

Axis Diplomacy in Comparison: The Japanese and Italian Foreign Ministry in the 1930s¹

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The conventional wisdom about the Tripartite Alliance between Italy, Germany and Japan was that the decision-makers of these three countries shared their sense of international isolation. The three Axis powers lacked not only the united ideology but also common interests, and therefore the substance of the alliance was very hollow.² However, it must also be said that there are relatively few works that examine this conventional wisdom through detailed comparative analyses of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and ultranationalist Japan, and as a result, there is a tendency for the historians to accept it uncritically.³ This article is intended to tackle this shortcoming of historiography by offering an analysis from comparative perspective. It will concentrate on examining the commonalities and differences between Italy and Japan, specifically on the role of diplomats and foreign ministries in diplomatic policy-making process of respective nations.

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² ken ishida, "the german-japanese-italian axis as seen from fascist italy," ed. by kudo akira, tajima nobuo and erich pauer, *japan and germany: two latecomers to the world stage, 1890-1945*. vol. ii: *the pluralistic dynamic of the formation of the axis*, (folkestone: global oriental ltd, 2009), pp. 262-301.

³ Some of the few works that make a comparative analysis among these three nations are; Paul Brooker, *The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Bernd Martin, *Japan and Germany in the Modern World*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995); MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Aristotle A. Kallis, *Fascist Ideology: Territory and Expansionism in Italy and Germany, 1922-1945*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

This article will focus on this theme because, first, despite the fact that there are some works that conduct comparative analyses of the Tripartite nations, those few works that make such attempts usually revolve around the Italo-German or German-Japanese comparison, and there are almost no work that make such an attempt between Italy and Japan. Second, this article will focus on the importance of diplomats and senior officials in foreign ministries, because there also is a conventional wisdom surrounding the diplomatic policy-making process of Axis countries that it was the Nazis, Fascists and ultra-nationalists that pushed their countries towards adopting reckless and aggressive foreign policies, despite strong objections from moderate and rational state officials in the foreign ministries. This conventional wisdom is also a relatively unchallenged one, and therefore is worth close examination.

After a close analysis, it becomes clear that while it is undeniable that the countries had little in common, these three countries shared a common structural feature which weakened the check-and-balance mechanism of the state and therefore enabled the regimes to put aggressive foreign policies into effect. Also, while there are many historians who have hitherto emphasized the importance of the differences of opinions between the regimes of these three countries and their subordinate veteran diplomats - who are often seen as being more moderate and realistic - this article will argue that the individuals within decision-making circle of these countries shared certain worldviews which encouraged the decision-makers to adopt aggressive policies as they did during the 1930s.

FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

This section will make a comparative examination on foreign policy-making structures between Italy and Japan in the 1930s. In order to highlight the commonalities and differences between these two countries, it is better to juxtapose them with the system of other countries as well. For this purpose, this section will offer brief analyses of the decision-making structures of Britain and Germany. By comparing the Italian and the Japanese diplomatic decision-making with that of Britain, it could differentiate between the “democratic” system from the “fascist” one, and by comparing them with Germany’s, it would bring the difference among the three Axis powers into prominence.⁴

In the British foreign policy decision-making process, the Cabinet, the Foreign Office, the Parliament and public opinion all took part in the tug of war. Besides particularly in Britain, Foreign Office played a more independent role

⁴For more detailed analyses in Japanese, using the same figure, see Ken Ishida, *Nichidokui Sangoku Doumei no Kigen (The Origins of the Tripartite Alliance: Axis Diplomacy Seen from Italy and Japan)*, (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2013), pp. 9-13.

in the diplomatic decision-making process and casted very strong influence in providing the basic line of policy than in other democratic countries such as the United State and France. However, the individuals who had the ultimate authority to make the governmental decision-making were not the bureaucrats but the Cabinet ministers. Every minister was important; even Neville Chamberlain, who was eager to act on his own initiative, could not ignore political opinions raised by other ministers and risk the breakdown. And since these ministers were elected politicians, they could not remain indifferent about the argument of the oppositions and public opinion, which were expressed in the Parliament and the press. There were multiple actors that determined the democratic British foreign policy-making process.

