

THE ANTI-COMINTERN PACT

N. Readdy

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact date when the need for closer German-Japanese cooperation arose, but it became obvious by 1933, with the rise of Hitler, that Germany was in need of an ally in the Far East to act as a buffer against the Soviet Union. The first gleanings in this direction come from Herbert von Dirksen who had been the director of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office and was later Ambassador to Tokyo. On his way to his new post in Tokyo, Dirksen passed through Berlin in October, 1933 where he spoke with Hitler and Ribbentrop; however, neither had anything special to say regarding German-Japanese relations. Dirksen, however, spoke with von Blomberg, the Minister of War, who hinted that it was Hitler's intention to find in Japan a substitute for Russia; especially in as far as military matters were concerned.¹

The German Foreign Office had shown little interest in Hitler's pro-Japanese stand and the Foreign Secretary, von Neurath, especially, could still remember the Triple Intervention and Japan's conduct toward Germany in 1914.² Neurath advocated closer ties with China which would mean valuable trade and military aid to Chiang Kai-Shek, but this was not to be. By 1934 the *Buero Ribbentrop* had come into existence and all negotiations relating to German-Japanese relations were kept secret from the Foreign Office.

The Japanese, on their part, aimed to bring Germany into closer contact with the newly-created state of Manchukuo,³ this however, was difficult, as Germany was more or less committed to China. However, a German-Japanese and a German-Manchurian commercial agreement was signed at the beginning of 1934 which proved to be extremely profitable for all three countries.

Meanwhile, as Hitler in Berlin displayed an interest in Japan, the Japanese military in Tokyo reciprocated with a growing interest in Germany. This mutual interest resulted in both countries appointing new military attachés to their respective embassies. The new military attachés were men who would play a vital part in the subsequent development of German-Japanese relations.

In March of 1934, Hiroshi Oshima took up his post of military attaché in Berlin. As the representative of the Japanese army, Oshima reported directly to the central military authorities in Tokyo and was given permission by the army to enter into negotiations for a military agreement. His counterpart in Tokyo was General Eugen Ott who later succeeded von Dirksen as Ambassador.

It seems that Ribbentrop made an indirect approach to Oshima in May or

1. Hitler must have given some thought to German-Japanese relations even in October, 1933 as it was during this month that the German Press was ordered to suppress all anti-Japanese articles.
2. In October, 1914, Japan took possession of all German mandates and leaseholds in the Far East.
3. Germany officially recognized the state of "Manchukuo" on Feb. 20, 1938.

June of 1935. At this time it was suggested that Germany and Japan form an alliance against the Soviet Union. A few months later, in October, Ribbentrop again sounded out Oshima on the possibility of the Japanese army being interested in such a proposal. Oshima contacted his superiors in Tokyo, who, in reply, sent to Berlin a Lieutenant-Colonel Wakamatsu of the German Division of the Japanese General Staff. Wakamatsu arrived in Berlin in December 1935 where he spent the next two weeks in conversations with Ribbentrop and War Minister Blomberg. It was from these conversations that the Anti-Comintern Pact emerged.

As mentioned previously, the negotiations were carried out by the *Buero Ribbentrop* and kept strictly secret from the Foreign Office. Dirksen, the German Ambassador in Tokyo was informed of the negotiations by his military attaché Ott, who in turn received his information from the Japanese General Staff.

The actual negotiations on behalf of the *Buero Ribbentrop* were carried out by a certain von Raumer. It was Raumer who thought up the name "Anti-Comintern Pact". It appears that the choice of a name for the pact had proven difficult; "non-aggression pact" had been suggested but had been discarded in view of the wide geographical separation of the two countries.⁴

Ribbentrop forwarded the German proposals for the pact to Japan in July 1936, and, since such a pact was desired by the Japanese military, the Hirota cabinet responded favourably. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the threat of Russia's military preparations not to mention its increased armaments programme and the alliances with France, Czechoslovakia and the Mongolian People's republic greatly increased the pro-German sentiment in the Japanese army.

