; I think it is a good thing for these countries that Great Britain has undertaken their development. I also agree with Lord Curzon that Great Britain has done very much better than any other country could have done. But I think what matters is that these countries should be developed, and there is a limit to what we can do.

While certain contradictions become obvious from the above, not least agreeing with Curzon's ever-imperialist stance while rejecting imperialism itself, Lloyd George accepted limitations to Britain's expansionist capacity. As a solution, he suggested, replicating Borden, to 'bring America in' and 'that some of these great tracts of territory should be handed over to the trusteeship of America'.

Hughes told Lloyd George plainly: 'I think you are wrong'. Nevertheless, the British Prime Minister's idea of greater American involvement had support among Cabinet members. Austen Chamberlain, now a War Cabinet member without portfolio, thought that 'it would be a good thing for the world if America, now that she has been brought into world politics, were kept there' and that 'it would be a particularly good thing for us if she had increased overseas responsibility, bringing her increased knowledge' which would make her 'know better what the British Empire has done, and what its merits are'.

The American card was a sticky subject for the Australasians, in particular for Hughes. On the one hand, he was using it as leverage in Britain, but when suggestions emerged to involve the Americans in international affairs and colonial oversight, antagonistic feelings kicked in, as Hughes must have realised that he had much more influence in London than in Washington.

Massey asked Lloyd George for clarification, to which the latter replied, referring to German South-West Africa, that 'that [territory] is so essential a part of that country that I do not see how the Cape, for instance, could possibly allow it to be handed over, and the same thing applies to the islands in the Pacific'. He continued that 'I am

thinking rather of those great African tracts which will either have to be handed over to Great Britain or to an International Board or to America'.

Curzon, unsurprisingly, was in agreement with Lloyd George on this point, as he was with 'this attitude taken by Mr. Hughes of "J'y suis, j'y reste" as regards the Pacific', 'General Smuts saying the same thing about South-West Africa' and 'Mr. Massey talking, quite rightly, about keeping Samoa'. He encouraged the latter three by saying that 'I hope they will persist in that attitude; if so, I think they will be victorious'. Chamberlain concurred that 'it is quite impossible to contemplate the surrender to anyone, as any condition of peace, of either the South Sea Islands or German South-West Africa'.

In summary, the British Empire was agreeing on some maxims regarding the future of the German colonies, but was not speaking with one voice. Lloyd George's idea to have the Americans involved generated limited enthusiasm within the IWC, whereas his concept of a 'trusteeship' or internationalisation remained unclear. These questions were not be resolved for the time being and would not be resolved until the peace conference itself, although rifts of perception were already visible within the British imperial camp. Consensus was developed on another particular position, however, that German New Guinea and Samoa, as well as German South-West Africa were somehow to be grouped together as territories meant to belong to their current occupants. Also, Lloyd George put things in perspective by claiming that 'whatever happens before we make peace, I think it is essential that Germany should be beaten', which 'matters more than the actual terms of peace'. He was right, of course. The Germans, although in fast retreat, were currently, in mid-August, still only redrawing their defence lines.

Some of the above-mentioned policy propositions were subsequently put into writing by Long and Ward in two separate memoranda. Long thought that Washington might want to take a share in administering German East Africa, but that 'as regards the Pacific, I am convinced any attempt to surrender the islands now in our possession would provoke violent opposition in Australia and New Zealand, and would be accompanied by immense dangers to these two great Sister Nations, and might even

strain their loyalty to breaking point'.[84] Imperial unity and togetherness, recently strengthend on the battlefield, was not to be jeopardised at a conference table in Long's mind. Ward, in his memorandum entitled 'The Pacific Problem', wrote from a different angle and reiterated some of New Zealand's previous complaints when stating that 'there are probably no interests of an Imperial nature anywhere that have been so much neglected as the interests of the Empire in the Pacific', but also analysed soundly that 'the future control of Pacific seas and the great interests of the Empire in that area must be associated with predominant naval power' while accepting that interests of the British Empire in the Pacific could also 'remain, as practically they do at present, in the hands of other friendly Powers which have great navies'.[85] As a conduit for this strategy, he advocated 'an unwritten alliance between Britain, the Dominions, America, and Japan, for the protection of the Pacific' in an article in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph*.[86]

Ward had ignored the French in his statement, who had been invited and sent a diplomatic mission to Australia during the summer.[87] It arrived in Sydney on 10 September and was received by Pearce and the New South Wales premier William Holman, described by the French consul as 'one of France's best friends in Australia'.[88] The latter reported on Holman promoting Hughes' 'nouvelle doctrine de Monroe' along with an accord between the United States, Britain, France and Japan 'for the definite confiscation of the German colonies in the Pacific Ocean'.

Nevertheless, Ward's approach was comprehensive, taking into consideration a width of factors, such as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the growing importance of the United States, Australia's and New Zealand's particular defence needs, and the postulate of German removal from the area. This was also in line with Massey's professed inclusive

[84] TNA, CAB 23/43/11, WC 457, IWC 30, Shorthand Notes, 13 Aug. 1918, including memo. for WC entitled 'War Aims', by Long, 24 Aug. 1918.
[85] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 119, MS 1538/23/2006, Western and General Report, no.83, week ending 28 Aug. 1918, with appendix 'The Pacific Problem', by J. Ward, undated.
[86] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 1A, fol.896, clipping, Sydney *Daily Telegraph*, 12 Aug. 1918, 'The Empire. Recognition of Dominions'.
[87] MAE, Série E, Australie 9, fol.9, Meadows-Smith, Paris, to Gout, MAE, letter, 6 May 1918; fol. 14, Gout to de Margerie, letter, 17 May 1918; fol. 34, MAE to Cambon, London, letter, 15 June 1918. New Zealand did not want to miss out on the prestigious visit and also invited the mission along. This was accepted, and the French went to New Zealand in December 1918/January 1919. See fol. 141, Derby to Pichon, letter, 20 Aug. 1918; fol. 164, Campana, Sydney, to MAE, cable, 11 Sept. 1918.
[88] MAE, Série E, Australie 9, fols 169-71, Campana, Sydney, to MAE, letter, 16 Sept. 1918.

rhetoric from June, which reconciled New Zealand's 'British' security interests with an Empire-centred narrative entrusting London with making the right decisions, while Hughes' confrontational stance towards Lloyd George and the Japanese suggests a narrower approach. With either approach, France, as a friend and ally both in Europe and in the Pacific, would certainly be accommodated under a strategic umbrella.

The Japanese, meanwhile, removed from the war in Europe, were in need of making sense of the international political dynamic. The press was not short of assessments. One article in the authoritative *Gwaiko Jiho* (*Diplomatic Review*) magazine, for instance, found it 'impossible to guarantee that the open door of the national development of Japan will not be closed by the application of the two Monroe Doctrines of America and Australia'.[89] In continuation of the Japanese press coverage after Hughes' visit to the United States, it insisted that 'there should [be] in America and Australia a friendly interpretation of Japan now and in the future'.

A remarkable statement came from a Japanese MP, Uehara Etsujiro. He summarised the logic of the future peace negotiations as far as the Pacific Islands and Japan were concerned and of the British intra-imperial dynamic reaching a convincingly logical conclusion. Although it did not emerge from the highest political or military tier in Japan, it is worth citing in full due to its astonishing contents:

> As regards the question of disposing of the South Sea Islands now under Japanese occupation, this matter is simpler than the Tsingtau problem in some respects. Britain, too, holds some of the South Sea Islands, and in her eyes the question of disposing of these territories must assume very important propositions, as they are situated near Australia. It is therefore highly improbable that Britain will ever consent to these islands being returned to Germany. Inasmuch, however, as she will be unable to get possession of the islands now in Japanese occupation as well, it will come about that Britain's decision to retain possession of the islands now in her occupation will result in those islands under Japan's occupation being transferred to Japan. In trying to obtain these islands it is necessary for Japan to have sufficient regard to the attitude of Britain, as otherwise she may excite suspicions in the minds of the British and American peoples. When Britain and America become aware of Japan's burning desire to get the islands, they will conclude that Japan wants them for strategical [*sic*] purposes, and will consequently raise strong objections to Japan's attitude. In these circumstances, any over anxiety that

[89] TNA, CO 418/173, fols 582-7, Norman, British Embassy Tokyo, to Munro Ferguson, letter, 16 Aug. 1918, with attached summarised translation of article entitled 'The Australian Monroe Doctrine' in August 1918 issue of *Gwaiko Jiho*.

> may be shown by Japan to obtain them may have the effect of losing what might have been hers if less eagerness had been demonstrated. So long as Britain has possession of Australia, she will not like any islands near the [Australian] Commonwealth being held by Japan, nor will the United States desire to see Japan in possession of islands near the Philippines. Whatever may be Britain's true disposition, however, she cannot in reason deny Japan the possession of some islands now under the latter's occupation, provided she intends to keep some islands herself. From this point of view it appears to be a wise policy for Japan not to take the lead in demanding possession of the South Sea Islands.[90]

Uyehara thus accepted that Japan's possession of Micronesia was neither in the United States' nor in the British-Australian interest, but interpreted the rules of international negotiations and the logic of reciprocity between the great powers as not allowing Britain to deny Japan what it claimed for itself and Australia, which implies that Britain and not the United States would be pulling the main diplomatic strings in his view. If Japan kept a low profile in the negotiations about the future of the Pacific Islands, seemed to be the argument, the British position, as an Australian conduit, would resolve Japan's objective of retaining its part of the territories favourably, whereas Japanese 'over anxiety' might be counterproductive and arouse suspicion. Strikingly, these predictions turned out to be correct.

To better appreciate the American perspective beyond Wilson's elusive policy manifestations regarding the Pacific, a brief look at some policy expressions from the United States over the summer of 1918 is merited, as some political snippets emerged from Capitol Hill. Thus, Wilard Saulsbury Jr from Delaware, the Senate's President *pro tempore*[91], introduced a motion to the chamber in early July which read: 'It is opportune for the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan to enter into a lasting agreement to render it inexpedient for anyone, and impossible for the Central Powers, to pursue methods of warfare in the Pacific Ocean which are not

[90] NAA, A3932, SC472 Part 7, Fitzpatrick, Premier's Office Sydney, to Watt, letter, 19 Sept. 1918, with attached article, *Japanese Chronicle*, 10 Aug. 1918, 'Japan and the Peace Conference', written by MP Uehara Etsujiro. Uehara was educated in the US and Britain, and therefore had a sound understanding of the cultural, political and psychological dynamic in both countries. He would later rise through political ranks and become a cabinet minister after the Second World War, late in his career.

[91] The acting President of the Senate is an elected Senator mandated to act in the absence of the Vice President, the constitutional President of the US Senate.

justified by the laws of warfare'.[92] The *Argus* in Melbourne took notice and reported on 9 July, not without enthusiasm, that members of Congress 'regard [the initiative] as the first step of active co-operation between America and Australia towards carrying out Mr. Hughes's suggestion of a Monroe Doctrine for the Pacific' and that 'several senators favour the resolution'.[93] Saulsbury even suggested that 'Australia would control the Southern Pacific islands in conjunction with Great Britain, thus preventing the possibility of Germany establishing submarine or naval bases on any island there', by which he showcased a surprising insight into recent strategic thinking. Saulsbury's stance was also reflected by statements from senators from the American West Coast. James Phelan from California concurred that 'some arrangement or alliance should be formed by the Great Powers on the Pacific as a protection against German aggression. In case of necessity these Powers should police the Pacific'.[94] Wesley Jones from Washington state also expressed agreement on the importance of the question. It is worth noting that the above-mentioned senators hailed from across the political divide, Saulsbury and Phelan were Democrats, and Jones Republican.

The idea of a common security sphere in the Pacific had thus attracted the interest of high-ranking congressional members and especially those from Pacific states. The current *modus operandi*, in which Britain and the United States were focussing on Europe while Japan was keeping the Pacific safe was thus gradually turning out to be more than a mere wartime measure and indicated a possible post-war partnership in the area, but without governmental sanctioning for the time being.

Despite these overtures, the region remained a strategic headache to American naval planners, who saw Tokyo, not Berlin, as the main security threat for the United States in the Pacific. The intention this was translating into in naval circles was thus to

[92] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, clippings from *Argus,* 8, 9 and 10 July 1918, entitled 'Hands off Pacific. Motion in [US] Congress.', 'Control of Pacific', and 'Future of Pacific. Motion in American Congress to Exclude Germany'.
[93] Ibid.
[94] NAA, A2219, Ext. Relations, vol. 3 P to Z, clipping, *Argus*, 22 July 1918, 'Germans in Pacific. American Senators' Views.'

minimise the threat emerging out of Micronesia, whereas Lansing reiterated the idea that all German colonies 'should come under international regime'.[95]

None of this was certain, although the British camp, with New Zealand and Australia in it, had gone some way in fashioning a claim within the IWC that German New Guinea and Samoa 'belonged' strategically to Australia and New Zealand respectively. The Japanese had tacitly been relying on what the IWC was doing for its own clients in order to get the same result by logic of reciprocity, alliance and contribution to the war effort, while German hopes for a favourable outcome in any war-related question, including the colonies, were hanging on a political philosophical thread called the Fourteen Points.

[95] LoC, Lansing Papers, Private Memoranda, 1915-1922, vol.63, mf reel 1, vol.1, fols 166-70, 'Memorandum on Territorial Arrangement After the War', 21 Sept. 1918.

Chapter 6
Armistice, early peace and the Pacific Question: September 1918-January 1919

As the Allied Hundred Days Offensive had gained momentum, the OHL under Hindenburg and Ludendorff came to the conclusion that a military victory was impossible and a collapse of the German defensive lines was looming, with the risk of an Allied breakthrough into German territory. At the end of September, they told the Kaiser that an immediate armistice was needed. An unwilling aristocrat, Prince Max von Baden, was appointed Chancellor and tasked with negotiations. The point of departure was Wilson's Fourteen Points, which were considered the only authoritatively formulated, balanced and equitable Allied peace proposal available to the Germans. Also, the United States was considered the least biased, and had lost the fewest lives, among the enemy powers.[1]

The colonial lobby, hopeful of recovering lost business and land, was in agreement with this approach, as epitomised in a letter of 4 October from Ballin to Solf, now also foreign secretary, urging that the 'peace declaration needs to go out today as quickly as possible'.[2] On the same day, the Germans turned to the Americans through the Swiss in Washington to initiate the relevant talks. In particular, they requested

> the President of the United States of America to take steps for the restoration of peace, to notify all belligerents of this request, and to invite them to delegate plenipotentiaries for the purpose of taking up negotiations. The German Government accepts, as a basis for the peace negotiations, the program laid down by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918. In order to avoid further bloodshed, the German Government requests to bring about the immediate conclusion of a general armistice on land, on water, and in the air.[3]

[1] Solf explained the reasons for approaching Washington for peace: he argued that the world would be economically and financially dependent on the United States in the future and that Wilson was the only person promoting a peaceful post-war agenda, whereas all other major powers had turned out to be imperialists. See BA Koblenz, N1053-59, fols 1-5, Sitzung der Reichskonferenz, Reichskanzlerpalais, 25 Nov. 1918.

[2] BA Koblenz, N1053-96, fol.6, Ballin to Solf, letter, 4 Oct. 1918. Ballin's hopes disappeared quickly, however. He took his own life on 9 November, probably as he saw his life's work destroyed.

[3] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 337-8, 763.72119/2113, Oederlin to Wilson, letter, 6 Oct. 1918, with message from von Baden to Wilson, translation, undated.