Nazi *Führerprinzip* drew a sharp contrast with the British decision-making process. The German political structure was more top-down type, and Hitler's influence was very dominant, especially after he ruthlessly purged the party member in 1934. Hitler exercised firm control over certain fields of foreign policy which he was interested in, such as *Anschluß* and *Drang nach Osten*. It is true that the Nazi ideology did not totally penetrate into the Foreign Ministry and the Military, whose institutional positions were said to be preserved, and the coercive order did not necessarily destroy the German bureaucratic autonomy; there are some historians who argue against Hitler's "program" theory from a pluralistic point of view.⁵ Nonetheless, there clearly was a hierarchical decision-making structure, in which Hitler reigned at the top, and this structure was not shaken completely until the end of the regime.

As the Fascist party imposed dictatorship in Italy, it is tempting to assume that the Italian political structure under its rule was similar to that of Nazi Germany. However, Mussolini did not cast as overwhelming influence as Hitler did, and neither could he subject the entire political structure under a reign of terror. He was more like a coordinator amongst the military led by the King, the Foreign Ministry and the Fascist Party. Fascists were eager to preside over every state institution, and made more determined effort to subject military than the Nazis, but they were not very successful. On the other hand, the newly appointed Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law who had stationed in China as a diplomat, could single out his friends for preferential posts. Such a personification of politics and arbitrary decision-making were typical in the Fascist regime; and therefore, Mussolini chose a policy in the fluid manner according to internal and external situation without a certain principle. At one point in the late 1930s, he

⁵ Wolfgang Schieder and Christof Dipper (Hrsg.), *Der Spanische Bürgerkrieg in der internationalen Politik (1936-1939)*, (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1976). Wolfgang Michalka, *Ribbentrop und die deutsche Weltpolitik 1933-1940*, (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1980).

was dreaming to act as a mediator between Nazi Germany and the West while invading Ethiopia and interfering the Spanish Civil War.

Japanese system was also a dictatorial one, with the divine monarch on top of it. Notwithstanding, what was unique about the Japanese political structure was that the “Imperial Court group” functioned as a buffer zone making the Emperor to evade his political responsibility by hiding him behind the structure similar to a cone without the vertex. Since even the godlike Emperor did not display the leadership of the country, the massive “system of irresponsibility” created “submission to *faits accomplis* and refuge in one’s competence and jurisdiction.”⁶ As a result, Japanese foreign policy-making process became heavily influenced by intense factional rivalry between the Foreign Ministry, the Navy and the Army. The rivalry was so fierce that there was an occasion that German naval attaché unexpectedly had to mediate between the Army and the Navy, because they were quarrelling so fiercely.⁷ Incapable of controlling the situation, the government and the Foreign Ministry was powerless when the junior rank military officers started to take the diplomatic affairs in their own hands in the 1930s, and could only follow the aggressive policies which were forcibly accomplished by their subordinates and the lower rank officers during the 1930s.

Thus, the foreign policy decision-making structures of the Axis countries did not have a check-and-balance function that could limit the explosive aggression like the British model. Despite the difference of ideology, interests and the way of choosing foreign policies, it is worth extracting common elements of the Japanese and Italian Foreign Ministries in order to analyze their Axis diplomacy. They shared the worldview of anti-communism which did not only mean anti-Comintern and anti-Soviet Union but also was considered convenient in arousing hostility against certain political targets such as Kuomintang government, Spanish Popular Front and the League of Nations, because anti-communism as an ideology was much less systematic than communism. The diplomats of Japan and Italy were also influenced by a sense of international isolation, and sense of vulnerability made them desire that they could clearly distinguish friend from foe.

THE INITIATIVE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

Both the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy encountered turning points, first in 1932 and then in 1936. In Japan, Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai was assassinated in the May 15 Incident in 1932, and from this moment the Japanese politics made a decisive turn from the previous trend in which the final authority of the

⁶ Masao Maruyama, *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, expanded ed. Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 103, 128.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 87.

decision-making were laid in the hands of the cabinet formed by elected politicians. As a consequence, the Foreign Ministry began to enjoy freedom from “the noise” of political parties. Under such an environment, the new Foreign Minister Koki Hirota, thirteen years younger than his predecessor, took the initiative in carrying out the new foreign policy with Vice-Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, active realist who could also become a hard-liner. After observing the Army attempting to detach Northern China and the Navy withdrawing from the Naval Conference, the Foreign Ministry also took initiative in establishing the hegemony over East Asia, after they left the League of Nations in 1933 due to the Manchurian Incident two years prior. Whereas the Italian diplomats initially tried to legitimize their invasion against Ethiopia within the League of Nations, Shigemitsu was more openly critical to the League, saying that Japan had right to create a regional order separate from the League after Japan’s withdrawal.⁸