In Japan, the only reservations that Prime Minister Araki expressed was that the content of the pact not be published until the pending Soviet-Japanese fisheries agreement had been concluded. Germany granted this request, so that the text of the pact, which had been agreed on in September, did not become public until November 1936. By and large, despite some opposition to the thought of an alliance against Russia from members of the *zaibatsu* and Saionji, the Hirota cabinet and the Foreign Ministry welcomed Japan's alignment with Germany. The newly appointed Japanese Prime Minister Hirota Koki expressed his opinion that the Anti-Comintern Pact would succeed in frustrating the Soviet Union's policy of aggrandizement, protect the common interests of both Germany and Japan against the armed pressure of Russia, and contribute towards a change of policy on the part of China toward Japan. The most important argument in defence of an agreement with Germany was that such an arrangement would strengthen Japan vis-a-vis China and make possible further Japanese expansion on the Asian mainland.⁵

The pact was signed on November 25, 1936 and included a secret addendum. The secret portions of the pact remained unknown even to Hitler's closest associates; even Göering never came to hear of them until the Nüremburg Trials

4. The Japanese, on their part, must have also experienced some trouble in thinking up a name for the pact. Instead of the logical "Hankyo Kyotei" (an abbreviation for Han-Kyosanto Kyotei", or anti-Communist Pact), they adopted the term Bokyo Kyotei or "Containment of Communism Pact".

5. Ikke. F.W. "Japan's Foreign Policy" re. section "Policies Toward Germany" p. 309-310.

when the Americans informed him of their existence. The obligations of the secret addendum read:

Should either of the High Contracting States become the object of an unprovoked attack or an unprovoked threat of attack by the U.S.S.R., the other High Contracting State engages itself to enter upon no measures of a kind which would have the effect of relieving the position of the U.S.S.R. (Article I)

and Should the case in the foregoing paragraph arise, the High Contracting States will immediately consult on what measures to take for the safeguard of their common interests. (Article I)

again During the continuation of this agreement the High Contracting States will not without reciprocal concurrence, conclude any sort of political treaties with the U.S.S.R. which are not in keeping with the spirit of this agreement. (Article II)⁶

The Japanese had a hard time convincing the Soviet Union that the pact with its secret addendum was not directed against them. The Soviet Government, on their part, was up-to-the-minute informed of all German-Japanese negotiations partially through the efforts of Richard Sorge, the Soviet agent in Japan and a close friend of Ott,⁷ and partially through Russian Intelligence at the Hague who had succeeded in cracking the code used by Oshima in his reports to Tokyo. Through Ott, Sorge learned the strength of the Kwangtung Army in Manchuria which the Japanese had divulged to the German during the course of pact negotiations. In Sorge's opinion, which he quickly conveyed to Moscow, the posture of the Kwangtung Army posed no immediate threat to the Soviet Union. As a result, although Moscow made much propaganda out of the secret addendum in the Anti-Comintern Pact, the Red Army did not reinforce its garrisons in the Far East. Further, the day before the pact was even made public, the Soviet Government showed its hand by refusing to renew the Russo-Japanese treaty regulating quotas and privileges on the fishing banks of Siberia.

Sorge's reports on the Anti-Comintern Pact proved to his superiors in Moscow that his two years of preparation had not been in vain and, over the next five years, his reports were to play an increasingly important part in enabling Russia and Japan to stand off from one another and prepare for their respective wars with the United States and Germany.

Although the pact was unanimously approved by the militarists in Japan, it did not go over well with the public, even Saionji had misgivings.⁸ In Germany, the Anti-Comintern Pact was greeted in the press with unanimous approval, but in Japan, besides the general public and Saionji, it was unpopular with businessmen and members of the Diet who saw it as an instrument that would prejudice Japan's relations with the U.S.S.R. and Britain and, more important, serve to

6. In theory, the pact should have become null and void following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of April 1939.

7. Ott and Sorge had served in the same German Division during World War I.

8. He called it a "fool's bargain, which will only result in Germany exploiting us".

increase army control over civilian life. Fear among Japan's political parties and financial circles over the growing power of the military now found expression in bitter criticism of Prime Minister Hirota who had allowed the army to conduct its own brand of diplomacy. Eventually this resulted, in February 1937, in the overthrow of the Japanese Government. Army Minister Terauchi, accused in a speech by a member of the Diet of conducting dual and secret diplomacy, resigned and thereby toppled the Hirota cabinet. Fear and misgivings concerning the pact as proof of the dictatorial tendencies of the Japanese army could still be expressed publically in the press in 1936, but, within a year, such open criticism was to be a thing of the past.⁹

In effect, the Anti-Comintern Pact came into being because Germany and Japan faced a common enemy. The alliance of Stalin and Franco as well as Soviet aid to Spain contributed to Germany's desire to find an ally. In the case of Japan, her actions in Manchuria and China, her withdrawal from the League of Nations, and her denunciation of the Washington and London naval limitations treaties had caused not only serious estrangement from the western powers, but also rapid deterioration in her relations with the Soviet Union. With the escalation of Soviet support for China in its struggle against Japan, the Japanese army, which dominated the Hirota cabinet, stepped up its efforts to push through the pact with Germany.