Wilson's reaction to this was at first cautious, refusing to negotiate with an occupying power and what he considered a militaristic leadership pulling the strings in the background. Solf reassured him that 'the new Government has been formed in complete accord with the wishes of the representation of the people, based on the equal, universal, secret, direct franchise' and that the 'offer of peace and an armistice has come from a Government which, free from arbitrary and irresponsible influence, is supported by the approval of the overwhelming majority of the German people'. He was less committed on the withdrawal from Belgium and France, possibly Germany's only remaining trump card, maintaining that 'the actual standard of power on both sides in the field has to form the basis for arrangements'.[4] Germany was indeed undergoing a political and constitutional earthquake, as Ludendorff was sacked by the Kaiser on 26 October, and as a new constitution was being prepared, transforming the authoritarian Empire into a parliamentary democratic monarchy on the British model. It came into force on 28 October.[5]

Wilson now gave the German initiative a favourable reading and responded in kind, communicated by Lansing:

> Having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of the United States on the 8th of January, 1918 … and that this wish and purpose emanate, not from those who have hitherto dictated German policy and conducted the present war on Germany's behalf, but from Ministers who speak for the Majority of the Reichstag and for an overwhelming majority of the German people ..., the President … feels that he cannot decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated the question of an armistice.[6]

It is important to present the exchange of the above notes in some detail, as they were used in a hybrid fashion during the negotiations between the United States and Germany. On the one hand, they incorporated Wilson's Fourteen Points into the German notes as a condition to lay down arms, whereas their essence had been to establish rules and commitments for a future negotiated peace, which would include

[4] Ibid., 379-81, 763.72119/2377a, Oederlin to SS, letter, 22 Oct. 1918, with attached translation of communication from Solf to Swiss Foreign Office for Wilson, 20 Oct. 1918.
[5] These developments became themselves obsolete through the German November Revolution the following month. For a good overview of events in Germany, see Nebelin, *Ludendorff*, ch.14.
[6] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 381-3, 763.72119/2377a, Lansing to Oederlin, letter, 23 Oct. 1918.

the resolution of the German colonial question. Their inclusion – together with the clause on colonial questions -- in the armistice, *per se* a short-term agreement on an end of hostilities, anticipated their inclusion in a following peace treaty, at least according to the German reading of events.

While Wilson had no issue with this, they were his own terms after all, future complications were evident to the others. Lloyd George warned that 'with the tenor of his [Wilson's] policy we are in full accord, but that these [the Fourteen Points] have never been discussed with the Associated Powers, that certain of them are capable of various interpretations, to some of which we would raise strong objection and that there are probably other terms not referred to by President Wilson ... which should be insisted upon if full justice is to be done'.[7] He also cautioned 'that care must be taken lest the conditions of armistice should be so framed as to deprive the Allies of necessary freedom of action in settling final terms in Peace Conference'. Furthermore, Lloyd George was unwilling to 'let them [Germany] off by an armistice the terms of which will be more helpful to them than to us', thereby once more acknowledging the overlap between the perception of armistice and peace conditions.[8]

Wilson's intentions were unclear to the British, including about his colonial clause. Irwin B. Laughlin, the American Chargé d'Affaires in London, reported to the State Department:

> Article 5, dealing with colonial claims, is not comprehended at all. The majority of the British people sincerely wish that the best solution possible may be found for the difficult problem of the German colonies and are by no means insistent that this territory should remain under British rule. They will not tolerate, however, the suggestion that the colonies might be returned to Germany.[9]

There were also fears that 'this article might apply to all the French and British [colonial territory] held long before the war and whose allegiance was never called into question', or, more broadly, that Wilson's programme was not only a measure to end the war, but also to create a *Pax Americana* with an American imprint on the global political and economic order. In this context, the biggest worry for London was not

[7] ANZ, ACHK 16598 G43/2, SSCols to GGNZ, cable, 14 Oct. 1918.
[8] Link, *PWW*, vol.51, 313, Lloyd George to Geddes, cable, 12 Oct. 1918.
[9] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 365-7, 763.72119/2211, Laughlin to SS, cable, 15 Oct. 1918.

Wilson's colonial clause, but his stipulation of 'freedom of the seas', which the British rejected outright and fought to remove from the armistice and later peace, as it was seen as undermining Britain's naval and merchant marine global *modus operandi*.[10] What this highlighted, in any case, was a lack of information, understanding, and preliminary consultation between both sides. This situation was somewhat remedied when Wilson sent his emissary Edward House to Europe in the second half of October to liaise with the Allies, in particular the British, but Anglo-American relations remained fraught with a level of misunderstanding throughout the build-up to and into the peace conference.

In preparation, the British made a concerted effort in early October to define their strategy on post-war aims. A specific institutional framework was established for this purpose, the Policy Committee of the British War Mission.[11] The Committee included representatives from the Admiralty, the War Office, the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office and the Treasury, and was chaired by Lord Northcliffe, who had headed the British War Mission in the United States in 1917 before returning to London and taking over the Mission's British branch in 1918. Tasked with securing consistency between British and Allied policy, it recommended that the government approach the colonial question as follows: 'The former colonial possessions of Germany lost by her in consequence of her illegal aggression against Belgium shall in no case be returned to Germany'.[12] This stance was then sanctioned by the War Cabinet as an 'indisputable' peace condition and thus became official government policy.[13] This point was then made public, first and foremost by Balfour and Northcliffe, for example in an article in

[10] Eric Geddes, the First Lord of the Admiralty, remarked that he was 'convinced that … it is the aim and purpose of the President to reduce comparatively the preponderance in sea power of the British Empire'. See Link, *PWW*, vol.51, 633-4, memo. to WC by Geddes, 7 Nov. 1918.
[11] The British War Mission was an umbrella term for the concerted British effort to conduct war propaganda in the United States and to accomplish its war aims, first and foremost to bring the Americans into the war. Questions of trade and finance were also a top priority. The Mission was unified under one leadership out of a number of separate missions in 1917 under Lord Northcliffe and was then administered by Lord Reading, who had arrived with plenipotentiary powers as Britain's new ambassador to the United States in February 1918: See William George Lyddon, *British War Missions to the United States, 1914-1918* (London, 1938), 36-7.
[12] TNA, CO 537/1012, British War Mission Policy Committee, Crewe House, memo., 19 Oct. 1918.
[13] TNA, CO 537/1012, Extract from 'The Weekly Summary of Propaganda Intelligence' and note by Mitchell, British War Mission, 23 Oct. 1918; 'Propaganda Peace Policy', [Oct 1918]; Long to Munro Ferguson, letter, 30 Oct. 1918.

the *Daily Mail* from 24 October 1918 entitled 'No German Colonies'.[14] A little later, this message was also communicated to the Americans when Lord Derby, the British ambassador in Paris, told House on Lloyd George's behalf that Britain had no intention of restoring colonies to Germany or of taking them away from the Dominions.[15] House's reaction, according to Derby, was that he neither 'assented to these views', nor did he 'demur from them'. This position was reiterated by Long in conversation with House a few days later with the same outcome.[16]

What House had not disclosed on these occasions was that Wilson had made up his mind and decided 'that the [German] Colonies must not be given back to Germany', but also made the qualification that this was the case 'until we are satisfied that their [the Germans'] form of government is very different from the present'.[17] As a solution to the colonial question, Wilson even considered that 'the German Colonies [could be] administered by Great Britain', but warned of a 'great jealousie of the other nations'. Wilson's stance was moral, like Lloyd George's recently, and he stipulated that 'Germany will have to redeem her character, not by what happens at the peace table but by what follows'.[18] His expectations of Germany were thus not limited to Ludendorff's and Hindenburg's removal, nor to the recent constitutional changes, which were nevertheless welcome, but more fundamental and longer term. Meanwhile at the State Department, a 'Memorandum on Territorial Arrangement After the War' was drafted stipulating that the German colonies 'should come under international regime, taking into consideration interests of inhabitants'.[19] In summary, the American position was not unified and clear. Wilson's rhetoric put an end to German colonies for the time being, while an administration by third powers or internationalisation was being considered.

House then commissioned an interpretative study of the Fourteen Points and had a detailed document produced, which also dealt with Wilson's Point Five on colonial

[14] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.28, clipping, *Daily Mail*, 24 Oct. 1918, 'No German Colonies'.
[15] TNA, CO 532/121, fol.249, Derby to WC, cable, 2 Nov. 1918.
[16] ANZ, ACHK 16598 G43/2, SSCols to GGNZ, cable, 6 Nov. 1918.
[17] Link, *PWW*, vol.51, 347-52, memo. by William Wiseman, 'Notes of an interview with the President at the White House', 16 Oct. 1918.
[18] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 316-21, Address, Wilson, 27 Sept. 1918.
[19] LoC, Lansing Papers, Private Memoranda, 1915-1922, vol. 63, mf reel 1, vol.1, 166-70, 'Memorandum on Territorial Arrangement After the War', 21 Sept. 1918.

questions.[20] Some of it is worth citing, as it responded to those in doubt about the scope of Wilson's intentions and provided some important interpretation of the language used, such as the terms 'equitable claims' and 'interests of the populations'. It is also a useful summary of the colonial arguments having been brought forward by the belligerents so far:

> Some fear is expressed in France that this involves [a] reopening of all colonial questions. Obviously it is not so intended. It applies clearly [to those] colonial claims which have been created by the war. That means the German colonies and any other colonies which may come under international consideration as a result of the war.
>
> What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Great Britain and Japan, the two chief heirs of the German colonial empire, that the colonies cannot be returned to Germany? Because she will use them as submarine bases, because she will arm the blacks, because she uses the colonies as bases of intrigue, because she oppresses the natives.
>
> What are the "equitable" claims put forth by Germany? That she needs access to tropical raw material, that she needs a field for the expansion of her population, that under principles of the peace proposed, conquest gives her enemies no title to her colonies.
>
> What are the "interests of the populations"? That they should not be militarized, that exploitation should be conducted on the principle of the "open door", and under the strictest regulation as to labor conditions, profits and taxes, that a sanitary regime be maintained, that permanent improvements in the way of roads, etc., be made, that native organization and custom be respected, that the protecting authority be stable and experienced enough to thwart intrigue and corruption, that the [protecting] power have adequate resources in money and administrators to act successfully.
>
> It would seem as if the principle involved in this proposition is that a colonial power acts not as owner of its colonies, but as trustee for the natives and for the interest of the society of nations, that the terms on which the colonial administration is conducted are a matter of international concern and may legitimately be the subject of international inquiry, and that the peace conference may, therefore, write a code of colonial conduct binding upon [all] colonial powers.[21]

This was an American discourse in defence of enlightened colonialism, rather than of self-determination. It allowed for a principled exploitation – whatever that may have meant in the Americans' mind -- under a 'protecting authority'. Terminologically, a

[20] This was carried out by Frank I. Cobb, editor of the *New York World*, and Walter Lippmann, a journalist, intelligence officer in the American army and former secretary of the Inquiry.
[21] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 405-13, 763.72119/8979, House to SS, cable, 29 Oct. 1918.

'colonial administration' was seen as necessary to act as a 'trustee for the natives', which is where the discourse invoked a level of internationalism, as did the claim for a 'code of colonial conduct'. The latter was eventually meant to be binding for all colonial powers, not only the ones taking over German colonies. In that respect, there was a contradiction with the claim that a 'reopening of all colonial questions' was not intended, and such a code could be seen by the Europeans as an American bid to impose rules on colonialism with an internationalist imprint. What this also revealed is that 'old world' concepts of colonial rule and a supposedly progressive American discourse were not far apart and that, in fact, the Americans were accepting colonialism as much as the Europeans did. After all, the United States had its own ante-cedent commitment in the Philippines and elsewhere. Furthermore, it is remarkable that Britain and Japan are mentioned as the 'two chief heirs of the German colonial empire', whereas France, with its predominantly African interests, is not, which conveys a more Pacific-centred American colonial approach, compared to a European perspective which was more Africa-centred with Britain, France, Belgium, and even Portugal expecting to inherit the German colonial empire there.

Wilson commented on the memorandum in ambiguous terms. On the one hand, he admitted that it was a 'satisfactory interpretation of [the] principles involved', but on the other, he wanted it to 'be regarded as merely illustrative suggestions [for the] peace conference'.[22] Regarding the local populations, he made the point that the 'admission of inchoate nationalities to [the] peace conference [was] most undesirable', thereby replicating Taussig's discourse from earlier in the year and revealing the colonial character of the conference he had in mind.

Meanwhile in London, the British warned House that the 'Germans would assume that the Allies had accepted President Wilson's Fourteen Points and other speeches without qualification', and Lloyd George also made it clear that, unless the relevant 'Asiatic Islands' (he meant the Pacific islands) did not go to Australia -- and, correspondingly, German South-West Africa to South Africa -- 'Great Britain would be

[22] Ibid., 421, Wilson to House, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.

confronted by a revolution in those dominions'.[23] In another discussion between the British, French and Italians, it emerged that the French and Italians had reservations as well, which led to House's warning that Wilson might have to reconsider the American position altogether.[24] He complained that Lloyd George had opened the floodgates regarding the Fourteen Points by initiating consultations between the Allied powers and cautioned that the effect could be that Wilson might have to take the issue to Congress for a vote, presumably with uncertain result.[25] Equally, it was made clear that American participation at the peace conference would not be possible without the inclusion of negotiations on a League of Nations and the freedom of the seas clause on the agenda.[26] House suggested to Wilson that, if the Europeans did not play along, he should 'quietly diminish the transport of troops giving as an excuse the prevalence of influenza or any other reason but the real one' and then to 'begin to gently shut down upon money, food and raw material'. The Americans were prepared to tighten the economic screw on their partners in order to enforce Wilson's agenda, but it did not come to that, as the threat was understood and the Europeans fell into line.[27]

House informed Wilson about this outcome for verification before it could be communicated to the Germans.[28] In the end, the only Allied qualification included the 'freedom of the seas' clause along with objections regarding what was called 'invaded territories' by Germany.[29] This related to Belgium and France and territories in Eastern Europe, while no qualification was made regarding colonies or Wilson's Point Five. The German reading of this was, unsurprisingly, that the Allies had virtually accepted the Fourteen Points and that the outcome opened the possibility of colonial concessions

[23] Ibid., 424, 763.72119/8983, House to SS, cable, 30 Oct. 1918. House did not mention Samoa, although it is likely it would have been mentioned in the same vein.
[24] Ibid., 421-3, 763.72119/8982, House to SS, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.
[25] Ibid., 425-7, 763.72119/8985, House to SS, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.
[26] Ibid., 423, Wilson to House, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.
[27] For instance, Clemenceau 'at once abandoned his idea of submitting an elaborate memorandum concerning the President's fourteen points and apparently accepted the proposed answer drafted by the British'. *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 425-7, 763.72119/8985, House to SS, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.
[28] Ibid., 427, 763.72119/8986, House to Lansing, cable, 30 Oct. 1918; 455-7, 763.72119/9051, House to Lansing, cable, 3 Nov. 1918.
[29] Ibid., 460-2, 763.72119/9052, House to Lansing, cable, 4 Nov. 1918; 463, 763.72119/9056, House to Lansing, cable, 4 Nov. 1918.

and retro-cessions.[30] Chancellor von Baden proclaimed: 'Hereby the premises for peace and armistice negotiations alike have been furnished'.[31]

A different reaction came from Hughes. He complained that Australia had not been consulted but also pointed to the confusion between peace and armistice terms and went public with his protest, which was published, once more, in the *Times*:

> My Government are of opinion that certain of President Wilson's fourteen points are not satisfactory. It specifically objects, inter alia ... to point 5 relating to colonies in the Pacific formerly held by Germany, retention of which my Government deems vital to [the] national safety of Australia ...
>
> I have remained here at my Government's request for [the] purpose of setting forth its views ... before any terms of peace were definitely settled, but no opportunity has been given me to do so. I was not even informed that peace terms were being discussed at the Versailles conference, which I had presumed was engaged in settling terms of the armistice with Germany as it had done in the case of Austria. The first intimation I received that terms of peace had been discussed at Versailles was conveyed in the document which notified me that they had been definitely settled.[32]

To conclude, Hughes accused the British government, and behind them the United States, of bad faith:

> It is quite true that representatives of the Dominions have during sittings of [the] Imperial War Cabinet discussed at large questions of peace. But most certainly Doctor Wilson's fourteen points were never agreed to, they were not even specifically discussed. We were told [the] Dominions would be given an opportunity of discussing [the] actual terms of peace before they were settled. This has not been done.