In Italy, Mussolini replaced Dino Grandi as the Foreign Minister together with the purge of the other Fascist sub-leaders in 1932. Since the diplomats could now directly influence Mussolini as he became the Foreign Minister, they made attempts to control diplomatic policy-making process by secluding Mussolini from stubborn Fascists who were ignorant of world affairs. In the calculation of the diplomats, Mussolini could be easily affected by the people around him including the Fascist hawks, and therefore it was necessary to give him the real information from the diplomats. Meeting everyday with Mussolini, Vice-Minister Fulvio Suvich managed to persuade Mussolini that Fascist Italy should not approach Nazi Germany wholeheartedly throughout his Vice-Ministership from 1932 to 1936, since he was an advocate in favor of containing Germany. Other capable diplomats were also successful in making an impact on foreign policies. At the same time, they leaned on Mussolini who seemed to earn a place in the sun by building up a new empire.⁹

As the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy regained their influence in diplomatic policy-making process, they played active role in their respective countries carrying out aggressive expansion into China and Ethiopia. Diplomats could cooperate with the hard-liners as long as the Western countries were not totally opposed to their military attempts, and in particular both the Japanese and the Italians shared a consensus that they should avoid total military confrontation

⁸ Kenkichi Yoshizawa, *Gaiko Rokuju-nen (Sixty Years of Diplomacy)*, (Tokyo: Jiyu Ajia-sha, 1958), pp. 86-87, 145-157. Mamoru Shigemitsu, *Japan and Her Destiny: My Struggle for Peace*, (London: Hutchinson, 1958), pp. 27, 72, 82. Tetsuya Sakai, *Taisho Demokurashi no Hokai - Naisei to Gaiko (The Breakdown of the Taisho Democracy: Internal and External Politics)*, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1992), p. 52. JFMA (Japanese Foreign Ministry Archives), A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 3.

⁹ Dino Grandi, *Il mio paese. Ricordi autobiografici*, a cura di Renzo De Felice (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), pp. 271-272, 360. Fulvio Suvich, *Memorie, 1932-1936*, a cura di Gianfranco Bianchi, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1984), p. 4. TNA (The National Archives, Kew), FO 371/20418, R1724/458/22 (21/3/1936).

against Britain in the period from 1932 to 1936.¹⁰ Yakichiro Suma was one of examples of diplomats acting offensively. He was one of the most influential diplomats in China from 1932 to 1937, and he was able to utilize that influence to claim his share in any loan business to China after 1934. Suma treated China as Japan's preserve, started to classify all the Chinese politicians and foreign diplomats into whether if they were pro- and anti- Japanese, and became extremely arrogant and coercive towards those whom he classified as being anti-Japanese. Suma, calling the Kuomintang's anti-communist policy as being fake, sought even tougher measures against China than the Army.¹¹ The Italian equivalent of Suma would be Raffaele Guariglia, the Chief of the Department for Ethiopian Affairs from 1935 to 1936. He was obsessed with Ethiopia and rejected other offers by the West, such as Angola and the Cameroons, for Italian defeat in Adua in 1896 was a disgrace to his country. Consequently, Guariglia dreamed of a glorious victory in a war against Ethiopia, and represented himself as the "Africanist" whose passion for an Italian colonial empire was as definite as those of Fascists.¹²

Many diplomats who became senior officers of the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy were not always more moderate than ultra-nationalists and Fascists respectively. In Japan, one of scenarios that Shigemitsu seriously contemplated was to eliminate international control over China and purge unfavorable leaders from the Chinese government, so that the pro-Japanese leaders in China would be able to suppress the anti-Japanese movement "agitated" by the communist.¹³ In Italy, Suvich saw the Ethiopians as being nothing more than "barbarians"; therefore, he did not hesitate to use military intimidation against them. The only thing he was concerned was not to make the British and the French too upset, and he tried to strike some kind of a deal with these two countries through secret diplomacy for a colonial agreement.¹⁴

Shigemitsu and Suvich, both capable Vice-Ministers, also took advantage of the *faits accomplis* achieved by the hard-liners, particularly in 1935. While Shigemitsu

¹⁰ Hiroaki Shiozaki, *Kokunai Shintaisei wo Motomete (Seeking for New Domestic System: Radical Thoughts and Movements during the Inter-war Period)*, (Kyushu University Press, 1998), pp. 61-108. Ken Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats in the Ethiopian War: The Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process in Fascist Italy," *Hogaku Zasshi (Journal of Law and Politics)* of Osaka City University, Vol. 42, No. 4 (1996), 994-1004.