At this stage, the Anti-Comintern Pact paid dividends for Japan as it alleviated fears of Soviet intervention in China, facilitated Japan's aggressive moves against that country and, most important, enabled Japan to continue with impunity to exploit to its own advantage the continuous series of "incidents" in China which culminated in the one which occurred near the Marco Polo Bridge on the night of July 7, 1937.

The proposed follow up to this incident was based on the idea of causing China a crushing defeat followed up by generous peace formulas.¹⁰ For Germany, the Sino-Japanese War produced a serious quandary in as much as the value of Japan as an ally against the Soviet Union immediately decreased and, to a lesser extent, threatened German interests in China. Germany did her utmost to mediate the situation but the Japanese military played out their game to the end. Because Japan desired the complete defeat of China they demanded harsher and harder terms from Nanking so that all German efforts to negotiate a settlement, however sincere, were negated by the pre-arranged plans of the Japanese military who would accept no settlement short of complete Japanese mastery and the reduction of China to the status of a puppet dependency.

In Berlin, Ribbentrop pointed out that by miring down in the paddies of China, Japan would be emasculated as a German ally against the Soviet Union and the Third Reich was not in any way committed by the Anti-Comintern Pact to help Japan fight Bolshevism south of the Russian border. Japan's adventure in China brought no profit to Germany, in fact, it produced the opposite effect. Further, as Japan was committed to the complete overthrow of the Nanking

9. Baba. T. "The Anti-Comintern Pact in Domestic Politics" p. 536-357.

10. A favourite military ploy of Frederick the Great.

regime, it was a foregone conclusion that German interests in China would suffer. The conflict in China was thoroughly disapproved of in German business circles, in the Foreign Office and the General Staff; however, it was highly approved of and supported in Nazi circles. By October of 1937, Hitler had made up his mind – he would support Japan. On Hitler's orders, all arms deliveries to China were halted, German military advisers to Chiang Kai-Shek were withdrawn¹¹ and, in a Reichstag speech of February, 1938, Hitler committed himself to the recognition of Manchukuo.¹² By this move, Germany, as the world's third largest trading partner with China, lost everything and, to make matters worse, Japan let the German government know on April 8, 1938 that Germany could not be given a position of economic equality with Japan in China, not to mention preferential status. By this move, Japan committed herself fully to pursuing her own interests in Asia regardless of those of her ally.

Italy was drawn into the Anti-Comintern Pact in October, 1937. Neither Mussolini nor Ciano were informed that the true nature of the pact was an alliance against the Soviet Union. Further, it was not until after Italy had signed the pact on November 6, 1937 that Mussolini was informed of its secret addendum. It was after these points were explained to the Duce that he conceived the idea of changing the Anti-comintern Pact into a tripartite alliance directed against Great Britain rather than the Soviet Union.

As Hitler's foreign policy in 1938 shifted from a primarily anti-Soviet to an anti-British and anti-French stand, the importance of the alliance with Japan faded as the threat of Soviet danger receded. The Japanese, on the other hand, had to change their policy following the defeat of the Imperial Army at the hands of the Soviets in the Changkufeng Incident.¹³ The prowess of the Red Army and the inability of Japan to terminate the war in China caused the military to turn their eyes toward South East Asia.

In August 1938, a Five Ministers Conference was held in Tokyo to determine the question of a military alliance with Germany directed against the U.S.S.R. primarily and other powers secondarily. This was not exactly what the Germans wanted at the time but, in one respect, it indicated the beginning of considerations that led Japan to contemplate an alliance directed against powers other than the Soviet Union.

In October of the same year Oshima was appointed ambassador to Berlin where he continued to discuss with Ribbentrop the possibility of a new alliance. At Ribbentrop's suggestion, Italy was brought into the discussions which resulted in the drafting of a new triple alliance agreement. The draft was sent to Tokyo where it met with opposition from the Konoe cabinet and from Foreign Minister Arita who argued that Japan should first come to some agreement in China before worsening relations with the West; which would have been the result had a tripartite pact been signed at this time. The opposition by the Konoe Cabinet lasted until January 1939 when it was replaced by the ultranationalist Hiranuma Cabinet which immediately sent the Ito Nobufumi Mission to Rome and Berlin to

11. A cadre of German military experts under General Falkenhurst had been training and equipping the Nationalists.

12. *Ibid.* no. 3.