He was under the impression that not only had an armistice been agreed, but also that future peace conditions had been settled, and that this was happening along American lines not British ones. In a letter to Watt, he fumed that 'we want our rights to these islands guaranteed in Peace terms in same way as France's right to Alsace-Lorraine is guaranteed' and that the 'Imperial War Cabinet is a farce and sham'.[33]

This recalls Massey's comparison of Samoa and Ireland from March 1917, but was not taken seriously in London, as Hughes was criticised not only for recalcitrance but also for a lack of strategic understanding. Amery thought that 'Hughes is in a very

[30] Ibid., 486-8, 763.72/12190, Bliss, Netherlands, to Lansing, cable, 8 Nov. 1918.
[31] Ibid.
[32] TNA, FO 371/3236, fols 395-6, clipping, *Times*, 8 Nov. 1918, 'Mr. Hughes on the Peace Terms'.
[33] NAA, CP360/8, 2, fol.143, Hughes to Watt, cable, 13 Nov. 1918.

troublesome frame of mind' and 'will need careful handling', while Munro Ferguson maintained from Melbourne that, although Hughes frequently spoke of the 'Pacific question', consisting of Australia's retention of New Guinea and German removal from the ocean, it was 'not so well understood that this can only be achieved thanks to the strength of the British Navy'.[34] Which was a sound analysis, as Australia's, as well as New Zealand's, colonial agenda in the Pacific was purely academic without (British) command of the seas. Also, the discourse and discrepancy of geographic perceptions is an interesting anticipation of Australia's later 'Far East' – 'Near North' paradigm.[35]

Only days before his intervention in the *Times*, Hughes had fired another epistolary shot in a letter to Lloyd George, advocating in all seriousness that the Japanese occupation of the German islands north of the equator should be reversed. He referred to a statement that Okuma, now a member of the Upper House of the Diet of Japan, had made and which was also published in the *Times* on 30 October. In it, Okuma had remarked that, while it was Japan's right to hold on to the German Pacific islands north of the equator after the war, these were actually 'valueless'.[36] Hughes took these remarks as an opportunity to speak out and maintain that Australia had a 'deeply rooted mistrust of Japan' and to 'enter an emphatic protest on behalf of the Commonwealth against Japan's right or even claim to the islands mentioned by Marquis Okuma, viz, the Marshalls, Caroline, and Ladrones'. [37] He went on that 'the disposition of these islands is of great, and perhaps vital importance to Australia' and that the German possessions administered from New Guinea had been surrendered in their entirety to Australia, which included Micronesia. He also accused Japan of aggressive designs by warning that 'these islands would form an admirable advance

[34] PA UK, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/2/1/34, Amery to Lloyd George, letter, [November 1918], with attached draft letter for Lloyd George to Hughes, undated [probably 11 Nov. 1918]; NLA, Novar Papers, box 2, MS696/1085-90, Munro Ferguson to Long, letter, 24 Oct. 1918.

[35] This was memorably represented in a speech by Robert Menzies in April 1939. In it, he spoke about Britain and Australia's position in the Pacific, claiming: 'In the Pacific we have primary responsibilities and primary risks. Close as our consultation with Great Britain is, and must be, in relation to European affairs, it is still true to say that we must, to a large extent, be guided by her knowledge and affected by her decisions. The problems of the Pacific are different. What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north.' See *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949* (online source), vol. 2: 1939, doc.73: Broadcast Speech by Mr R.G. Menzies, Prime Minister, Extract 26 April 1939, reported in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1939, p.9.

[36] PA UK, LG Papers, LG/F/28/2/7, clipping, London *Times*, 30 Oct. 1918, 'Japan and Peace. Forecast of Policy. Marshall Islands to be Retained.'

[37] PA UK, LG Papers, LG/F/28/2/7, Hughes to Lloyd George, letter, 4 Nov. 1918.

base for operations either against the Philippines, Dutch East Indies, or the North West Coasts of Australia'.

Although Hughes was arguably technically right about the terms of New Guinea's surrender, it should have been clear to him that this was not necessarily a binding agreement and that, ultimately, the Japanese presence in Micronesia was a British strategic construct.[38] This did not prevent him from maintaining his anti-Japanese discourse at the IWC, stating that it would be 'most unfortunate' if the Japanese claim to the islands north of the Equator was admitted.[39] The British would not have any of this, but remained calm for now. Cecil referred to the memorandum which he had committed to drafting in August and which he had recently circulated to the IWC. It dealt with claims by and commitments to Japan regarding the Pacific Islands and showed that 'no steps … had been taken without full consultation with, and the approval of, Australia'.[40] Lloyd George also chimed in and maintained that the Japanese had so far 'never raised the question of the colonies', but that 'he had discussed the matter [of colonies] fully and frankly with Colonel House, and he had told him, at their first private interview, that under no conditions would we consent to any of the colonies being returned to Germany; and, further, that we could not consent to the surrender of any colonies conquered by the Dominions, but were prepared to discuss what should be done with the remainder'. He was thus signalling to Hughes that the Australian stake was safe in British negotiating hands while the

[38] See ch.1. The relevant passage in the 'Terms of Capitulation' from 17 Sept. 1914 reads: 'The name Deutsch Neu Guinea (German New Guinea) includes the whole of the German Possessions in the Pacific Ocean lately administered from Rabaul by the said Acting Governor [Haber] on behalf of the Imperial German Government, and the said possessions are hereafter referred to as "The Colony."' The German islands in Micronesia, including the Caroline, the Mariana and the Marshall Islands, were indeed being administered from Rabaul at the time. See NAA Melbourne, MP1049/1, 1914/0454, Terms of Capitulation of German New Guinea, 17 Sept. 1914. In strict legal terms, however, Haber had pointed out at the time that he did not have the authority 'to surrender any portion of the German possessions under his administration'.

[39] TNA, CAB 23/42/7, IWC 36, Minutes of a Meeting, 5 Nov. 1918.

[40] CAB 24/67/78, fols 207-10, IWC, note by the Secretary [Hankey], 26 Oct. 1918, with attached accompanying note and memorandum, G.T.-6078, for WC, by Cecil, 15 Oct. 1918. Meanwhile, Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's private secretary, made the following unofficial note upon receiving Hughes' letter of the previous day: 'Mr Hughes quite ignores the official assurance given to the Japanese Govt on Feb 14, 1917, that H.M. Govt would at the Peace Conference support Japan's claims in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and in islands north of the Equator … This assurance was given after consultation with and with the approval of the Govts of Australia & New Zealand. ... H.M. Govt are committed to support Japan's claims to the islands in question & could not go back on their assurance without committing a gross breach of faith and finding compensation elsewhere which would be more embarassing'. See TNA, FO 371/3236, fol.398, Handwritten note by Kerr, 4 Nov. 1918.

Japanese Pacific question was none of Australia's business. Logically, Japanese/German Micronesia would be among the 'remainder' that Lloyd George claimed was open for discussion, but in reality, he remained steadfast about his support for Tokyo, which he would soon make clear.

Hughes summed up his view of the British position, particularly *vis-à-vis* the Americans, in a truncated cable to Watt:

> Versailles Council position is that for all practical purposes terms [of] peace are Wilson's 14 Points subject [to] two or perhaps three qualifications being (1) Freedom of seas which Britain [word missing] refused [to] accept; (2) Provision for reparation for damage by German aggression. As for remainder of 14 points they stand except that Lloyd George states he told Col. House that German Colonies would not be handed back and would be left in possession of those Dominions that had captured them'.[41]

Hughes also complained to Watt about House's lack of commitment and that Australia had not been consulted, but Watt's reply was not as forthcoming as Hughes might have hoped. Watt confirmed that the Australian cabinet had shared Hughes' 'surprise and indignation that conditions of peace should have been decided without consultation with [the] Dominions', but he also praised 'with great satisfaction the resolute attitude of the British Prime Minister in his conversation with Colonel House concerning captured German Colonies'.[42] This challenge to Hughes' tactics was substantiated in a letter by Munro Ferguson who confirmed to the Colonial Office that Watt and the Australian cabinet disapproved of Hughes' public attacks on Lloyd George and the British.[43] The above episode, albeit confined to the internal workings of the Australian government and its relationship with London, illustrates the divergences of interests and attitudes that were now coming to a climax as the conference approached. Not only was there tension between the centre in London and the Australian periphery, but dissonance also surfaced within the Australian government, especially between Hughes and his cabinet in Melbourne.[44]

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[41] NAA, CP360/8, 2, fols 114-3 [reverse order], Hughes to Watt, cable, 6 Nov 1918.
[42] NAA, CP360/8, 2, fol.127, Watt to Hughes, cable, 8 Nov. 1918.
[43] TNA, CO 532/112, fol.35, Munro Ferguson to Long, cable, 9 Nov. 1918.
[44] Despite his disagreement with Hughes over form, in substance Watt initiated a resolution to the Australian parliament in favour of the retention of the captured possessions by both Australia and New Zealand. It was passed on 15 November. Watt argued: 'We have a perfect right to say to the Mother Country that we desire to be consulted. This war has brought Australia into the blood-stream of the

Watt also took it upon himself to talk to the French mission during its stay in Australia. While it was in Melbourne, he had a conversation with its chef de mission, Paul Pau. Despite its limited political remit (as foreign affairs continued to be London's prerogative), important topics of strategic relevance were discussed, not least in light of expected peace negotiations approaching. Watt thus confirmed 'Australia's urgent desire that the German Pacific colonies not be returned to Germany' and made the following offer:

> If the French government supports the Australian point of view among the Allies at the peace negotiations, the Australian government would then support the French position with regard to the Pacific question insofar as it concerns a solution for the New Hebrides.[45]

This presumably meant that the Australians, who had previously been pushing for British control for the islands, would give up this desideratum. What was more, Watt made a sweeping geostrategic claim when saying that 'it suffices for us that nearby territories belong to nations with the same civilisation and political ideal as ours, and that is why France as a neighbour satisfies Australia'. Once more, Watt's statement was formulated against the Germans, but it does not take much reading between the lines that he also had the Japanese in mind. Munro Ferguson later described the French visit to Australia 'an unqualified success', while Pau said about New Zealand that 'France benefits from an unequalled prestige [there]', which goes to show that common ground was found between the French and the Australasians.[46]

In London, a crucial question between House and his British counterparts concerned the format of the conference. Lloyd George had suggested that 'the Allies should get together before the peace conference and thrash out their differences' and that 'the peace conference itself need not last longer than one week' while the preliminary conference 'could be finished in three or four weeks'.[47] Although House himself had observed that 'Germany seems so nearly in collapse that I cannot believe that it will be

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world. That brings to us great opportunities, but it also brings boundless responsibilities, and amongst many others will [a]rise the question of determining what our foreign policy, to speak in popular parlance, will be with regard to those waters and those islands.' See NLA, Hughes Papers, box 120, MS1538/23/2502, Western and General Report, no.95, week ending 20 Nov. 1918.

[45] MAE, 1914-1940, A. Paix, 78, fols 3-4, Pau/Fliche, Melbourne, to MAE, cable, 17 Oct. 1918.

[46] MAE, Série E, Australie, 10, fols 33-4, Derby to Pichon, letter, 7 Jan. 1919; fols 45-9, Hippeau to MAE, cable, 31 Jan. 1919.

[47] *FRUS 1918, War Supplement 1*, vol.I, 424, 763.72119/8983, House to SS, cable, 30 Oct. 1918.

necessary for a peace conference to continue more than two and a half to three months' and that 'it looks as if the Allies might be able to lay down their own terms', Lloyd George's request only confirmed the Americans' suspicion of European dealings, and House 'strongly advise[d] [Wilson] against this procedure and for reasons which will be obvious to you'.[48] Wilson then cabled his disapproval, maintaining that he 'cannot … consent to end with only European arrangements for peace'.[49]

As arms were laid down and the war ended, the situation remained in flux. The Germans received and accepted the armistice terms in a railway carriage outside Compiègne, while Wilson read them out solemnly in front of a joint session of Congress to mark the occasion on 11 November 1918. The otherwise detailed armistice document made no mention of German colonies except East Africa, where Lettow-Vorbeck's force was still at large and capitulated two weeks later.[50] Importantly, however, the Germans agreed to withdraw their forces from France and Belgium and thereby forfeited a crucial expedient they had so far invoked to use in peace negotiations against colonial concessions.[51]

Meanwhile, Long had summed up the efforts he had tasked the Australasians to undertake earlier in the year regarding local opinion in the Pacific islands in 'a brief memorandum with regard to the steps that have already been taken to ascertain the feelings of the natives in the ex-German Colonies with regard to their remaining under British Rule'.[52] According to it, Samoans and Nauruans had distinctly expressed their wish 'to remain under the King's protection', while the 'information supplied with regard to German New Guinea is much less satisfactory. The natives are very backward and have little understanding of what has occurred ... and we have no expression of their wishes'.[53]

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[48] Link, *PWW*, vol.51, 406-8, House to Wilson, letter, 22 Oct. 1918.
[49] Ibid., 533, Wilson to House, cable, 31 Oct. 1918.
[50] Link, *PWW*, vol. 53, 35-43, Address to a Joint Session of Congress, 11 Nov. 1918.
[51] The German army quickly pulled out of Belgium following the armistice. The last troops left the country on 23 November 1918.
[52] TNA, CO 537/1017, fols 17-20, Note by W.H. Long, circulated to WC, 15 Oct. 1918, with accompanying 'Memorandum for War Cabinet', undated, containing cable from Long to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, 4 Jan. 1918.
[53] Latham reiterated this line of argument during the PPC in January 1919, writing: 'There is no public opinion as in the case of a civilised community. The natives have no views concerning their form of

Nauru was a particular case. It had been a company-run island before the war, coveted for its wealth in phosphates. Native expressions of loyalty were irrelevant before as, in essence, they were now. An Australian garrison had secured the island since 1914 as a colonial backwater, but now that events moved into a decisive stage, the question of Nauru gained momentum. The British Colonial Office observed that the island's 'deposits of high grade phosphates are the largest yet discovered in the Pacific Ocean' and opined that it should remain British, but acknowledged that 'the question whether, if retained, the islands should remain under Imperial control, or be handed over to the Commonwealth of Australia or NZ requires careful consideration'.[54] It also noted that the Pacific Phosphate Company, a British business, 'have expressed a strong opinion in favour of Imperial control' and that the Australian government 'have given no definite indication of a desire to take over Nauru'.[55] This was incorrect, as Hughes, equally aware of the island's value, had written to Long and made a case for Australia, claiming that 'the matter should be under Australian rather than British authority' and also that Australia had a stronger claim than New Zealand 'owing to its geographical position'.[56] Watt, closer to events in the Pacific while Hughes was in Europe, made sure to keep him up-to-date and warned him of foul play by the British regarding Nauru.[57] Further suspicion was raised when Hughes found out that 'the Company "through the Secretary of State" requests withdrawal of the Australian garrison and intimates its readiness to protect the island by a force recruited from its own employees' and that the company was 'very anxious' to reimburse Australia for the occupation.[58] He decided in early January 1919 that 'in view of the possibility of this island ultimately passing to Australia … civil control of Nauru should be placed under the Australian

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Government, and they do not possess the mental capacity to form such views. ... If they are comfortable, they do not care who governs them.' See NLA, Cook Papers, MS 762, folder 1, draft memo., 'The case against the internationalisation of the Pacific Islands south of the Equator', marked 'for circulation among dominion representatives', J.G. Latham, 25 Jan. 1919. The formulations above did not go into the final version circulated by Latham on 27 Jan. 1919. This argument served all along to save the Australians from scrutiny about their colonial record.

[54] TNA, CO 532/129, fols 254, 256-7, Lambert, CO, to the Secretary, Economic Defence and Development Committee, letter, 16 Sept. 1918, with attached draft memo. prepared by CO, Sept. 1918.

[55] The company had been established in 1906 as an Anglo-German business. After expelling all German employees in late 1914, the British formally took it out of German hands by publicly auctioning their four-ninths share in July 1917. Hiery, *Neglected War*, 119.

[56] TNA, CO 532/129, fol.253, Hughes to Long, letter, 6 Sept. 1918. Hughes also mistakenly assumed that Japan was going to present a claim for Nauru, stating that the Japanese 'will be able to make out a fair case', as he was possibly (and mistakenly) assuming that Nauru was located north of the Equator.

[57] NAA, CP360/8, 2, Watt to Hughes, cable, 12 Dec. 1918.

[58] TNA, CO 532/152, fol.283, Hughes to Long, letter, 3 Jan. 1919.

Administrator at Rabaul, [and] the British Administrator removed'. As it occurred, Hughes got his way some time later, as the Nauru question became an awkward sub-plot to the Inter-Allied Conference.[59] Considerations of local self-determination were not applied.

Regarding New Guinea, the discourse was somewhat different. John Latham, a leading Australian intelligence officer, future Chief Justice, and member of the Australian delegation to Europe, had recognised belatedly, in December 1918, that Australia was falling short in the international arena in the field of the representation of 'native interest' and urged his government 'to get (a) evidence of ill usage of natives in islands by Germans (b) statements by chiefs that they want to remain under Great Britain'.[60] This recommendation was officially reiterated by Hughes to Watt, and the latter was asked to build a broad case against Germany:

> As to German Colonies -- try to obtain information as to ill usage natives or unjust dealing as to land or property, of stirring up trouble among natives or selling liquor, also as to whether and what extensive naval or military preparations, docks, wharves, etc. in Islands, and all other facts likely to help us. ... Can you get statements by Chiefs of preference for British rule with reasons if possible. See articles by Mallahon in "World's Work" November, which contains many statements damaging to Germans. Can they be substantiated?[61]

In Wellington, Liverpool declared that he believed 'the blessings of peace upon which we are now on the threshold will long remain with us and that an era of increased prosperity lies before the inhabitants of the Samoan Islands'.[62] What he did not mention, however, was that these very islands were being ravaged as he wrote by the influenza pandemic imported from Europe via New Zealand. The war had barely ended when the New Zealand government had to admit that it was overwhelmed and unable to cope with it and was forced to ask for help from Australia.[63]

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[59] See Epilogue.