¹¹ TNA, FO371/18097, F2378/107/10 (26/4/1934); FO371/18098, F3252/107/10 (21/5/1934). JFMA, A. 1. 1. 0. 10, Vol. 8, Suma's report on 27 April 1936.

¹² Esmonde M. Robertson, *Mussolini as Empire-BUILDER: Europe and Africa, 1932-1936* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 14. DBFP (*Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*), 2-XIV (London: HMSO, 1976), No. 225. Raffaele Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922-1946*, (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1949), pp. 226-227, 259-261. Id. *Ambasciata in Spagna e primi passi in diplomazia*, a cura di Ruggero Moscati, (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1972), XII. George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 21-22.

¹³ Shin'ichi Kamimura, *Nihon Gaikoshi (Japanese Diplomatic History)*, Vol. 19: *Nikka Jihen (China-Japanese Incident)*, (Tokyo: Kajima Kenkyujo Shuppankai, 1971), pp. 84-88.

¹⁴ Suvich, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291. DBFP, 2-XIV, No. 330.

promoted the destruction of the Chinese Maritime Customs, utilizing Japanese occupation of North China, Suvich forced Ethiopia to surrender its sovereignty, threatening the war. Shigemitsu and Suvich were convinced of respective nation's superiority over the Chinese and the Ethiopians in racial terms, and justified their expansion by such logic.¹⁵ In contrast to the post-war memoirs of the diplomats, which assert that they opposed the military and Fascists throughout the 1930s, most diplomats were not completely against prosecuting aggressive foreign policies, as long as it was not done in a manner that would seriously offend the majority of the imperialist powers. Far from applying the brakes against aggressive expansionism, the foreign ministries of Japan and Italy had rendered indirect aid to the military expansion.

However, in 1936 the Japanese and the Italian foreign offices lost the influence that they regained four years prior. In Japan, the military galvanized the control of the state decision-making, including the foreign policy, after the February 26 Incident. Hirota was designated as the new Prime Minister, but both Hirota and his Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita were so powerless against the military that they could only take a makeshift measures. Arita attempted to prevent Japan from forming an alliance with Nazi Germany that would bind its destiny with that of the partner, but he could not prevent the signing of the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany in November 1936.¹⁶ Also in Italy, Ciano, who was appointed as the new Foreign Minister in May 1936, purged the veteran diplomats from the important posts in order to "fascitize" the ministry after the conquest of Ethiopia, and replaced them his acquaintances whose role was restricted to the bureaucratic rather than political field.¹⁶¹⁷ Suvich wrote a memorandum to Mussolini on 7 February 1936, arguing Italy must maintain good relationship with the League of Nations and the Western countries, even though he had once advised Mussolini to withdraw Italy from the League. After dismissal of Suvich in June 1936, diplomats including Guariglia reiterated the argument of their former vice-minister and also maintained that the relationship with Britain ought to be improved.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ken Ishida, "Racisms compared: Fascist Italy and ultra-nationalist Japan," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2002).

¹⁶ Teijiro Yamamoto, *Arita Hachiro no Shogai (The Life of Hachiro Arita)*, (Kokodo Shoten, 1988), p. 140. Satoshi Hattori, "Arita Hachiro Gaisho to 'Toa Shin-Chitsujo' (Foreign Minister Hachiro Arita and 'the New Order in East Asia')," in *Senkanki no Higashi Ajia Kokusai Seijishi (International History in East Asia during the Interwar Period)*, ed. Ryuji Hattori, Akio Tsuchida and Harumi Goto (Chuo University Press, 2007), pp. 501, 505-511. Politisches Archiv des Auswartigen Amt, Berlin, R85841, J. Nr. 233 (22/1/1934).