13. The Lake Khasan Incident. Located on the border where Manchuria, Siberia and Korea meet. Seventy miles from Vladivostok; fifteen miles from the Japanese naval base of Rashin in Korea.

discuss further the possibilities of such an alliance.

Now follows a period where Japan wavers between committing herself to an alliance with Germany and Italy or going her own way. Hitler's demands for an immediate Berlin-Tokyo-Rome alliance of the fascist states against the rest of the world did not fit in with the timetable which Japan, as an undeveloped nation, had been patiently following for years. On the other hand, Tokyo was well informed of the might of the German Army and it was indeed on the cards that Hitler could succeed in conquering the Lowlands and France. In such a case, it would indeed benefit Japan to have such a partner who could not but refuse her the Dutch East Indies and French Indochina. How the militarists in Tokyo must have squirmed in anguish over which course to take. There were two choices open and only one could be made – either jeopardize Japan's carefully worked out National Programme by siding with Hitler or – alienate Japan's best friend by refusing to side with Germany. The Army was pressing to sign the pact with Hitler while the Foreign Office was for protracted negotiations. On April 24, 1939, Ribbentrop broadly hinted to Oshima in Berlin that if Japan could not reach a clear-cut decision as to which side she was on, Germany would be forced to improve her relations with the Soviet Union. That same evening a decision was arrived at in Tokyo; Japan would enter into a full alliance with Germany with two provisions; that the clauses in the alliance directed against the democracies should be kept secret and that Japan's entry into World War II should not necessarily follow at once upon Germany's but should be made, in all good faith, as soon afterwards as Japan's strength warranted.

Ott, the German Ambassador in Tokyo, was informed of the decision and cabled his understanding of it to Berlin the same day; he also discussed the situation with his friend Sorge. Hitler was furious at Ott's news and rejected the provisions out of hand. He then ordered Ribbentrop to proceed at once with the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union.

For the next four months frustrating negotiations continued between Berlin and Tokyo with the Japanese hedging and the Germans pushing for a full and unconditional military alliance. The Japanese, however, were not prepared to join Hitler until they had seen the lie of the land. Reports of Ribbentrop's negotiations with Moscow filtered through to Tokyo where the militarists hit upon the idea of testing Germany's obligations contained in the Anti-Comintern Pact by staging a border incident with the Soviet Union. By the secret addendum in the pact, Germany was pledged to support Japan in all ways short of troops in the event of that country becoming involved in hostilities with Russia. The incident was to take place in the Soviet Protectorate of Outer Mongolia near the juncture of the border line of Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia and Manchuria at a village called Nomonhan.

The incident began on May 11, 1939 and ended on August 23rd with the complete and utter defeat of the Japanese forces by Lieutenant General Zhukov. A few weeks before this, while Hitler was planning the invasion of Poland and

Ribbentrop was negotiating with Stalin, Sorge had informed his masters in the Kremlin that the incident at Nomonhan was merely a Japanese move to probe Soviet strength. By April 19, Hitler and Stalin had signed their non-aggression pact which pledged Germany and Russia to refrain from making war on one another no matter what their respective commitments to other countries.

The news of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact¹⁴ came as a shattering blow to Japan. Prime Minister Hiranuma who had lent his full support to the strengthening of German-Japanese ties tendered his resignation to the Emperor who accepted it.¹⁵ Japanese resentment against Germany continued until the great victories in France and the Lowlands caused a shift in opinion on the part of the military as well as the public in Japan. With the new Konoe cabinet and Matsuoka as Foreign Minister, new interest was shown in a Tripartite Pact with Germany aimed at keeping the United States out of the war. The decision to form a definite alliance with Germany came on July 20, 1940 when it was urged that Japan must take advantage of Germany's victories by expanding south and establishing her own new order in East Asia.

The Tripartite Pact, which was mainly the work of Matsuoka, was the logical culmination of an approachment between Germany and Japan in as much as it gave both nations a free hand in carrying out their policies of expansion and aggression. The pact was a very short-lived agreement; neither Germany nor Japan were willing to make any sacrifices for the sake of the new partnership. It was based on mutual distrust and a desire of each to draw advantage from the other. Only one year after its signing, Germany attacked the Soviet Union without prior consultation with her partner; while Japan attacked America the same year without informing Germany in advance. Both powers only thought of their respective territorial interests; Hitler wanted America to become involved in the Pacific not Europe, and Japan only wanted to move south into the unprotected colonial possessions now that the time was ripe and showed no interest in aiding Germany against the Soviet Union. In fact, the period in which the pact was in effect could be termed that in which the lack of cooperation between the two parties reached its zenith.