[60] NLA, Cook Papers, MS 762, folder 1a, Hand-written note by Latham requesting to be cabled, secret, 12 Dec. 1918.

[61] NAA, CP360/8, 2, Hughes to Watt, cable, 18 Dec. 1918. Regarding the 'articles by Mallahon': it is not obvious what Hughes refers to. There is no article published by such an author in *The World's Work*, vol. XXXVII, November 1918 to April 1919, *A History of Our Time* (New York, 1919). There is an article by George Barry Mallon, which is on war finance and does not refer to German colonial atrocities.

[62] ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/40, GGNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 13 Nov. 1918.

[63] For the flurry of messages sent between Samoa, New Zealand and Australia to provide help, see ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/40, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 19 Nov. 1918; GGNZ to GGAus, cable, 20 Nov. 1918; GGAus to GGNZ, cable, 20 Nov 1918; GGNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 20 Nov. 1918;

Despite this ongoing tragedy caused by governmental negligence, the *Times* wrote on 30 November, as if nothing had happened, that 'in Samoa, the leading chiefs from every district gathered together ... and sent a letter declaring that they were unanimous in wishing that Samoa should remain under British rule'.[64] As if by irony, shortly before the pandemic made landfall, the *Daily Mail* cited Balfour from a speech in which he invoked 'the treatment of the native peoples' and maintained that 'nothing could be worse than the record of Germany in this respect'.[65] As a matter of fact, the evidence held by the British and Australasians contradicted this point, even before the pandemic. An Australian report about New Guinea from July 1918, for example, stated that records of German atrocities were scanty, making brief reference to an attached document from 1904 to provide some evidence of a 'distinct disregard of native life' by the Germans.[66]

Whether the Australasians were thus 'qualified', or not, to be entrusted by the international community with colonial powers was a debatable question. An important point regarding the best strategy to approach the upcoming negotiations, in particular with the Americans over colonies, was made by Borden. Despite his ambiguous

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GGAus to GGNZ, cable, 21 Nov. 1918; GGNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 21 Nov. 1918; GGNZ to GGAus, cable, 21 Nov. 1918. For messages on the ongoing and escalating crisis, see ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/40, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 21 Nov. 1918, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 25 Nov. 1918; GGNZ to Administrator Samoa, cable, 1 Dec. 1918, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 1 Dec. and 2 Dec. 1918. On 2 January 1919, Logan reported: 'epidemic over'. ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/42, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 2 Jan. 1919. The pandemic had been imported on SS *Talune*, a New Zealand cargo ship regularly connecting Auckland with a number of islands in the South Pacific. Ultimately, it killed 8,500 (Western) Samoans, or 22 per cent of the population, and changed the social and political structure of the islands. In American Samoa, by contrast, a strict maritime quarantine was implemented and the disease was kept at bay. On 4 January 1919, Logan reported on native officials asking questions about why New Zealand's authorities had allowed *Talune* to sail from Auckland 'with plague raging there'. ANZ, ACHK 16596 G41/42, Administrator Samoa to GGNZ, cable, 4 Jan. 1919. See also Sandra M. Tomkins, 'The Influenza Epidemic of 1918-19 in Western Samoa', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 27, 2 (1992), 181-97. Helen Clark, New Zealand's Prime Minister, officially apologised for these and other events relating 'to the inept and incompetent early administration of Samoa by New Zealand' in 2002. See https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=2044857, retrieved 11 March 2018.

[64] NLA, Cook Papers, MS 762, folder 1a, clipping, *Times*, 30 Nov. 1918, 'Future of German Colonies, Wishes of the Natives'.

[65] BA Berlin, R901/54535, fol.28, clipping, *Daily* Mail, 24 Oct. 1918, 'No German Colonies'.

[66] NLA, Cook Papers, MS 762, folder 1a, memo by J. Johnston for Dept of Defence, Melbourne, dated [?]/7/1918. This is not to suggest that Germany's colonial practice in the Pacific was without violence, but the approach is generally considered much more 'enlightened' than in Africa. See, for example, Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (Paderborn, 2018, 7th edition), 245. A notable exception is the Sokehs Rebellion in the Eastern Carolines in 1910-11. For a detailled study, see Thomas Morlang, *Rebellion in der Südsee : der Aufstand auf Ponape gegen die deutschen Kolonialherren 1910/11* (Berlin, 2010).

attitude towards the imperialist nature of the war and its aftermath, he argued for 'the great importance of having the Dominions themselves, who are particularly interested, put forward their [territorial] claim strongly, so that it will come rather from them than the Government of the United Kingdom'. Borden explained that 'persons who are very closely in touch with affairs in America have urged that upon me. I was informed that those claims would present less difficulty if they were put forward insistently and urgently on behalf of Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, rather than by the United Kingdom itself'.[67] Assuming the role of a trans-Atlantic negotiator with a particular understanding of the American political mind, he anticipated the colonial question to be fraught with the American accusation of Britain as a land-grabber, which he was intent on mitigating with regard to the Dominions. As senior spokesperson for the Dominions, he was also marking their newly won imperial and international status as a result of their war efforts.

Lloyd George agreed with Borden on Dominions representation and was increasingly confident of the British position. Despite Wilson's rebuff, he maintained (again) that 'Germany [was] entirely at our mercy, and if we can agree amongst ourselves upon a particular policy, we could then dictate, and that is why the [preliminary] Inter-Allied Conference is the important one'. In the same vein, Balfour criticised the American President harshly on this point: 'to think we should have a conference at which will be present the Germans, the Austrians, and the Turks, and we have to fight out these questions before them ... [he] cannot have really given his brains to the subject'.[68] The French were of the same opinion, thinking 'that certain questions have to be settled directly among great powers' including 'colonial affairs which essentially concern England and France'.[69] Hughes, unsurprisingly, was in agreement and also had a particular order of events in mind. After 'having decided what our attitude is to be', Hughes thought that the British camp 'should then endeavour to get our views endorsed by the Inter-Allied Conference', which, in turn, would make 'the Peace Conference itself ... become practically a recording body'.[70] This procedure was

[67] TNA, CAB 23/43/14, IWC 37, Shorthand Notes, 20 Nov. 1918.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Link, *PWW*, vol.53, 292-8, Polk to Wilson, letter, 2 Dec. 1918, with attachment, Jusserand to SS, letter, 29 Nov. 1918, and enclosed translation of French conference plan, undated.
[70] NLA, Hughes Papers, box 120, MS 1538/23/2465, IWC 38, Shorthand Notes, 26 Nov. 1918.

accepted by the IWC. The Americans thus had to be convinced both of holding a preliminary conference and of accepting the retention of Samoa, New Guinea and German South-West Africa through a 'deal' which all at the IWC knew Wilson was loathe to do. Regarding the latter, Lloyd George expected Wilson to be 'less difficult in regard to the Pacific than to Africa'.[71]

Alongside these consultations on organisational aspects, the formulas for how to possibly manage former enemy colonies were taking shape. The terms 'trusteeship' and 'internationalisation', for instance, had occasionally been floated in the recent past, but had not been substantiated between the now victors. This was to change. The *Manchester Guardian* invoked a 'trusteeship' for the ex-German colonies in an article entitled 'Peace and Reconstruction. A Programme.' on 27 November.[72] On 20 December, the IWC brought forward notions of 'mandatories' and 'mandates', based on a memorandum drafted for Smuts by Henry Erle Richards, a distinguished Professor of Law in Oxford.[73] Borden described how a mandatory appointed by the League of Nations would assume a 'mandate ... for the development of those countries in the interests of the inhabitants until they were capable of governing themselves', thus a temporary measure.[74] The IWC also discussed some details of the concept of a 'mandatory occupation', and it was agreed that it should not involve 'international administration, but administration by a single Power on certain lines laid down by the League of Nations' including 'equality of treatment to all nations in respect of tariffs, concessions, and economic policy generally' and 'no militarisation, or fortification of the territory in question'. Lloyd George made it clear, however, that 'the discussion ... should be confined to those colonies as to whose fate there could be some doubt', whereas 'those colonies which had been captured by Dominion troops must be retained by the Dominions concerned, such as the Pacific colonies south of the Equator, and German South-West Africa'. The Dominion-occupied Pacific colonies

[71] Ibid.
[72] BA Berlin, R901/54523, clipping, *Manchester Guardian*, 'Peace and Reconstruction. A Programme' by John H. Harris, 27 Nov. 1918.
[73] TNA, CAB 29/1, fols 376-86, P.-34, Memorandum respecting German Colonies, [Erle Richards], [December 1918]. This memorandum also includes an 'Appendix "B"' including a file on the 'Correspondence relating to the wishes of the natives of the German colonies as to their future government', which contains a number of documents on Samoa, one on Nauru, and none on New Guinea. See fols 389, 572-601.
[74] TNA, CAB 23/42/16, IWC 44, Minutes of a Meeting, 20 Dec. 1918.

were thus not even part of these early British deliberations, which, conversely, implied their annexation by the respective powers.

Meanwhile in the United States, policy ideas were floated, but these did not add up to a precise formula. Wilson presented one version before the Inquiry and claimed that 'the German colonies should be declared the common property of the League of Nations and administered by small nations'.[75] After his arrival in Paris, he confirmed that 'never for one minute would he recommend that they [the German colonies] should be returned to Germany'.[76] It appears that Wilson had one of the Scandinavian countries in mind as 'small nations', although it remained vague how he thought the mandatory tasks were to be carried out.[77] This vagueness led to criticism in Wilson's own camp. Lansing, for example, pointed out that 'certain phrases in the President's "Fourteen Points" … I am sure will cause trouble in the future' and asked:

> When the President talks of "self-determination", what unit has he in mind? Does he mean a race, a territorial area or a community? Without a definite unit which is practical, application of this principle is dangerous to peace and stability.[78]

In another memorandum, Lansing claimed that self-determination 'is simply loaded with dynamite' and that 'it will raise hopes which can never be realised'.[79] One of Lansing's subordinates in the State Department, Samuel Breckinridge Long, had a different idea altogether and suggested, in opposition to the official line, that his administration should advocate the return of the Micronesian islands – along with Samoa – to Germany.[80] The motive was anti-Japanese and the plan was to minimise the perceived Japanese danger by eventually negotiating their takeover by the United States from Germany. Similar thinking emerged from specialists of the Division of

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[75] Link, *PWW*, vol.53, 353-6, Isaiah Bowman, memo. on remarks by WW to the Inquiry, 10 Dec. 1918.
[76] Ibid., 470-2, Derby to Balfour, letter, 22 Dec. 1918.
[77] An account of the discussions between George Louis Beer, head of the Colonial Division within the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, and Wilson while on their way to Europe aboard USS *Washington* can be found in Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015), 18.
[78] LoC, Lansing Papers, Private Memoranda, 1915-1922, vol.63, mf reel 1, vol.1, fol.208, memo. on 'Certain Phrases of the President Contain the Seeds of Trouble' by Lansing, 20 Dec. 1918.
[79] LoC, Lansing Papers, Private Memoranda, 1915-1922, vol.63, mf reel 1, vol.1, fol.210, memo. on '"Self-Determination" and the dangers', 30 Dec. 1918. Lansing referred to 'Irish, Indians, Egyptians' in this memorandum. It can be argued that, if Lansing thought that 'self-determination' was not to be applied to these 'advanced' 'races', *a fortiori* he would have been opposed to its use for the Pacific Islands.
[80] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.II, 511-5, Breckinridge Long to Harrison, Commission to Negotiate Peace, letter, 14 Dec. 1918, with enclosed 'Memorandum … on the Disposition of the Ex-German Islands of the Pacific Ocean Now in Possession of Great Britain and Japan', Breckinridge Long, 14 Dec. 1918.

Territorial, Economic and Political Intelligence within the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, the successor to the Inquiry. E.T. Williams and Stanley Hornbeck, two Far East experts, rejected the idea 'of the islands north of the equator [being given] to Japan, either as a mandatory of the proposed League of Nations or otherwise'.[81] Relevant memoranda suggested that territorial agreements entered into during the war, mentioning the Anglo-Japanese deal from February 1917 as an example, should now be 'subject to scrutiny for approval, revision or rejection' and that the entire 'region be placed at the disposal of the League of Nations', which was to 'place the islands, either collectively or by groups, under the administration of one or more powers [other than Japan]'.[82]

In American naval circles, the thinking was similar. From within the Planning Section, set up in 1917 to advise on American naval policy in the war, a memorandum emerged stating that 'the Carolines and Marshalls in the hands of the Japanese is opposed to the interests of the United States' but acknowleding that 'these islands cannot be taken from Japan and given to another nation without violating the principles of fair play and arousing the enmity of Japan'.[83] As a strategic diversion, it was suggested to 'turn Japan towards the continent of Asia' and give it 'a free hand in Eastern Siberia', whereas 'the Marshalls, Carolines, German New Guinea, and Samoa [were] to be internationalized', in line with Lansing's recent claim.

As a guiding principle, the League of Nations was thus clearly on Wilson's and the Americans' minds regarding a future framework for the German colonies, in particular those on the Pacific, as was the view that the Japanese presence in Micronesia stood against American interest. This now needed to be reconciled with the British insistence on giving the Japanese what was promised to them during the war and the Dominions' calls for annexation.

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[81] NARA CP, RG 256, M820, roll 337, 185.115/3, memo by E.T. Williams, 'Dept. of T.P. & E. Intel.' [Division of Territorial, Economic and Political Intelligence], Far Eastern Div., undated; 185.115/4, msg from Stanley Hornbeck, 'Dept. T.P. & E. Intel.', Far Eastern Div., 20 Jan. 1919.

[82] NARA CP, RG 256, M820, roll 337, 185.115/5, memo. entitled 'Far East - Problems and Recommendations', undated and unsigned; 185.115/6, memo. entitled 'Far East. III. Disposal of Islands in Pacific Ocean. Problems and Policy. Problems Arising Out of the War. Disposal to be made of Insular Possessions formerly German in the Pacific Ocean.', by Stanley Hornbeck, undated.

[83] NARA DC, RG 80, box 168, GB, memo. by Evans, Yarnell, Hart, Planning Committee [this was the American Naval Planning Section in London], to Chief of Naval Ops, 27 Nov. 1918.

These calls were being reinforced in Australia. A recently formed military advisory committee, the Committee of Defence, suggested the annexation of New Guinea 'against operations from the north', while the Japanese islands were to be internationalised.[84] Hughes in London, meanwhile, was defensive about any scheme mentioning New Guinea in the same context as other colonies and maintained that 'as regards the Pacific Islands, which are in the immediate neighbourhood of Australia ... the differentiating of their occupation from that of the adjoining Dominion would create insuperable difficulties in respect of customs laws, coastwise trade, methods of economic development, labour laws &c'. Lloyd George concurred insofar as 'the real basis of claim in this case was geographical contiguity and security'.

The British position, as it had evolved so far, was presented by Lloyd George to Wilson after his arrival in Europe.[85] While no notes were kept of the meeting and it was insisted that nothing more than an 'informal interchange of views' had taken place, Lloyd George's account before the IWC nevertheless indicated the direction of travel.[86] Wilson had agreed that the German colonies could not be returned to Germany and did not contest the claim that German South-West Africa was 'essentially' a part of South Africa, thereby apparently accepting the argument of geographical contiguity. Wilson did not seem to extend this logic to Australia, however, as he 'of his own accord retorted that the position of Australia regarding the Pacific colonies was not quite the same' and rejected the argument that Australia needed the adjacent German islands on grounds of security.[87] He also fired a broadside at Lloyd George by expressing doubt over the Anglo-Japanese territorial arrangement from February 1917 and whether Japan could be admitted as a mandatory power. In fact, Wilson

[84] NLA, Cook Papers, MS 762, folder 1a, Watt to Hughes, cable, 9 Dec. 1918.
[85] This in itself was an achievement of British diplomacy, as Wilson had refused to meet his Italian and French counterparts ahead of the conference. For more detail, see TNA, CAB 23/42/16, IWC 44, Minutes of a Meeting, 20 Dec. 1918. Despite this symbolic concession, Wilson cautioned the British, equally symbolically: 'You must not speak of us who come over here as cousins, still less as brothers; we are neither. Neither must you think of us as Anglo-Saxons, for that term can no longer be rightly applied to the people of the United States. Nor must too much importance in this connection be attached to the fact that English is our common language.' See Link, *PWW*, vol.53, 573-6, EP Bell to LL Winslow, letter, 31 Dec. 1918, with enclosed memo. by Frank Worthington, Deputy Chief Censor, 'Statements made by President Wilson to me on the evening of Saturday', 28 Dec. 1918.
[86] TNA, CAB 23/42/19, IWC 47, Minutes of a Meeting, 30 Dec. 1918.
[87] Ibid.

reportedly saw 'his function [at the conference as] to act as a buffer to prevent disagreeable things, such as the Japanese retention of the islands, being carried out'.

