

ABSTRACT
ACCOMMODATORS IN A TIME OF WAR:
THE JAPAN CONNECTION'S ATTEMPTS TO AVERT A
JAPANESE-AMERICAN WAR,
1937-1941

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The "Japan Connection" consisted of the experts on Japan in the United States Department of State and Foreign Service who consistently advocated American-Japanese cooperation between 1929 and 1952. Their ranks included William Castle, Joseph Grew, Hugh Wilson, Jay Pierrepont Moffat, Eugene Dooman, and Joseph Ballantine. From 1929 to 1952, these American diplomats insisted that cooperation between the United States and Japan would block Soviet expansion, stabilize East Asian relations, and obviate the need for American globalism.

After limiting the American response to Japan's aggression in Manchuria (1931 to 1933), the Japan Connection struggled from 1937 to 1941 to prevent a Japanese-American war. In 1937, Grew, Dooman, Moffat, Wilson, and Castle successfully urged restraint in response to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. By 1941, however, the national and international contexts of power had shifted to cause the elimination of the Japan Connection's influence. Despite frenzied efforts, these American diplomats failed to produce a Japanese-American rapprochement before the disaster at Pearl Harbor. A comparison of 1937 and 1941 demonstrates the Japan Connection's declining role in shaping America's Japan policy.

During this period of escalating Japanese-American tensions, Grew emerged as the most influential member of the Japan Connection. As the American Ambassador in Japan, Grew depended on fellow members of the Japan Connection in Washington to argue for his recommendations. In 1937, Moffat and Wilson supported Grew within the Department of State, while Dooman worked with the Ambassador in Japan and Castle helped as an "informed outsider" in Washington, D.C. Although Ballantine served in the State Department in 1937, he hesitates until 1941 to disagree with his strong-minded superior, Stanley Hornbeck. By 1941, the Japan Connection had lost its strong base within the Department, and its members failed to reverse the increasingly anti-Japanese nature of American foreign policy.