¹⁷ Giordano Bruno Guerri, *Galeazzo Ciano*, (Milano: Bompiani, 1985), p. 100. Alan Cassels, compiled & ed., *Italian Foreign Policy 1918-1945: A Guide to Research and Research Materials*, (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1981), p. 17.

¹⁸ Suvich, *op. cit.*, p. 280. Renato Mori, *Mussolini e la conquista dell'Etiopia*, (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1978), p. 247. ASMAE (Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero Affari Esteri, Roma), Fondo Gabinetto, Carte Lancelotti (FGCL), F9-15, B14, Appunto del Sottoseg. Suvich per il Capo

Nonetheless, both Mussolini and Ciano ignored their arguments. The foreign ministries of Japan and Italy could no longer curtail their governments, former dominated by the military and latter under heavy influence of overconfident Mussolini and ambitious Ciano.

ITALIAN INTERVENTION IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND JAPANESE ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST CHINA

Losing the initiative in 1936, foreign ministries of Italy and Japan could only watch their aggressive wars turning into prolonged campaigns. Italy and Japan passed the point of no return after the former had intervened into the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 and the latter had begun the all-out war against China in July 1937. Since many diplomats in Italy and Japan agreed with the attempts of their respective governments to establish the anti-communist world order, they did not vociferously oppose a massive military escalation. The two wars had several characteristics in common. First, the war planners thought they could win in a short-term, but the attempt of quick victory ended in failure. Second, even after reaching a stalemate, they could not cut short the operation in order to avoid aggravating the international situation. Third, the military escalation resulted in both countries making a decision to set the first precedents of massive indiscriminate bombing in modern history in cities such as Guernica and Shanghai.

Since Italy and Japan decided to carry out large-scale air raids, these two countries started to contact each other for deals on military aircraft purchase. One year and a half later from the Guernica bombing, the Japanese Military used ten Italian FIAT bombers (BR20) together with their Japanese twelve bombers to attack Chongqing in December 1938. BR20 was also engaged in the bombing of Spanish cities with German aircrafts during the same period; there is a record that in late-1938 BR20s were intercepted in Madrid and Chungking, the capitals of the nations which laid in the two extremes of Eurasian continent, and they were caught coincidentally by the Soviet fighters of the same model.¹⁹ By this time, it became apparent that the decision-making process in Italy and Japan had changed, as the normal channels were no longer frequently used for diplomatic negotiations especially between the Axis powers. In December 1939, Ryoichi Sasagawa, the ultra-nationalist party leader, acted as the messenger of the Japanese War Minister, and informed the Italian Air Minister about the performance of

del Gov. (June?/1935), (9/8/1935). *Ibid.*, B15, Appunto del Sottoseg. Suvich per il Capo del Gov. (20/12/1935).

¹⁹Tetsuo Maeda, *Senryaku Bakugeki no Shiso (The Thought of Strategical Bombing: The Road to Guernica, Chongqing and Hiroshima)*, (Asahi Shinbunsha, 1988), pp. 89-90.

Italian shrapnel used in the air attack in China. Simultaneously Sasagawa even negotiated the purchase of aircrafts.²⁰

As discussed in the previous section, diplomats of Italy and Japan took part in the project driving their nations towards adopting aggressive policies before 1936. Before becoming the Chief of the Ethiopian Affairs, Guariglia served as the Ambassador to Spain from August 1932. At this time, the Italian Foreign Ministry was anxious that secret treaty between France and Spain, which would allow the French to occupy the Balearic Islands and let the French North African troops to pass the Spanish soil in wartime, might be concluded. The Fascist government also felt nervous about the network of anti-Fascist refugees in the Spanish Republic and France, making “red conspiracy” against Italy. Ambitious Air Minister Italo Balbo also suggested Mussolini that Italy should seize Melilla in Spanish Morocco for the sake of Italian presence in the Western Mediterranean. After receiving these advises, Mussolini instructed Guariglia to support the anti-Republican plot in Spain and to estrange Spain from France. Guariglia was one of the individuals who took initiative in organizing Fascist propaganda and adopting anti-French policies.²¹