Despite their meeting of minds regarding Japan's non-retention of Micronesia, Hughes was less than jubilant about the outcome of the meeting, accusing Wilson of 'talking of a problem which he did not really understand' with regard to 'the German colonies in the Pacific'. Hughes also claimed, and this represented an underlying grudge, that the American President was not entitled 'to be god in the machine at the peace settlement, and to lay down the terms on which the world would have to live in the future'. Lloyd George, by contrast, was satisfied, not least with regard to Australia's and New Zealand's retention of New Guinea and Samoa, while not expressing his thoughts on the Japanese in Micronesia. He considered the 'difference between mandatory occupation and annexation' as reconcilable, and criticised Hughes for his pessimistic view of Wilson.[88] A further mitigating factor working against Hughes was Borden, who pointed out that he would not work with European powers against the United States and thereby made the Australian Prime Minister a somewhat isolated figure even within his own British imperial grouping.[89]

As a matter of fact, bigger forces were at work aligning themselves favourably for the Australasians. The colonial question was being navigated – and would be at the Conference -- by the skilful politician and diplomat Smuts, who wrote and published a pamphlet on the future League of Nations, which also dealt with colonial questions including mandates. In it, he claimed that

> the German colonies in the Pacific and Africa are inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any ideas of political self-determination in the European sense. They might be consulted as to whether they want their German masters back, but the result would be so much a foregone conclusion that the consultation would be quite superfluous. ... [T]his is a special case falling outside the scope of the principles applicable to the European and Asiatic communities we are here discussing.[90]

[88] TNA, CAB 23/42/20, IWC 48, Minutes of a Meeting, 31 Dec. 1918.
[89] TNA, CAB 23/42/19, IWC 47, Minutes of a Meeting, 30 Dec. 1918.
[90] Jan Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (London, 1918), 14-15. Smuts' mandates model was based on classifying countries into three levels of maturity towards self-determination. The first group contained countries such as Finland and Poland, essentially ready to govern themselves. A second group of territories, such as Syria and Mesopotamia, required 'in one Degree or another ... the

Wilson's thinking was aligned with the 'civilisational' aspect of Smuts' discourse, but opposed to the technical side of it, as it allowed the territories in question to fall 'outside the scope' of a mandatory solution (although Smuts primarily had German-South West Africa in mind as 'barbarian' among the German African colonies, in line with political expediency). This was a gap between the two positions that needed bridging.

Then there was the question of the islands north of the Equator. Lloyd George had taken his time to respond to Hughes' intervention from November, in which the latter questioned Japan's right to retain the islands. Now, after his conversation with Wilson, Lloyd George finally produced a response for Hughes. It was unequivocal and indicated how he would approach the question at the Inter-Allied conference, to which Wilson had reluctantly agreed. It started on a conciliatory note, reassuring Hughes that the British Government 'will do their utmost to safeguard the interests and security of Australia and the Empire', before moving on to the essential message. Lloyd George warned that 'there can be no question that the British Government will enter that Conference having given a pledge to Japan to support her claims to the German rights North of the Equator -- a pledge to which the Australian Government was a consenting party'.[91] Hughes then refrained from creating further trouble about the Japanese in Micronesia, including at the conference, indicating that Lloyd George's red line had been appreciated.

The Japanese, meanwhile, had remained silent in the international arena, even to the point of being seen as enigmatic by the other powers, who were wondering what they would bring to the table. One indication had come from Okuma. In an article for the *Kokumin*, mentioned in the *Times* from 30 October – and which had triggered Hughes' intervention and rebuff by Lloyd George mentioned above – the former prime minister had claimed that 'there is no reason why they [the 'Marshall, Caroline and Ladrone

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guiding hand of some external authority', whereas a third group contained 'cases where, owing chiefly to the heterogeneous character of the population and their incapacity for administrative co-operation, autonomy in any real sense would be out of the question'. Even this third group was not suitable to accommodate the German Pacific colonies, which, in Smuts' view, were on an even lower 'civilisational' level and deserved annexation to neighbouring territories, see above. Although the mandates formula would undergo further evolution towards and into the conference, as well as after it, Smuts would henceforth be generally credited with the mandatory idea.

[91] PA UK, LG Papers, LG/F/28/2/20, Lloyd George to Hughes, letter, 30 Dec. 1918.

Islands'] should be given to a third party' and that 'Japan must continue in possession of them'.[92] Some interpreted that Okuma, a political heavyweight, making such a statement was not a coincidence and that, thereby, 'Japan has unofficially proclaimed her peace terms', although he was only a member of the upper house of the Diet at the time.[93]

Conversations on the subject were taking place, and the press reported some detail as well. One of those conversations took place on 30 October in Berne between the British Consul-General Lord Acton and the new Japanese plenipotentiary to Switzerland, Honda Kumataro, who disclosed what the Japanese negotiating strategy was going to be.[94] According to Acton, 'Mr. Honda remarked … that he was convinced that the Dominions would decline to restore any of the captured colonies to Germany'. 'As regards the Islands in the Pacific Ocean', Acton continued, 'he [Honda] understood that the retention of those North of the Equator would be claimed by Japan at the Peace Congress, and that Great Britain had engaged herself to support this claim of her Ally'. This position was also represented in the Japanese press. The overwhelming view was that if Britain wanted to retain the islands south of the Equator, Japan would retain those to the north.[95] A particularly astute point was made by Miyake Setsurei, a nationalist and famous philosopher, in the *Nichi Nichi*. He found that 'our attitude at the Conference will be very passive, but since Tsingtau and the South Sea question will be settled in connection with that of the German colonies in Africa, it will be no trouble at all'.[96] Miyake thus made the connection not only between the different parts of the German Pacific, but also with the colonial question in Africa, arguably more significant from a European point of view. He also observed that the Japanese 'bureaucrat-militarists', who would not be acceptable at the peace conference, had been discredited, while Japan's two main envoys were well suited for the environment. These were Saionji Kinmochi, a former prime minister and elder

[92] PA UK, LG Papers, LG/F/28/2/7, clipping, London *Times*, 30 Oct. 1918, 'Japan and Peace. Forecast of Policy. Marshall Islands to be Retained.' Okuma's original piece appeared in the *Kokumin* on 21 October.
[93] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 702, WA-5 Japan, folder 8, memo., ONI, 'Japan Demands Retention of the Marshall Islands', unsigned, 5 Nov. 1918.
[94] TNA, CO 532/121, fols 264-5, Acton, Berne, to Balfour, letter, 1 Nov. 1918. Acton was the Consul-General in Zurich but was writing from Berne.
[95] TNA, FO 371/3236, fol.337, Greene to Balfour, letter, 12 Nov. 1918.
[96] NARA DC, RG 45, entry 520, box 704, WA-5 Japan, folder 5, Roger Welles, ONI, to State/Operations et al., circular letter, 21 Jan. 1919.

statesman, who Miyake pointed out was a warm personal friend of Clemenceau, while Makino Nobuaki, a seasoned politician and diplomat with the pedigree of being a former minister for foreign affairs, had distinguished himself by opposing the militarists in Japan, which in turn was expected to be favourably viewed by the other Allies.[97] It thus seems that their passivity did not result from complacency or lack of understanding, but that the Japanese were applying this strategy consciously and deliberately.

That being said, there was more substance to the Japanese position as the conference approached, and the press and news services reported on a Japanese seven-point plan, including a stipulation to establish a 'protectorate over the Marshall, Caroline and other German South Sea Islands'.[98]

The Japanese logic of reciprocity, which would ultimately lead to the formal division of the British and Japanese Pacific along the Equator, was also being consolidated by administrative steps undertaken in Melbourne to enforce the line. The Australians had used the end of the war to justify their stopping of granting export applications for New Guinea to Japanese traders, thereby effectively halting Japanese trade to and from the area.[99] Once more, London advised to 'keep … this matter out of the formal diplomatic channel'.[100]

For the Germans, a mighty alliance was thus translating its war-time gains into post-war reality. The German foreign office admitted on 26 November 1918 that ambitions to have Japan shift its support away from the Anglo-Saxon powers and towards Germany had proved wrong and accepted the fact that Japan, pursuing its geostrategic

[97] Jonathan Clements argues that the Japanese strategy of sending an elder statesman, who was understood in Japan to hold more prestige 'than a mere Prime Minister', backfired when some of the other Peace Conference delegates assumed they were being 'fobbed off with a figurehead' and that Wilson used the lack of incumbency as a pretext to keep the two out of meetings during the conference. This argument does not account for the mentioned Japanese strategy of keeping in the background, at least as far as the Pacific question is concerned. Jonathan Clements, *Prince Saionji: Japan* (London, 2008), pp.112, 120.

[98] BA Berlin, R901/56769, fol.38, clipping, *Deutsche Zeitung*, 25 Nov. 1918, article entitled 'Japans Forderungen auf der Friedenskonferenz'; fol. 31, Pressedienst des Reichswirtschaftsamts, 20 Dec. 1918; fol.28, clipping, *Schwäbischer Merkur*, 5 Jan. 1919, 'Der Waffenstillstand. Die japanischen Friedensbedingungen'. The latter article cites Okuma as the author in *Kokumin*, undated.

[99] NAA, CP360/8, 2, Watt to Hughes, cable, 14 Dec. 1918; TNA, FO 371/3233, fol. 228, GGAus to SSCols, cable, 17 Dec. 1918.

[100] TNA, CO 418/170, fol.470, Long to Munro-Ferguson, cable, 23 Dec. 1918.

interests, was avoiding all ambiguity regarding its loyalty towards Britain.[101] What was more, Germany had plunged into revolutionary turmoil in November, from which emerged a socialist government, the *Rat der Volksbeauftragten,*[102] with radical elements in it pushing for the country to become a Soviet republic. While some old government hands remained in place, the political environment was not conducive to the restoration of the colonial empire.[103] Nevertheless, some continued to bank on Wilson and the upcoming conference, as colonial organisations and business representatives petitioned Solf to go to Paris.[104] The unrest in the country and in the leadership had led to his resignation at the foreign and colonial offices in December, but he continued to manage the RKA *ad interim* for another two months into February 1919. During this time, he made efforts to have colonial affairs meaningfully represented, and offered to attend the conference, but was only able to secure the sending of two subordinate delegates rather than representatives of substance.[105] Ferdinand Rosenstern, an international trader from Hamburg, lamented on 10 February 1919 that the RKA had let eight weeks pass by and that this long delay suggested that the government was not prioritising the colonial question. This was not Solf's fault, as the political system was too slow to react to events in the current turmoil, and the inactivity meant that, as Rosenstern argued, the 'prospect of having any influence in shaping the peace question in its colonial perspective was very much reduced'.[106]

The RKA also tried to remained involved, ultimately in vain, regarding affairs on the ground in the Pacific and made efforts to effect with the armistice authorities the

[101] PA AA, R 17438, memo., AA, 26 Nov. 1918.
[102] It served alongside some of the old cabinet as a hybrid government from 10 November 1918 to 13 February 1919, when a new government based on parliamentary legitimacy following the January elections was sworn in. Solf's work at the RKA ended at that time.
[103] Solf, for example, foresaw the possibility of the 'destruction of the German nation', highlighting the unpredictable situation the country was in at the time of the armistice and after. See BA Koblenz, N1053-59, fols 131-3, Solf to Ebert, letter, 24 Nov. 1918.
[104] BA Koblenz, N1053-60, fol.13, Vertreter Hamburgischer Kolonialinteressen to AA, cable, 14 Dec. 1918; fol.24, Versammlung deutscher Kolonial-Interessen to Solf, letter, 24 Dec. 1918.
[105] BA Berlin, R1001/7057, fol.13, Erzberger to Solf, RKA, letter, 9 Jan. 1919; Solf to RKA, cable, 24 Jan. 1919.
[106] BA Berlin, R1001/7057, fol.74, Ferdinand Rosenstern to Haber, RKA, letter, 10 Feb. 1919.

return of those Germans from New Guinea and Samoa currently interned in New Zealand and Australia who desired to continue there.[107]

The German press also retained some colonial hope and argued along the lines that the Japanese occupation of parts of the German Pacific would be perceived as disagreeable and a geostrategic challenge by the United States.[108] This was true and Cecil was expecting American objections on the principle of 'no annexations of territory', which would also apply to the islands south of equator.[109] He concluded that 'it is surely to our advantage to support the Japanese claim in return for Japanese support'. This was thus not only a war-time promise by the British, but also part of the common interest Britain shared with Japan to be used against the United States. Japanese reliance on Britain regarding the Pacific Islands question at the peace conference was thus neither one-dimensional nor one-directional, and Whitehall realised its dependence on Japan as much as the Japanese had to rely on Britain. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, having been degraded to a British tool of war-time expediency since autumn 1914, thus saw a short-term revival, which was once more dictated by global circumstance.

Given Britain's standing in the war and in global politics, it would have to be the London government, nevertheless, to take the initiative at the Inter-Allied Conference.[110] As it approached in January 1919, there was virtual certainty that the

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[107] BA Berlin, R1001/7053, RKA to Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Kommission, Kapitän z.S. Vanselow, letter, 10 Dec 1918. Conversely, the Australian government now toyed with the idea, initiated by Burns Philp, to remove all Germans from New Guinea and pass their businesses and plantations to the company, but ultimately decided against it, for the time being. Hughes argued that 'until territories have been dealt with by conference, no action of any kind and no publicity to proposals for future action should be taken or permitted'. NAA, CP360/8, 2, fol.231, Watt to Hughes, cable, 2 Dec. 1918; fol.246, Hughes to Watt, cable, 4 Dec. 1918. After the war, an 'Expropriation Ordinance' was passed in 1920 and an Expropriation Board was established, chaired by a Burns Philp manager. The Board thus assumed responsibility for over 300 plantations, which it later sold on with a preference for returned servicemen. Peter Cahill, ''A prodigy of wastefulness, corruption, ignorance and indolence': The expropriation board in New Guinea 1920-1927', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 32, 1 (1997), 3-28. For a thorough analysis, see Patricia Hopper, 'Kicking out the Hun: a history of the Expropriation Board of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, 1920-1927', MA thesis, University of Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby, 1979).

[108] BA Berlin, R901/56769, fol.38, clipping, *Deutsche Zeitung*, 25 Nov. 1918, 'Japans Forderungen auf der Friedenskonferenz'.

[109] TNA, FO 371/3236, fols 398-9, handwritten note by Cecil, 14 Nov. 1918.

[110] Despite their sound 'passive' strategy, the Japanese were over-reliant on Britain. For instance, Saionji only arrived in Paris on 2 March 1919, after the first, decisive, round of colonial deliberations was over. Lesley Connors, *The Emperor's Adviser: Saionji Kinmochi and Pre-War Japanese Politics* (London, 1987), 72. For domestic politics in Japan during the build-up to the Conference, see pp.60-6.

war's victors would not return the German colonies, and particularly the ones in the Pacific. Those colonies with territorial contiguity to Australia and New Zealand (as well as South Africa) were being constituted as a category *sui generis*, with preferential rights for their occupants. Wilson had accepted some such formula, but had also expressed doubt regarding Australia's role in New Guinea, possibly out of personal dislike for Hughes after their meeting in May 1918. A trusteeship system was also taking shape, and was differentiated, among other factors, by degrees of 'civilisational' advancement, with the Pacific Islands and New Guinea in particular at the bottom of the ladder, while different formulas, including full annexation and internationalisation were still being postulated. Wilson had not yet clarified his final views, although the American position was mellowing away from his persistence that the Europeans should not be getting their way in colonial matters. The American suspicion of Japan's new position in the Pacific remained strong, however, particularly in naval circles, but the diplomats' hands were tied by events in Europe and, not least, by Japan's naval presence in the Pacific, unmatched by any other power in 1919. Also, the logic of reciprocity in international diplomacy would make it difficult, and ultimately impossible, to deny the Japanese what the Australasians were to be given.