The pact, signed on September 27, 1940 consisted, in brief, of the following: Japan recognized the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe. Germany and Italy extended the same recognition to Japan's predatory rights in Asia. The signatories of the pact pledged to assist one another by a political, economical and military means if one of them should be attacked by the United States. An addendum of secret protocols left Japan free to decide for herself what would constitute such an attack.

The Tripartite Pact, however, was in no way a success. It failed to bring the Soviet Union into line, it failed to bring an end to the war in China, and it failed to awe the United States by its prospects of German-Japanese solidarity. When this realization dawned on the Japanese, fervent efforts were made to improve Russo-Japanese relations which took the form of Matsuoka travelling to Moscow

14. *ibid* No. 6.

15. Hiranuma termed the sudden switch in German diplomacy as "intricate and baffling".

for talks with Stalin and Molotov on “fundamental problems in Soviet-Japanese relations”.

Obviously the Japanese also wanted a non-aggression pact with Russia so as to protect her rear when she moved south into the Indies and, to attain this goal, she was willing to relinquish the Japanese oil and coal rights in the Russian half of Sakhalin and to promise Stalin that Japan would not aid Germany in any future war against the U.S.S.R.

The Soviet-Japanese Non-Aggression Pact was signed by Stalin and Matsuoka on April 13, 1941, just two months later, on June 21, Operation Barbarossa went into effect. And, following that, in December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour.

In general, German-Japanese relations between 1933 – 1941 were governed only by narrow considerations of power politics on the part of both nations. Having waited for years to establish their private spheres of influence, neither Germany nor Japan could see the necessity of aiding each other to bring it about. The reasons for this lack of coordination are many and varied therefore, I will try to point out the most obvious.

Distance was certainly a factor hampering collective action. Before World War II the sea routes were open between the two countries but, after 1939 and especially after 1941, all regular sea and land routes were closed to both Germany and Japan. This lack of contact affected German-Japanese cooperation in other ways. The Japanese High Command was vitally interested in obtaining military equipment from Germany while, on the other hand, Germany desperately needed raw materials from the Far East. Although commercial treaties were concluded between the two countries, little opportunity was found to put them into effect for the reasons stated above. True, some blockade runners succeeded in reaching Japan but by 1943 their losses were running as high as seventy percent.¹⁶

In the Russian theatre of war, an area where Germany and Japan would have been able to coordinate their strategies, the Germans were hampered by the fact that Japan was not at war with the Soviet Union and further, that the Japanese were carrying out negotiations for a meditated peace between the two belligerents.¹⁷ Hitler was determined to destroy the Soviets and, especially after the first German reverses, would not hear of peace. In fact he considered Japanese negotiations misplaced and showing a lack of confidence in an ally. For Hitler, it would have been better if Japan had joined Germany in her struggle against the Soviets. But just as Hitler had no intention of ending the war in Russia, the Japanese had no inclination to begin one.

There were, of course, elements common to both countries. Both Germany and Japan were politically isolated after their withdrawal from the League of Nations. Both were bent on expansionist policies at the expense of the Soviet Union. Both shared a common dislike for communism and democratic procedures. Both were the two greatest “have-not” nations of Europe and Asia; overpopulated, poor in raw materials and dependent on overseas markets. Both

16. It was suggested that submarines be used to run the blockade but, even if they were successful, they could not hope to carry the necessary tonnage that surface vessels could.

17. Japanese meditations were carried out with an eye to the future. With the possible defeat of Germany the Soviets would more than likely turn their interests toward Manchuria.

had unbounded confidence in their "mission" and their destinies. In spite of all these similarities, the diplomacies of Germany and Japan were carried out on a plane almost completely independent from each other.

APPENDIX

THE GERMAN-JAPANESE AGREEMENT AGAINST THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

I

The Government of the German Reich and the Imperial Japanese Government, recognizing that the aim of the Communist International, known as the Comintern, is to subdue and disintegrate existing States by all means at its command; convinced that the toleration of interference by the Communist International in the internal affairs of the nations not only endangers their internal peace and social well being; but is also a menace to the peace of the world; desirous of cooperating in the defense against Communist subversion; have agreed as follow:

Article I

The High Contracting States agree to inform one another of the activities of the Communist International, to consult one another on the necessary preventive measures and to carry these through in close collaboration.