In the summer of 1933, Guariglia arranged José Antonio Primo de Rivera’s visit to Rome so that Fascism could have a significant impact on Falange. In the autumn of that year, Guariglia also invited José Calvo Sotelo to fix up military uprising against the Spanish government. Under the auspices of Balbo’s initiative, the Italian government started to support the Falange in 1934, although it avoided sending the weapons until the outbreak of revolt in 1936. Guariglia too was heavily involved with the Falange members organizing a plot. While he did not oppose the monarchist orientation of the Spanish conservatives, he advised the Spanish not to consider the old fashioned coup d’état of pronunciamiento type, which Mussolini severely criticized for its obsolete method in 1932. Guariglia’s extraordinary eagerness to increase Italian influence on Spain over that of other Western nations sometimes got ahead of Mussolini’s wishes towards Spain, which often was capricious. Since Mussolini was rather eager to diminish the French influence than to overthrow the Spanish Republic at that moment, he recalled

²⁰ ASMAE, AP(Affari Politici) Italia, B50, F4, Telegr. 1659 (19/3/1938). Galeazzo Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, a cura di Renzo De Felice, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1980), p. 71. ASMAE, AP Giappone, B27, F7, Telespr. 238786 (18/11/1938); Telespr. 245150 (26/12/1939). *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun*, 22/12/1939.

²¹ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce, vol. 2: Lo Stato totalitario 1936-1940*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1974), p. 361. C. G. Segre, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 343. NA (National Archives, Washington, D. C.), T586/468, 035602-3. Guariglia, *Ricordi, 1922-1946*, pp. 193-199. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna*, pp. 265-266, 291-292, 302.

Guariglia to make him the Chief of the Department of Ethiopian Affairs in 1935. Mussolini did not insist on sticking to the organized reactionary connection.²²

Guariglia's actions were all based under the calculation that the British government could consent to his policies which were intended to create a network against communists. He also believed that the Italian invasion to Ethiopia was compatible with the interest of the British Empire. However, Mussolini considered diplomats only as his tool and reshuffled their roles, and began refusing *rapprochement* to Britain. As Foreign Minister Ciano selected his friends instead of experienced staff for the important posts, the pretended "Vice-Duce" accelerated personification of diplomacy. In consequence of ministry's "fascistization", Guariglia was appointed abroad as ambassador, and did not return to Rome until Mussolini was arrested in July 1943. He became Foreign Minister of Mussolini's successor, Pietro Badoglio, but was not considered to be the important individual in the regime. Guariglia told Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister, that Italy's foreign policy was unchanged in August, and Guariglia was left behind when the King and Badoglio escaped from Rome in September 1943. In the end, he had to seek protection of the Spanish Embassy in Rome against the German captivity. He became the Senator of National Monarchic Party after the war.²³

Turning to the Japanese side of the story, Suma, who by the late-1930s was one of the most notorious Japanese diplomats in China, was appointed as consul general at Nanking immediately after the assumption of Hirota's foreign ministry, indicating that the Japanese Foreign Ministry was becoming increasingly coercive towards China. Suma actively negotiated with the Kuomintang government, which aimed at excluding Western interference. While he held positive remarks to the Chinese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tang Yu-jen, for his work at the risk of his life, that did not prevent Suma from taking high-handed manner to Tang in June 1934 concerning the case of a missing Japanese diplomat who had disappeared for purely personal reasons. Suma also took a blatantly heavy-handed attitude on raising the Japanese legation in China to an embassy in May 1935.²⁴

Not every one of the Japanese diplomats were as hardliner as Suma, but not too many of them, including Shigemitsu, opposed to his policy itself. They were

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 302-324. Id., *Ricordi*, pp. 189-190, 193-196, 202-206. John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*, (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 41-42, 45, 48, 51-60. ASMAE, FGCL, Ufficio di Coordinamento, B9, F37-45, G44, F1, Verbale della Riunione tenuta a Palazzo Venezia, 31/3/1934. NA, T586/1295, 112744-5.

²³ Guariglia, *Ricordi*, pp. 193-199, 202-206, 617. Id., *Ambasciata in Spagna*, pp. 265-266, 291-292, 302-324, 321-323. Coverdale, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 48, 53. Ishida, "Mussolini and Diplomats", 994. Id., *Chichukai Shin-Roma Teikoku eno Michi (The Road to the New Roman Empire in the Mediterranean: The Foreign Policy of Fascist Italy, 1935-1939)*, (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994), p. 35.