Finally, Germany remained a *persona non grata* and was not consulted about any of the colonial post-war dealings. Struggling to stabilise during the domestic political and social unrest, German diplomacy was slow to concern itself with colonial issues again and would effectively not do so in a serious way until May, when being presented with a colonial dictate. The German hopes hinging on Wilson's Fourteen Points proved elusive, as Wilson was unable to secure a decisive imprint onto the peace conditions and unwilling to see the colonies return to Germany anyway. With or without justification, the German colonies, including those in the Pacific, became collateral damage both domestically and internationally after a war fought for the cause of national survival. As it occurred, the German nation would survive the conflict intact, albeit battered, bruised and decimated. Germany overseas, however, was now a thing of the past, to be confirmed by the Inter-Allied Conference and, finally, by the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Epilogue
The 1919 Peace Conference and Beyond

The Paris Peace Conference opened on 18 January 1919. This was not a typical conference, however, but a gathering of the war's victors where they agreed on terms before these would be handed, or dictated, to the Germans, the 'Inter-Allied Conference'.[1] The meeting's pre-eminent historian Margaret MacMillan writes that what was planned as 'a preliminary conference to hammer out the terms to be offered, after which they [the Big Four][2] intended to hold a full-scale peace conference to negotiate with the enemy' turned into the 'real thing' as the months went by.[3]

The conference was frontloaded with colonial matters, deemed easier to resolve than protracted financial and European territorial questions, and practical considerations were thus prioritised over scrutiny.[4] The colonial, non-European, questions themselves had to be divided between the different enemy powers, essentially Germany and the Ottoman Empire. As the future of Germany's overseas possessions was considered the most straightforward to deal with, rather than what was perceived as a more complicated Middle East, they came first.

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[1] Margaret MacMillan's definitive account of the Conference and its inner logic and workings is published under three different titles: *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War*; *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World*; and *Peacemakers: Six Months That Changed the World*. The distinction between the 'Inter-Allied Conference' and the proper 'Peace Conference' is important. Meetings at Versailles had been conducted at the Supreme War Council since December 1917. Essentially, the Inter-Allied Conference of January 1919 was a continuation of these meetings. The defeated powers were not invited to participate. In fact, it was decided that a written procedure was to be applied, which meant that Germany would be handed a written treaty draft to which it could respond in writing also. This happened later, in May and June 1919.

[2] The 'Big Four' refers to the war's principal Allied powers, Britain, France, the United States and Italy. Significantly, Japan was not considered one of the 'Big Four', although the Supreme Council, or Council of Ten (ten representatives from five countries, not ten countries), was instituted in January 1919 to monopolise all the major decision-making between the 'Big Four' and Japan. Later, in March 1919, the Council of Ten was reduced to a Council of Four, numbering only the Western heads of government, as the Japanese abstained from concerning themselves with matters of no interest to them.

[3] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York, 2002), xxviii.

[4] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.III, 693-703, PPC 180.03101/15, BC-8, Notes of a Conversation, 23 Jan. 1919, see pp.699-700. See also Hankey's Notes of a Meeting of the Council of Ten, 23 Jan. 1919, in Link, *PWW,* vol.54, 218-26. According to the latter source, Wilson observed that unrest arose from the situation in Europe, not in the colonies, and that he preferred 'to hasten a solution of European questions' but 'approved of utilising intervals for the discussion of less important matters'.

Australia and New Zealand, like the other Dominions, were allowed to participate in the Plenary Sessions[5] on their own merit, but, more importantly, would only speak at the Council of Ten and the Council of Four as parts of the British Empire Delegation (BED). In parallel, the Australian and New Zealand delegates were to be kept up to date by the BED, which operated as a mini-conference in its own right.

It was quickly agreed between the British, French, American, Italian and Japanese representatives not to return to Germany its overseas possessions as an outcome of the negotiations.[6] Lloyd George pointed out that 'most of the Colonies captured had been taken by Dominion troops' and that 'in many cases the Germans had treated the native populations very badly'. He also elaborated on the different administrative variants on offer, ranging from internationalisation to trusteeship to annexation, discarding the idea of internationalisation in the same breath. Hughes, Botha and Massey were then allowed to present their points of view, all wanting the annexations of New Guinea, South Africa and Samoa respectively, while Borden added that the British Empire was in 'itself a League of Nations', thereby suggesting to Wilson and Clemenceau the superiority of the British model for how to run a system of countries.

A few days later, Makino presented the Japanese case and claimed from the German government 'the unconditional cession' of Kiaochow and 'all of the Islands in German possession in the Pacific Ocean North of the Equator'.[7] His justification for Micronesia was that '[the 'many different tribes'] are not in a position to organize themselves … in the modern sense' and that public opinion in Japan was 'unanimous in this connection', which meant that Japan needed 'to protect the inhabitants and to endeavour to better their conditions'.

Wilson responded that 'the basis of this [mandatory] idea was the feeling which had sprung up all over the world against further annexation' and that 'if the Colonies were not to be returned to Germany (as all were agreed), some other basis must be found

[5] The Plenary Session was the full conference body assembling all 27 victorious powers. There were only four sessions across the conference.
[6] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.III, 716-28, PPC 180.03101/17, BC-10, Notes of a Conversation, 24 Jan. 1919. This was one of the meetings to which the Dominions' representatives were admitted.
[7] Ibid., 738-48, PPC 180.03101/19, BC-12, Notes of a Conversation, 27 Jan. 1919.

to develop them and to take care of the inhabitants of these backward territories'.[8] 'The fundamental idea', he added, 'would be that the world was acting as trustee through a mandatory, and would be in charge of the whole administration until the day when the true wishes of the inhabitants could be ascertained'. A civilising mission, some form of trusteeship, but no annexations, and no self-determination either, were thus Wilson's postulates, which needed to be reconciled with each other as well as with the British and Japanese positions, among others.

That said, Wilson cautioned in conversation with David Hunter Miller, the American delegation's legal adviser, that Japanese islands, 'athwart the path from Hawaii to the Philippines and … nearer to Hawaii than the Pacific coast', could be 'fortified and made naval bases by Japan' and stressed that 'he did not trust the Japanese' and 'would not trust them again' after Siberia.[9] Translating the above into the mandates discussion, Wilson warned that if exceptions from the mandatory principle were made for Samoa and New Guinea, 'it would be difficult to refuse to make a similar exception in the case of Japan'. He did not need to mention that this was not in the United States' interest, but it also showcased that the Japanese logic was working.[10]

Hughes maintained that 'the most direct form [of government for New Guinea] would be the best, and the most indirect form the worst' and that 'direct government' was preferable to 'the mandatory principle'.[11] Lloyd George, more constructively, stated that he had no objection in principle to the mandate idea and was not out for 'a division of spoils', but cautioned against its possible impracticalities.[12]

The French also weighed in with objections they shared with the British and Australasians against internationalisation and mandates, thus arguing a case for annexations as well.[13] Wilson was now opposed by France, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and, tacitly, Japan, although the British also continued to act as

[8] Ibid.
[9] Link, *PPW*, vol.54, 379, From the Diary of David Hunter Miller, 30 Jan. 1919. 'After Siberia' refers to the Siberian Intervention. The Americans developed a deep distrust of Japanese motives during the Intervention in 1918. See Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, chs 21 and 22.
[10] TNA, CAB 29/28, BED 5, Minutes of a Meeting, 28 Jan. 1919.
[11] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.III, 738-48, PPC 180.03101/19, BC-12, Notes of a Conversation, 27 Jan. 1919.
[12] Ibid.
[13] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.III, 758-71, PPC 180.03101/21, BC-14, Notes of a Conversation, 28 Jan. 1919.

a mitigating force. He decided, however, that 'there must be a League of Nations' and that it 'would be a laughing stock if it were not invested with this quality of trusteeship'.[14] Lloyd George went along and arm-twisted his imperial partners at the BED, arguing that Wilson had said he 'could not return to America with the world parcelled out by the Great Powers' and insisting that 'it was important to make progress before President Wilson returned to America'.[15] Likewise, Lloyd George and Clemenceau had urged Wilson to make up his mind before his return.[16]

Meanwhile, Smuts had laid out a mandates model before the BED, developed from his previous work. It now differentiated between three categories of territories, ranging from countries such as Syria and Mesopotamia, which were deemed to be able to 'speak for themselves' with some assistance, to the German colonies in Central Africa, characterised by the 'circumstance that the world, as a whole, was interested in them' and which were thus to become a second class of mandate in which progress towards self-government was foreseeable, to, at the other extreme, a third class, 'German Colonies with a British Dominion next door, which needed to be fully annexed by the adjacent Dominion 'for many reasons', including their perceived relative social and political backwardness.[17] This was in line with Lloyd George's previous attempts at annexation for the three territories, but the British position was now changing in light of Wilson's persistence, and also, as Cecil pointed out, because 'annexation represented the spirit of the Congress of Vienna, which was opposed to the spirit upon which the hope of a new system for the world was based'.

A draft was then produced that classed South Africa and 'certain of the Pacific Islands' as mandates. This established what would become the A, B and C-class mandates, although this was yet to be agreed on by the Council of Ten. It is worth citing the

[14] Ibid.
[15] TNA, CAB 29/28, BED 5, Minutes of a Meeting, 28 Jan. 1919. Wilson decided he had to return to Washington to push his peace agenda against political odds at home. See MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 149, 153-4, and Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 422-6. Braisted posits that after Wilson witnessed the congressional defeat of a naval bill during his stint in Washington, which would have increased the number of capital ships for the US Navy and created a significantly improved negotiating position, he returned to Europe weakened both at home and at the conference.
[16] TNA, CAB 29/28, BED 6, Minutes of a Meeting, 29 Jan. 1919, including appendix P.B.-11, 'Draft Resolutions in reference to Mandatories', 29 Jan. 1919.
[17] TNA, CAB 29/28, BED 4, Minutes of a Meeting, 27 Jan. 1919.

relevant part of the draft, point 8, in full (as it corresponds with the later C-class mandate category, reserved for New Guinea, Samoa and German South-West Africa):

> 8. … there are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain islands of the Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the mandatory state, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the mandatory State as integral portions thereof, subject to the safeguards above-mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.[18]

Thus, within a short space of time, the German Pacific territories south of the Equator, along with German South-West Africa, had turned from planned annexations into mandates. The above resolution is clearly a legal fudge between the British and the three involved Dominions to accommodate Wilson, but not all questions had been answered.[19] Massey, for example, enquired about the draft's logic in the light of Japan's status, to which Lloyd George responded that he 'wished to keep the Japanese out of the resolution', but had to admit, vaguely, that he expected the Japanese-occupied islands to 'be assigned on mandatory terms, but not on the terms applicable to New Guinea'. Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, summarised that 'clause 8 had been inserted ... solely for the special protection of the interests of South Africa, New Zealand and Australia'. Importantly for Massey and Hughes, the formula guaranteed them administration 'under the laws of the mandatory State as integral portions thereof', thus in a quasi-colonial setting with some exceptions attached. Now, it required Wilson's blessing.

After some hesitation, and reassurance by Lloyd George that 'what had been done … in giving birth to a League of Nations was a reality' and that 'it had really been born', Wilson conceded that 'he did not wish to delay any decision and … was ready to accept any provisional arrangement'.[20] Lloyd George admitted 'that the resolution did not deal with the distribution of mandates at all, but only laid down the general principles', thereby allowing Wilson to save face on his return to the United States. The American

[18] TNA, CAB 29/28, BED 6, Minutes of a Meeting, 29 Jan. 1919, including appendix P.B.-11, 'Draft Resolutions in reference to Mandatories', 29 Jan. 1919.
[19] Hankey tried to sway Hughes by arguing that the mandate formula under point 8 would be akin to a 999-year lease instead of a freehold. L.F. Fitzhardinge, *The Little Digger, 1914-1952: William Morris Hughes, a Political Biography*, vol.2 (Sydney, 1979), 392.
[20] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.III, 785-96, PPC 180.03101/24, BC-17, Notes of a Conversation, 30 Jan. 1919, with attached Appendix, PB-11, 'Draft Resolutions in Reference to Mandatories', 29 Jan. 1919.

President had the final word and suggested that they had 'arrived at a satisfactory provisional arrangement', followed by the Council of Ten giving its green light.

This left the question of two further territories' destinies unresolved. The future of Nauru was provisionally determined in early May. Massey had by now thrown in his claim, and Lloyd George, explaining to Wilson that 'the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand were all interested [in Nauru]', decided to remove the island from the conference discussions by having it become a separate C-class mandate awarded to 'the British Empire'.[21] Wilson had some misgivings but did not insist further, with time pressing to present the peace conditions to the Germans. This meant that Britain and the two Dominions could haggle over and agree on how to divide the phosphate spoils between themselves after the treaty had been signed.[22]

The other question concerned the islands north of the Equator claimed by Japan, which had so far been discussed but not resolved. Former foreign minister Kato, not present in Paris, had made it clear at the beginning of the conference that 'the subjects for solution on Japan's account are already determined' and considered that the apportioning of the South Sea Islands had been 'informally approved by the Powers so that I believe it will be easily settled without particular controversy'.[23]

Wilson's conference reaction to Makino's claim for seizing the islands had been that 'some other basis [than annexation] must be found to develop them and to take care of the inhabitants of these backward territories', after which the Japanese delegates kept their guard, but spoke up when agreeing to the provisional mandates resolution

[21] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.V, 491-5, PPC 180.03401/146, IC-181D, Notes of a Meeting, 6 May 1919, 5.30pm. For Massey's perspective and intervention, see PA UK, LG/F/36/4/8, Massey to Milner, letter, 9 April 1919.

[22] A Foreign Office note observed that 'it has been already settled that the mandate for Nauru is to be given to the British Empire'. See TNA, FO 608/175, fol.285, Handwritten note by 'H'[?], [7[?] May 1919]. The solution turned out to be a phosphate- and administration-sharing arrangement, under which Britain and Australia were to receive 42 per cent of the mined material and New Zealand 16 per cent. Australia was to assume the island's administration for the first five years, after which 'the Administrator shall be appointed in such manner as the three Governments decide'. In reality, Australia retained the administration of Nauru beyond this initial period. For the final tripartite agreement, see NLA, Hughes Papers, box 104, MS 1538/16/3143, Parliament of the Commonwealth, 'A Bill for an Act in relation to the Island of Nauru', 18 Sept. 1919. See also Bridge, *Hughes*, 94-6.

[23] TNA, FO 371/3819, fols 81-2, Greene to Curzon, letter, 13 Jan. 1919.

presented to the Council by the BED.[24] Seemingly resigned to accepting a mandate for the islands as the best available outcome in the light of Wilson's insistence, Prime Minister Hara then agreed that 'direct control [of the Pacific Islands] is not contemplated'.[25] Formally speaking, the Japanese for now remained outside the resolution, however.

The mandates formula was closely related to the League of Nations that was being shaped at the same time as the mandates. A commission had been established for this purpose with Wilson as its head.[26] Lansing had urged him not to return to Washington 'empty handed' and to at least have a resolution regarding the establishment of the League and its main features.[27] An entire draft of a 'covenant', a charter for the League of Nations, was then elaborated, which Wilson presented to the Plenary Session on 14 February. It incorporated a dedicated article dealing with 'those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which have formerly governed them', which included a paragraph dealing with the Dominions-occupied territories.[28] The text was virtually the same as that passed by the BED and the Council of Ten.

On the same day, Wilson left Paris and would not to return until 14 March. Despite his absence, the wheels of diplomacy kept turning. Relevant work was done in the following weeks, and Milner devised a plan that was discussed by the BED on 13 March. He had drafted a 'typical mandate of class (c)', outlining in an example containing eight points what the features of such a mandate would be, most importantly the mandatory's 'full power of administration and legislation'.[29] A ban on fortifications and military and naval bases was also included in accordance with the

[24] *Le Matin*, a French daily based in Paris, noticed, for example, that 'the eminent statesmen representing Japan at the peace conference have so far remained remarkably silent', BA Berlin, R901/56769, fol.22, clipping, *Le Matin*, 29 Jan. 1919, 'Les neuf points du Japon'.
[25] TNA, FO 371/3819, fols 48-9, Greene to FO, cable, 5 Feb. 1919.
[26] Link, *PWW*, vol.54, 264-71, Protocol of a Plenary Session of the Inter-Allied Conference, 25 Jan. 1919.
[27] Ibid., 400-2, Lansing to Wilson, letter, 31 Jan. 1919, with enclosed Redraft of Resolution of 23 Jan. 1919, 30 Jan. 1919.
[28] Link, *PWW*, vol.55, 164-78, Wilson, Address to the Third Plenary Session of the Peace Conference, 14 Feb. 1919.
[29] TNA, CAB 29/28, fols 60-74, BED 13, Minutes of a Meeting, 13 March 1919, including appendix, W.C.P 211, entitled 'Mandates under Clause 19 of the Draft "Covenant" of the League of Nations', Memorandum by Lord Milner, 8 March 1919, and Annex I: 'Typical Mandate of Class (c)', Annex II: 'Typical Mandate of Class (b)', and Annex III: 'Nauru'.

relevant agreements from January and February on mandates and the League of Nations.