Article II

The High Contracting Parties will jointly invite third States whose internal peace is threatened by the subversive activities of the Communist International to adopt defensive measures in the spirit of this agreement or to take part in the present agreement.

Article III

The German as well as the Japanese text of the present agreement is to be deemed the original text. It comes into force on the day of signature and shall remain in force for a period of five years. Before the expiry of this period the High Contracting Parties will come to an understanding over the future methods of their cooperation.

In witness thereof, etc.,

Berlin, November 25, 1936

von Ribbentrop
Mushakoji

II

(Supplementary Protocol)

On the occasion of the signing today of the agreement against the Communist International, the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have agreed as follows:

a) The competent authorities of the two High Contracting States will work in close collaboration in matters concerning the exchange of information over the activities of the Communist International as well as investigatory and defensive measures against the Communist International.

b) The competent authorities of the two High Contracting States will within the framework of the existing law take severe measure against those who at home and abroad are engaged directly or indirectly in the service of the Communist International or promote its subversive activities.

c) In order to facilitate the cooperation of the competent authorities provided for in paragraph (a), a permanent committee will be set up. In this committee the further defensive measures necessary for the struggle against the subversive activities of the Communist International will be considered and discussed.

von Ribbentrop
Mushakoji

III

TEXT OF THE SECRET ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE GERMAN-JAPANESE AGREEMENT

The Government of the German Reich and the Imperial Japanese Government, recognizing that the Government of the U.S.S.R. is working toward a realization of the aims of the Communist International and intends to employ its army for this purpose; convinced that this fact not only threatens the existence of the High Contracting States, but endangers world peace most seriously, in order to safeguard their common interests have agreed as follows:

Article I

Should one of the High Contracting States become the object of an unprovoked attack or threat of attack by the U.S.S.R., the other High Contracting State obligates itself to take no measures which would tend to ease the situation of the U.S.S.R. Should the case described in paragraph 1 occur, the High Contracting States will immediately consult on what measures to take to safeguard their common interests.

Article II

For the duration of the present agreement the High Contracting States will conclude no political treaties with the U.S.S.R. contrary to the spirit of this agreement without mutual consent.

Article III

The German as well as the Japanese text of the present agreement is to be deemed the original text. The agreement comes into force simultaneously with the agreement against the Communist International signed today and will remain in force for the same period.

In witness thereof, etc.,

Berlin, November 25, 1936

von Ribbentrop
Mushakoji

THE THREE-POWER PACT BETWEEN GERMANY, JAPAN AND ITALY

The Governments of Germany, Italy and Japan consider it the prerequisite of a lasting peace that every nation in the world shall receive the space to which it is entitled. They have, therefore, decided to stand by and cooperate with one another in their efforts in the Greater East Asia and the regions of Europe respectively. In doing this it is their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things, calculated to promote the mutual prosperity and welfare of the people concerned.

It is, furthermore, the desire of the three governments to extend cooperation to the nations in other spheres of the world who are inclined to direct their efforts along similar lines to their own for the purpose of realizing their ultimate objective, world peace.

Accordingly, the Government of Germany, Italy and Japan have agreed as follows:

Article I

Japan recognizes and respects the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe.

Article II

Germany and Italy recognize and respect the leadership of Japan in the establishment of a new order in Greater East Asia.

Article III

Germany, Italy and Japan agree to cooperate in their efforts on aforesaid lines. They further undertake to assist one another with all political, economic and military means should one of the three Contracting Powers be attacked by a Power at present not involved in the European War or in the Chinese-Japanese conflict.

Article IV

With the view of implementing the present pact, joint technical commissions, to be appointed by the respective Governments of Germany, Italy and Japan, will meet without delay.

Article V

Germany, Japan and Italy affirm that the above agreement affects in no way the political status existing between each of the three Contracting Parties and Soviet Russia.

Article VI

The present pact shall become valid immediately upon signature and shall remain in force for ten years from the date on which it becomes effective. In due time, before expiration of the said term, the High Contracting Parties shall, at the request of any of them, enter into negotiations for its renewal.

In resignation thereof, etc.,

Berlin the 27th day of September, 1940

von Ribbentrop
Ciano
Kurusu