²⁴ Yakichiro Suma, *Gaiko Hiroku (Secret Observations on Diplomacy)*, (Tokyo: Shoko-Zaimu Kyokai, 1956) pp. 7-9, 27-30. Shigeharu Matsumoto, *Shanghai Jidai (Shanghai Interlude)*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chuo

alarmed when the Leith-Ross mission from Britain reached China in 1935, fearing that this was an attempt by the British to occupy the Chinese “financial heart”.²⁵ As a matter of fact, Shigemitsu did resemble Suma as he behaved quite paternalistically towards China, for the Foreign Ministry was already carved also by the financial-economic circle which had a strong avidity for expansion. Shigemitsu was left with little option, as many actors in the Chinese field took a hard-line approach and became inclined to protect *faits accomplis* that the military had gained.²⁶

Suma perceived the Chinese as being unfaithful and opportunistic, and therefore he continued to treat them arrogantly. Suma even justified Japanese smuggling as a means to lower the Chinese tariff. The pro-Axis diplomats often supported the idea of the military to solve the problem through use of force. Irresponsible ultra-nationalists repeatedly drove foreign policy into aggressive direction, acting as the mediator of the nation-state whose decision-making process was marred by factional strives. They brought their nation to challenge the British more openly than before. Also, *faits accomplis* that the military had presented to them after partial victories in the Chinese battlefields were too attractive for the Foreign Ministry to reject. Suma became counselor to the Japanese Embassy in the United States in 1937, the Director of Information in the Japanese Foreign Ministry in 1939 and finally the Minister to Spain in 1940. Suma was arrested as war criminal after the war but not prosecuted in 1948, and was later elected to the Parliament.^{*2627}

There are three features that these two diplomats had in common. First, Guariglia and Suma were as aggressive as Fascists and ultra-nationalists, since they respectively considered Spain and China as inferior to Italy and to Japan. Second, they both rationalized their interference in Spain and in China by the simple expedient of anti-communism at the early stage. Third, while the military intervention was intended for immediate overthrow of Spanish and Chinese governments, which they presumed to be contaminated by “reds”, the diplomats no longer ruled out the option of confronting Britain to accomplish their objectives. Guariglia and Suma were conspicuous, but was not anomalous as diplomats in their countries in the late-1930s. In fact, both of them played new political roles in

Koron-sha, 1974), pp. 247-249. Jie Liu “‘Chugoku-tsu’ Gaikokan to Gaimusho no Chugoku Seisaku (The Japanese Foreign Ministry’s ‘China Experts’ and Their Policy towards China, 1935-1937),” in *Nichu Senso no Shoso (New Perspectives on the Sino-Japanese War after Sixty Years)*, ed. Gunjishi Gakkai (Tokyo: Kinseisha, 1997), p. 104. Shigeaki Uno, “Hirota Koki no Taika-seisaku to Sho Kaiseki (Koki Hirota’s Policies towards China and Chiang Kai-shek),” *Kokusai Seiji (International Politics)*, 56 (1976), 38-39.

²⁵ Suma, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

²⁶ Tomoki Takeda, *Shigemitsu Mamoru to Sengo Seiji (Mamoru Shigemitsu and Postwar Politics)*, (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2002), pp. 108-111.

²⁷ Suma, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-189. Ciano, *Diario*, pp. 54, 71, 224.

their parliaments even after the war, since their pre-war activities were not regarded as total deviation from “normal” foreign policies based on national interests.

It is often said that there is a great cultural diversity between the Western and non-Western nations. However, Italy and Japan, which were the component of the Axis in the 1930s, did have significant common features in their foreign policies although there were some structural differences in decision-making process. Diplomats in these countries acted in the name of anti-communism and regional hegemony, and assumed that they were racially superior to the people of the country that they intervened. Whilst diplomats of Italy and Japan both initially tried to avoid total confrontation against Britain, their aggressive foreign policies resulted in gradually marginalizing themselves from the collective system of the League of Nations, and eventually European great powers began refusing negotiations for imperial bargaining with them. After a close analysis of the archival materials of the foreign ministries of these two countries suggest that the conventional wisdom that diplomats of these countries attempted to restrain the Fascists and ultra-nationalists from adopting aggressive diplomatic policies is questionable and often misguided. More research is necessary to shed light on the responsibility of the foreign offices of these two countries in driving their respective nations towards reckless and aggressive wars.