The Japanese now asked for reciprocity within that formula, and Makino, in conversation with Cecil, had 'insisted that whatever was done as regards the islands south of the equator should be done as regards the islands north of the equator', or 'in other words, Japan should be in the same position as a mandatory as other nations'.[30] Lloyd George was concerned that 'we should lose trading rights with their mandated islands' in such a case. This concerned the 'open door', which the Australasians, excessively concerned with migration, had essentially forfeited for their class of mandate to keep the Japanese out. Austen Chamberlain made sure to clarify this stance and asked Massey and Hughes whether it was correct that 'it would be better to allow the Japanese to exclude us from the islands north of the equator in order to have the right to exclude the Japanese from islands south of the equator', which both approved.[31]

After his return to Paris, Wilson acted against his previous dislike of backroom diplomacy and confirmed the Japanese position in the Pacific Islands north of the Equator in conversation with Makino and Chinda, but made 'a reserve in the case of the island of Yap' which Wilson 'considered should be international'.[32] At the end of April, it was formally agreed that the Germans renounce 'in favour of the five Allied and Associated Powers all rights and titles appertaining to her in regard to her oversea

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid. Hughes and Massey were much more belligerent when it came to the famous Racial Equality Proposal, an amendment introduced by the Japanese delegation to be part of the LoN covenant. This effort was thwarted by them and by Wilson, even though a majority in the relevant PPC commission eventually voted for it. Wilson decided, dubiously, that the vote should have been unanimous. MacMillan called the 'failure to get the racial equality clause [included] an important factor in the interwar years in turning Japan away from cooperation with the West …'. See MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 317-21. For a comprehensive study, see Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London, 1998), especially chapters 5 and 6 on the Australian and American opposition to the proposal and relevant manoeuvrings.

[32] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.V, 106-11, PPC 180.03401/110, IC-175, Notes of a Meeting, 21 April 1919. Yap was considered a special case by Wilson, due to its status as a communications hub with importance for the United States, as it connected a cable arriving from Guam on to Shanghai and the Dutch East Indies. The agreement between Japan and the United States regarding the Pacific Islands and Yap in particular had been, as many issues during the Conference, another fudge. The question of Yap remained unresolved until after the war, see below.

possessions'.[33] This confirmed the agreement by the Council of Ten from January. The Dominions now made a late push to have their occupied territories explicitly mentioned in the peace treaty, and Lloyd George made a late intervention on their behalf, but Clemenceau and Wilson wanted to proceed quickly and rejected the initiative, which closed the matter for the time being and postponed the detail of particular allocations until after the signing of the peace.[34] Wilson, once more, made it clear that he wanted 'to avoid the appearance of a division of the spoils being simultaneous with the Peace', but nevertheless agreed to informally but expressly accepting that the relevant Pacific mandates later be assigned to Australia, New Zealand and Japan respectively.[35] Thus, on 7 May, Lloyd George handed a memorandum entitled 'British Proposal for Distribution of Mandates' to Stéphen Pichon, the French foreign minister, which contained all the German colonies and the powers to which they were to be allocated.[36] Later the same day, the German delegation was handed the peace terms. After that, and still on the same day, Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando reconvened and agreed to the British proposal.[37]

The Germans were given two weeks to respond to the peace terms, a term subsequently extended. Berlin's observations were presented on 29 May 1919 and remained consistent with the official strategy of full colonial retention. The relevant section read that 'the German Government regards the claim of Germany for the return of her colonial possessions as being ... justified', but conceded that 'when, however, a League of Nations shall come into being, in which Germany is immediately

[33] *FRUS 1919*, *PPC*, vol.IV, 615-40, PPC 180.03201/9, FM-9, Notes of a Meeting, 26 April 1919, see clause IX of 'Annexure "A": Clauses Relating to the German Colonies, to be inserted in the Preliminaries of Peace' on p.614. The initiative for this emerged from an Allied 'Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting on 15 April 1919. See *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.IV, 548-65, PPC 180.03201/4, FM-4, Notes of a Conversation, 15 April 1919.

[34] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.V, 389-402, PPC 180.03401/135, IC-178D, Notes of a Meeting, 1 May 1919; 463-72, PPC 180.03401/144, IC-181B, Notes of a Meeting, 5 May 1919. One notable exception was the Kiaochow concession, which was legally part of China, and the German treaty over which Japan had assumed. The Japanese insisted and the concession was assigned to them in the Peace Treaty, much to China's chagrin. Indeed, it was why China refused to sign the Peace Treaty.

[35] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.V, 491-5, PPC 180.03401/146, IC-181D, Notes of a Meeting, 6 May 1919.

[36] Ibid., 496-500, PPC 180.03401/147, IC-181E, Notes of a Meeting, 7 May 1919, with attached Appendix I 'British Proposal for Distribution of Mandates', undated.

[37] Ibid., 506-9, PPC 180.03401/149, IC-181G, Notes of a Meeting, 7 May 1919, with attached Appendix I 'British Proposal for Distribution of Mandates', undated. The memorandum was not part of the peace treaty.

admitted as a member with equal rights, Germany is prepared to carry on the administration of her Colonies according to the principles of the League, and if need be, as its Mandatory'.[38] The Germans also protested that the peace was supposed to be based on Wilson's Fourteen Points and that the conditions imposed upon Germany contradicted them and the 'principles embodied thereby', not least with regard to the colonial question.

The Allies insisted, however, that 'no concessions can be made in regard to the Clauses in the Treaty which concern the former German colonies and German rights outside Europe'.[39] Finally, the 'Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany' was signed on 28 June 1919. The crucial clause determining the fate of the German colonies was article 119. In its final version, it read: 'Germany renounces in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her oversea possessions'. The mandates were only dealt with in the Covenant of the League of Nations, signed at the same time, but not by the Germans. The final formulation regarding the German Pacific, in article 22, read:

> There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.

The welfare and non-fortification clauses, which were formulated for the B class mandates were also to be applied to class C, whereas the 'open door' was not. To provide further detail and produce the final mandate terms, a commission was established on 26 June, with Milner at its head. It continued its work on the Pacific mandates until December 1920, when they were finally awarded, including a separate

[38] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.VI, 795-901, PPC 185.1/165, Brockdorff-Rantzau, Head of German Delegation, to Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference, translated letter, 29 May 1919, with attached 'Observations of the German Delegation on the Conditions of Peace', undated, see p.844. For the relevant German archival material, see BA Berlin, R1001/7058, Friedensverhandlungen, vol .2, Mai 1919-Juni 1919, AA, Materialien betreffend die Friedensverhandlungen; Bemerkungen der deutschen Delegation zu den Friedensbedingungen, undated.

[39] *FRUS 1919, PPC*, vol.VI, 348-69, PPC 180.03401/62, CF-62, Notes of a Meeting, 12 June 1919, with attached Appendix IV, WCP 944 (revise), German Counter-Proposals: Conclusions of the Committee on the Political Clauses of the Treaty Relating to Countries Outside Europe, undated.

mandate for Nauru. The contents were essentially in line with what had been agreed at the conference, but the road there was not free of obstacles.

The American Congress, for one, decided momentously in March 1920 that the United States would not join the League of Nations, which was a blow not only to Wilson, but upset the logic of the entire mandates model. Now, the mandates had to be formalised by the remaining powers 'without the official consent or knowledge of the American Government'.[40] Also, the Japanese had brought the open door back on the agenda and insisted on its being included in the C class mandate formula, which led to fierce Australian resistance, after which the Japanese gave in and fell back on the Versailles line.[41] These conversations were preceded in the British Empire by the Jellicoe reports, a series of naval defence assessments for different parts of the empire. The report for Australia stated that 'the potential enemy in the Pacific is taken as Japan', which strengthened the Australian determination to shut the Japanese out even further.[42] The report recommended the stationing of a Royal Navy fleet in Singapore sufficient to balance the Japanese threat.

On Yap, Wilson told the Senate Committee for Foreign Relations in August 1919 that he had reserved in the peace treaty that the status of the island would be considered by a conference on electrical communications dealing with the disposition of former German cables.[43] The Japanese claimed that no exception had been made, and indeed, the conference record confirmed this claim. On this issue Wilson turned to Lloyd George in November 1920, but was told that Britain, France and Japan all interpreted the Japanese mandate as including Yap.[44] Without a seat at the League, there was no formal avenue for complaint the Americans could exploit. After the American presidential election in November 1920, the new administration under President Warren Harding and his Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes took up the issue again in April 1921. Hughes challenged the validity of any disposition of German colonial territories without American assent, and it was the British who helped broker

[40] George H. Blakeslee, 'The Mandates of the Pacific', *Foreign Affairs*, 1, 1 (1922), 100.
[41] Meaney, vol.2, *Australia and World Crisis*, 473-4.
[42] NLA, Hughes Papers, MS 1538, box 113, folder 2, Report of the Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa. On naval mission to the Commonwealth of Australia, May-August, 1919. Vol.IV.
[43] Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 528.
[44] Ibid., 529.

a deal. Curzon thus emphasised that Britain would uphold the Japanese mandate in its entirety, but also suggested that Tokyo explore a compromise with Washington.[45] The Americans and the Japanese then embarked on bilateral negotiations over Yap in the summer of 1921, which ultimately successfully affirmed the terms of Japan's mandate but assured that the United States would have free access to Yap for cable purposes.[46]

With the Anglo-Japanese Alliance about to lapse in July 1921 (this, at least, is what the British government argued, whereas the Japanese insisted that it would run for another year), it was an important topic of conversation at the Imperial Conference, held in London from June to August of that year.[47] The British government was ambiguous about the Alliance because of its relationship with the United States, and was also worried that Canada, Australia, and New Zealand might gravitate towards a 'union of Pacific Nations with Anglo-Saxon stock' with the Americans.[48] In the event, the Canadians expressed their opposition to the Alliance, whereas Massey and Billy Hughes were supportive and in favour of an extension for want of better options.[49] Hughes' main aims were to maintain White Australia and to avoid antagonising the Americans. The Foreign Office had recommended earlier in the year to avoid an impasse by replacing the Alliance with a three-power entente between Japan, the United States, and the British Empire, and Whitehall launched an initiative to call an international conference for the Pacific between the three powers.[50] This momentum was seized on by the Americans who saw an opportunity to merge it with a conference on naval limitations, their own brainchild.

The Japanese were at first reluctant, but ended up accepting this American idea and subsequently invitation, as did the British, along with France and Italy. Talks would deal with three different, albeit related issues -- naval limitation, the Pacific, and China -- culminating, respectively, in a Five-Power Treaty, a Four-Power Treaty, and a Nine-Power Treaty. They took place in Washington D.C. and went from November 1921 to February 1922.

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[45] Ibid., 532.
[46] Ibid., 533.
[47] Ian Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period* (Westport, 2002), 25.
[48] Braisted, *US Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922*, 559.
[49] Ibid., 559-60.
[50] Nish, *Interwar Period*, 26.

The agreement on naval limitation, known as the Five-Power Treaty, fixed a 5:5:3:1.75:1.75 ratio between the United States, the British Empire, Japan, France, and Italy, which applied to capital ships, but, importantly, not to submarines, on which no agreement was found (nor forebodingly to aircraft carriers, then in their infancy). Equally important was the fact that it contained a clause agreeing on 'the status quo at the time of the signing of the present Treaty, with regard fortifications and naval bases [in the Pacific Islands]', only applicable between the United States, the British Empire and Japan and banning all further construction. Hawaii was exempted, as were Australia and New Zealand. Mainland Japan did not fall under the scope of the agreement either, and the mandated islands in the Pacific were not mentioned at all.

They were included in the Four-Power Treaty between the United States, the British Empire, Japan, and France, however, which was meant to replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and stipulated, somewhat softly, that the 'High Contracting Parties agree as between themselves to respect their rights in relation to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the region of the Pacific Ocean'. A 'Supplementary Declaration' proclaimed that 'the Treaty shall apply to the Mandated Islands in the Pacific Ocean'. The Americans, as a non-member of the League of Nations, made a reservation that 'the making of the Treaty shall not be deemed to be an assent on the part of The United States of America to the mandates and shall not preclude agreements between The United states of America and the Mandatory Powers respectively in relation to the mandated islands'. The latter part was related to the negotiations between the United States and Japan about Yap, which resulted in a separate bilateral agreement, but also confirmed generically that 'the United States consents to the administration by Japan … of all the former German Islands in the Pacific Ocean lying north of the Equator'. The Four-Power Treaty was signed in December 1921, whereas the Five-Power Treaty and the Yap agreement were not signed until February 1922.

After the Pacific question had been settled at Versailles in 1919, the remaining legal, political and military uncertainties and inconsistencies were thus coordinated and harmonised in Washington in 1921 and 1922. The main involved powers considered this a truce rather than a long-term plan, but had bought themselves time after a long and draining war and at a time of instability in the world economy and politically at

home. Problems remained, such as the American Philippines dilemma, Britain's attempts to maintain a global defence network, and the Japanese Pacific empire being scattered across thousands of miles. The Americans thus had to rework their 'War Plan Orange', for a potential naval conflict with Japan, acknowledging that their 'natural line of advance' across the Pacific now led through Japanese island territory, but it would only be in the 1930s that a truly sophisticated planning approach was taken.[51] Japanese secrecy about Micronesia, barring visits by foreign vessels, rarely admitting travellers and then only to a few ports, did not help to avoid American suspicion.[52] British military and colonial overstretch continued in the 1920s and 1930s and hinged on an increasingly obsolescent and reduced Royal Navy. The main strategic defence asset projecting into the Indian and Pacific Oceans was to be a modern naval base at Singapore, as suggested by Jellicoe. Ultimately, it was only a half-hearted measure even when it was finished in 1938, remaining a mismatch between needs and resources and failing to do justice to the complexities of changing technology.[53]

In Germany, the Versailles Peace Treaty was under fire from day one, including its stipulations on colonies. *Kolonialrevisionimus*, or the attempt to undo the final verdict on the loss of the colonial empire, thus had currency from 1919 as part of the wider anti-Versailles discourse. This was highlighted in 1924 by a publication by Heinrich Schnee, ex-governor of German East Africa, entitled *Die koloniale Schuldlüge.*[54] The desire for colonies was mostly limited to ex-colonial circles, however, and was never a priority in German foreign policy in the 1920s although Gustav Stresemann, the foreign secretary, kept formulating claims of colonial restitution or at least admission as a League of Nations mandatory.[55] When the Nazis took over power in 1933, the topic was revived, as some had put their hopes for a renaissance of German colonialism in Adolf Hitler, but he, like Ludendorff before him, saw the future of German settlement in Eastern Europe. The German *Mittelafrika* idea was regurgitated, however, and made it to the drawing board only to be shelved again when the attack on the Soviet Union

[51] Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 115-21, 186-212.
[52] Ibid., 173.
[53] Anthony Clayton, 'Imperial Defence and Security, 1900-1968', in Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (eds), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol.IV, *The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2001), 282-3.
[54] Gründer, *Deutsche Kolonien*, 262.
[55] Ibid., 265-6.

was being prepared in 1940.[56] The Pacific figured much less in the German imagination of a colonial future, and the German navy was making plans for a maritime security perimeter in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to secure Africa rather than contemplating the Pacific. Finally, any large-scale colonial outcome in Germany's favour hinged on armed conflict and was ultimately unsuccessful.

In the Pacific, some urgency emerged when Japan walked out of the League of Nations in 1933, thereby freeing itself of the commitment not to militarise the islands, and by the summer of 1941, there were eleven naval air bases in Japanese Micronesia.[57] This was followed by the real denouement in another armed conflict, in which the Pacific had a more prominent strategic role than ever before. Only after that much-anticipated armageddon, in 1945, did the American Pacific come into existence and shaped the region for decades to come.

[56] For a comprehensive study, see Karsten Linne, *Deutschland jenseits des Äquators? Die NS-Kolonialplanungen für Afrika* (Berlin, 2008).
[57] David C. Evans, Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics, and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941* (Annapolis, 1997), 465. For a comprehensive analysis of the Japanese militarisation of Micronesia in the interwar period and American reactions, see Peattie, *Nan'yo*, ch.8.

Conclusion

The geostrategic conundrum and complexity surrounding the Pacific, as it had evolved throughout four years of war and diplomacy, was carried over into the peace in November 1918 by an armistice which had in it an imprint of expectations and anxieties based on Wilson's Fourteen Points, but, problematically, without mentioning them explicitly and without providing any further detail. The Fourteen Points would be invoked, tweaked or rejected in the following months, but they had undeniably been agreed as a central pillar of peace between both sides. On the ground, much of the Pacific question, in the shape of the carve-up of the German Pacific, was settled by the end of 1918, and the lines of division had become relatively clear. A British-Australasian Pacific south of the Equator, juxtaposed by a Japanese one north of the line. The carve-up added to the pre-existing geostrategic situation, which meant that the colonial presence north of the equator was now Japanese-American, while the French remained *in situ* to the south.

The notion of a 'long' world war stretching beyond 1918 and into the 1920s, as took place in other areas and ex-theatres of the Great War, can also be applied to the Pacific, although the jostling there remained limited to negotiations. The 1919 Conference provided one post-war marker, but discussions on the final formula on mandates, naval power in the Pacific, and on the peculiarity of the American position, especially after the American Congress refused to join the League of Nations, would only find an end through the Washington Conference in 1921-22, which goes beyond the chronological scope of this work and invites further research and comparative study for which I hope to have laid some groundwork.

Returning to 1914, the events surrounding the Pacific Ocean as they emerged with urgency in August of that year are worth a concluding appreciation. They can be considered as one Pacific question, an initial Allied mission to remove Spee and his Squadron, to destroy German communications and, ultimately, to seize the German Pacific, with the question's German counterpart, consisting of inflicting as much damage on the enemy as possible by maritime raiding and cruiser warfare and eventually, if achievable, a return to Germany. Neutralisation of the entire area was a

short-lived idea, driven by German strategic despair and a race-imbibed military nostalgia that Europeans would not fight Europeans in faraway war theatres, a notion proven wrong many times before.[1] Neutralisation was also invoked by Washington and Tokyo but ultimately dropped as a serious goal. The Americans had a genuine interest in keeping the Pacific out of the war, with their fragile imperial construct from the Philippines to Hawaii being considered indefensible if Japan was on the wrong side of a conflict, which was considered a possibility.[2] However, political will was lacking, as Wilson saw no incentive to become involved in the war more than necessary and preferred to pursue an isolated and neutral stance. This would turn out to be impossible to maintain in a conflict of such magnitude, but it also took more than a very limited German or hypothesised and remote Japanese threat to trigger a dedicated American involvement in Pacific diplomacy in 1914. Furthermore, an inward-looking and relatively economically self-sufficient continental United States was not dependant on sea-lanes and trading connections across the Pacific, or any ocean, as a vital economic lifeline.

Ultimately, Japanese determination to join the war as a strategically safe bet, virtually without risk of military or territorial losses and political jeopardy tipped the balance. The prospect of colonial and economic spoils was too good an opportunity to miss, although this outcome was initially triggered by Britain's world-wide strategising and inability to deal with the Germans in a global war. The realisation in London that the British Empire's assets in the Pacific, including those in Australia and New Zealand, would not suffice to remove the threat of a small but significant German naval force from a vast ocean without shifting forces from Europe made it invoke a logic that soon became irreversible. The fact that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was not quite suitable for the scenario in question, especially after the Germans made no move to approach Chinese or Japanese waters, was conveniently overlooked. As the hawks in London had

[1] Queen Elizabeth I's instructions from 1578 to Humphrey Gilbert upon his mission to North America come to mind, in which she ordered him not to 'robbe or spoile by Sea or by land, or doe any act of unjust and unlawful hostilitie to any of the Subjects of us, our heires, or successours, or any of the Subjects of any King, prince, ruler, governour or state being then in perfect league and amitie with us'. The Germans, not being in 'perfect league and amitie' with Britain in 1914, were not given the privilege of this tenet of British imperial policy. For the text of the letters patent from 1578, see http://avalon.law.yale.edu/16th_century/humfrey.asp. Retrieved 5 May 2018.

[2] For some formulation of thought at United States Navy level in 1914 that Japan might, one day, want to assert itself in the western Pacific and push the United States out, see Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 25.

it, this was the one chance to get rid of the German nuisance of *Weltpolitik* and to remove an aspiring and growing power from its 'place under the sun', an approach Tokyo agreed with.

Governments in Australia and New Zealand also wished to seize the opportunity to acquire colonial spoils, although the question of coming into the war did not have to be asked. The mechanism was the British Empire, and as parts thereof, both countries were constitutionally at war under a united crown once Britain was, although the two parliaments still made 'sovereign' decisions confirming this outcome. In Australia's case, this turned into a reality check over how much expansion the country could digest strategically, which evolved into a defence perimeter close to the Australian mainland. Whichever territory within this perimeter was not in Australian or British hands, such as the Dutch Western half of New Guinea or New Caledonia, was a possession of what were considered in Australia friendly nations. The Solomon Islands were British, while good relations between Australia and France had been strengthened by the war and were furthered by the French mission to Australia, and New Zealand, in 1918, which then also reflected on the status of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. This defence perimeter remained in place after the war and, in a different guise, still exists today.[3]

After the initial stage of war in 1914, the greater conflict became less global following the removal of the Germans from the Pacific and China as well as from parts of Africa, and the Pacific question broke down into a multitude of diplomatic and political sub-questions. Some of them were regional or area-based, such as the antagonism within the British Empire between Australasians and metropolitan Britain over the correct geostrategic approach, including how to treat Japan. And, more broadly, the tussle when the Pacific Rim powers -- Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States -- argued with the British (and French) in Europe, who were far removed yet interested in the Pacific. Subdivisions of the Pacific question in the war also included aspects such

[3] Significantly, New Caledonia remains French until the present day, although its status is uneasy in view of opposing metropolitan and independent tendencies and movements. The New Hebrides remained under Anglo-French rule until their independence as Vanuatu in 1980, whereas Western New Guinea was incorporated into Indonesia, independent since 1949, after a controversial referendum in 1969. The Australian Menzies government had considered the Dutch presence in Western New Guinea as a cornerstone of Australian security in the 1950s, before the Netherlands pulled out in 1962.

as army versus navy, imperialists versus isolationists, navalists versus continentalists, global traders versus domestic and continental business interests, and so on.

No single approach was thus monolithic, one-dimensional or indeed easy. Part of this played out in a domestic context, such as in Germany, where a cohort of shippers, traders, navalists and colonial (ex-)administrators tried unsuccessfully to salvage their interests in an argument with a continental culture embedded within the political centre in Berlin. Faced with the reality of military engagements to Germany's east and west, this agenda was ultimately unheard, as this required not only a cohesive policy but also a decisive victory in the greater war, which was becoming less and less likely, or a negotiated end to the war to save some of the wreckage, which turned out to be politically unfeasible on both sides of the divide.

The other arena was international, in which the Germans were also present, not least by their diplomatic contact with the Americans until 1917 and again in the final months of the war in 1918, or by their unsuccessful attempts to lure the Japanese onto their side against guarantees of colonial spoils. This arena was thus truly multilateral and continuously active between 1914 and 1918. The war's limited nature in the Pacific in military terms betrays its significance in political and geostrategic terms. These imperatives were the decisive factors in the end, and the non-return of all German colonies was decided between the Allies before the war had even ended, one of few policy items on which there was universal agreement among the victors, although the details took years to resolve. The proposition that a prosperous German economy and polity were needed in order for all of Europe to be safe and thriving, difficult enough to comprehend from an Allied perspective, was not applied to the colonial question. As a consequence, Germany lost its position as a world power, and its status would henceforth be ambiguous, between being one of the world's leading economic powerhouses depending on exports and imports, and a regional continental player grappling with the aftereffects of a devastating war. Germany's right to export its version of a 'colonising mission' also came to an end.

At the other geopolitical end, Japan had remained determined in its commitment to its alliance with Britain and its consequent position in the Allied camp. Despite being

offered the German Pacific on a plate by Berlin in 1916, the incentive was to make the safest bet in the war, which turned out to be the Allies.[4] The idea of a broader alliance between Japan, Germany and Russia was contemplated by the Germans but not seriously tested as Russia drifted out of the world war and into domestic conflict, whereas Germany's locked position was aggravated in April 1917 when the Americans entered the conflict. It was only then that the Japanese felt insecure and agreed to have serious talks, not with the Germans but with the Americans. With regard to the Pacific islands, they had to content themselves with American acquiescence when Lansing and Ishii had their conversations. Backed by the various guarantees they had extracted from the British, the French, the Italians and the Russians, this would remain the Japanese fall-back line into the peace negotiations.

The British Empire was both united and torn apart by the war, and this was particularly true in the Pacific. Massey's accusation at the IWC in 1917 that hardly anyone in Britain knew about or cared for the Pacific was not entirely correct but had a premonitory kernel of truth, as when later the long-term lack of naval assets, the decisive military factor in this maritime theatre, came home to roost with devastating consequences in 1941, when the Japanese were on the other side of the divide. Different strategic cultures also came to the surface. For London, the Pacific conflict in 1914 and the following diplomacy were based on a premise of a global defensive war to protect trade, supplies and troop transports between the relevant parts of the Pacific and the mother country or other parts of the empire when need arose. Because of an irreconcilable imperial overstretch, improvisation was needed, and worked well, in the shape of Japanese partnership, benevolent American neutrality which was turning into forms of partnership even before April 1917, and crucial Dominions' support where needed, including in the Pacific. This led to a large strategic preponderance over the enemy, but also in the long run to loss of political and strategic control.

For the Australasians, the Pacific question was predominantly one of colonial conquest and homeland defence. The former aspect predominated as the threat of a German attack on Australasia was virtually eliminated when Japan joined the war.

[4] This also turned out to be true in other cases, although the circumstances were different in every single one. For example, Romania and Italy came out as beneficiaries of the war, whereas Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey did not.

Nevertheless, both were sides of the same coin, as colonial conquest in New Guinea also had the objective of providing defence to mainland Australia. Economic ties and Australia's presence in Papua added to the logic. New Zealand was in a similar but somewhat different position, geographically more isolated than Australia. Its claim that Samoa was an obvious part of its defence perimeter thus remained an untested hypothetical. The only time foreign naval powers meaningfully approached New Zealand during the war was when the Japanese helped with escorts and a rogue detached German raider created some uncertainty and left mines behind. Its exposure to military threat was thus premised on the means of getting there in the first place, which Massey and Hughes foresaw would become more realistic with the further development of now-known and tested technologies such as submarines, airships and airplanes.

The Americans, by contrast, did not even participate meaningfully in the war in the Pacific in 1914-18, which indeed was not necessary by the time they entered the greater conflict in 1917. In a way, this confirmed the stance expressed in 1914 when they acted – or pretended to do so -- as if there was no war at all. April 1917 did not make a difference to the Pacific, although the ghost of an over-potent American presence in the Pacific spooked the Japanese. This was not a realistic scenario, and what had been going on in the American Pacific, such as the construction of the Pearl Harbor naval base, was being continued regardless and finalised in 1919, before further dredging and construction expanded the base in later years. What was new, however, was Japan's presence in Micronesia, an island world stretching more than 4,000 kms across the western Pacific north of the Equator, in the middle of which was Micronesia's largest island, Guam, and at the eastern end of which were the Philippines. The largest naval power in the Pacific, Japan, was thus now surrounded by, or from another viewpoint itself surrounded American possessions.

Moving south, some in the United States saw Australia as a natural strategic partner, whereas some in Australia started seeing the Americans as a possibly inevitable partner. After all, Australia, and also New Zealand, had emerged victorious from the war, but remained in an ambiguous position as their small populations and limited economic and military resources made them remain reliant on a potent power for

their defence needs. Formally, this power remained Japan, as the Anglo-Japanese Alliance imposed and allowed for a continuing partnership beyond the war, but some hesitant forms of dialogue between the Australasians and the Americans had started to take place. After all, paradoxically, Japan was also potentially the main threat.

Wartime events did not bode well for the Anglo-Japanese partnership in the Pacific, however, as Australia had withdrawn behind a trade and race barrier defined by the Equator and increasingly denied the Japanese access. The Alliance had also been seen with unease by the Americans, who were formally excluded from what was the main defence architecture for the Pacific and had only been part of it accessorily as they joined the war on the Allied side and accepted the situation of Japan defending the Pacific. In this context, American unease with current geostrategic conditions had also been expressed by their ultimately unsuccessful attempts to undo British global dominance via the Freedom of the Seas clause in Wilson's Fourteen Points, a concept which was only enshrined in international law after 1945. As the war came to an end, Washington, Melbourne, and Wellington were thus tied into a partnership that had been made in London, but their popular perception of Japan put a limit on their acceptance of this order, whereas Tokyo had been pursuing its agenda under this umbrella.

Also as a consequence of the above, France in the Pacific emerged from the war unscathed, embedded in safe alliance with both Britain and accessorily Japan, on which it was wholly dependent. The German threat only manifested itself very briefly at Papeete, whereas any landfall was out of the question or would have been very short-lived in 1914. The French redeemed themselves by their assistance in the taking of Samoa and New Guinea when *Montcalm* participated in the operations. There had been no shortage of foreign designs on the French Pacific, expressed in various forms in Germany, Australia and New Zealand before and during the war, but the issue remained mute in the light of war time expediency. In a way, the French situation in the Pacific was comparable to the German, only weaker. The French example thus shows how an indefensible and undefended scattered island empire could be maintained in the right conditions. London, despite some dissonance in Australia, was not prepared to bring up any such subject while it was entrenched with the French,

while, eventually, friendly Franco-Australasian relations strengthened the desire to maintain the *status quo*.

As a result of the enormous amount of strategic contemplation on all sides, the Pacific Ocean and the islands within it had taken on a different meaning. Not only had the political map been redrawn between 1914 and 1918. Paired with the knowledge, expectations and imagination of technological advances, not only military but also civilian, the space that had only been understood as a meaningful whole by European mapmakers since the 18th century, had significantly shrunk in size, and the first trans-Pacific flight, for instance, was only a matter of time.[5] With regard to the sea, Hector C. Bywater, a highly-regarded British defence journalist and writer, proclaimed in 1921 'A New Era of Naval Power' for the Pacific in conjunction with a 'Gravitation from West to East'.[6] The First World War in the Pacific was thus a momentous event bringing about solutions as well as raising questions that had to remain unanswered in 1918 and in the two decades of truce thereafter. Bywater's second book on the subject was published in 1925 and entitled *The Great Pacific War*. The future would tell whether he was right.[7]

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The Pacific question 1914-18 was thus for most purposes one dictated by the war and its consequences, and so was the period 1941-45. In the later 20th century, degrees of decolonisation followed, which bore and bear their own complexities, to do with much of what had an impact in 1914, distance, water, communication, technology, strategic relevance. It is on this level that I hope to have made a connection between the past and the present, by bringing together a vast body of archival material from six countries and three languages and by bringing this synthesis to a narrative conclusion,

[5] In 1928, Australian aviator Charles Kingsford Smith did it first when he flew from Oakland, California, to Brisbane, Queensland, via Hawaii and Fiji. The first trans-Atlantic flight from the American East Coast to Ireland was undertaken in June 1919, paving the way for Kingsford Smith and others.
[6] Hector C. Bywater, *Sea-Power in the Pacific: A Study of the American-Japanese Naval Problem* (London, 1921), 1.
[7] Hector C. Bywater, *The Great Pacific War*: *A History of the American-Japanese Campaign of 1931-33* (London, 1925).

not without intellectual and logistical complexities of its own. In the end, I hope to have done justice to both the narrative and the sources dealing with the subject as it absorbed the minds of politicians, journalists, businessmen and officers in the different countries involved in the war. The irony that the Pacific Islanders themselves were hardly part of any of the above has not gone unnoticed and should be the scope of further research on the Great War and its global impact.

For the future, it is not clear whether or how the Pacific (Islands) question will reformulate itself and in which shape the past will resonate, as, for example, the Chinese government pours sand into the sea and builds airstrips while the sea's level rises due to global warming.[8] It could be a geostrategic as well as an environmental and migratory question, but power over space will be projected in any scenario, and this is where what happened in the Pacific between 1914 and 1918 will surely echo events to come.

[8] For recent Western concerns about Chinese expansion of influence into the Pacific, see the Australian Lowy Institute's various links and sources on http://www.lowyinstitute.org/issues/china-pacific, such as https://chineseaidmap.lowyinstitute.org, retrieved 10 Aug. 2018.

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