SOURCES IN CHINESE HISTORY
Diverse Perspectives from 1644 to the Present

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1) JAPANESE ASSERTION THAT CHINA IS NOT AN ORGANIZED STATE (1932)

2) PRINCIPLES FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF "MANCHUKUO" (1932)

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9.1 JAPANESE ASSERTION THAT CHINA IS NOT AN ORGANIZED STATE (FEBRUARY 19, 1932)

In their statement before the League of Nations general assembly, Japan defended their actions in Manchukuo by principally asserting that China's chaotic political situation necessitated such a step. Japan claimed that without its intervention the entire region could become destabilized, endangering all of Northeast Asia, including Japan and their Korean colony, hence their actions were purely self-preservation. Few nations failed to see through Japan's incongruent claim, below, that twelve years earlier (in 1921) at the height of warlord control, China was more stable than under the Nanjing regime. There was no acknowledgement that many of Japan's earlier interventions (e.g., military maneuvers, loans to warlords, etc.) fueled such "anarchy."

The preamble to the Covenant of the League specifies distinctly that the Covenant applies to organized peoples. It regulates the relations between such peoples. I am obliged to state that in the Far East we have to deal with a country—I regret to have to say so, but it is the truth—which has for more than ten years been in a state of civil war, in a condition of complete chaos and incredible anarchy.

Such are the circumstances in which difficulties arose between Japan and China. Had such difficulties arisen in another country which had a properly organized and efficient administration, our action would have been different. There would have been no need for us to go to the point we have reached now. We would have accepted any peaceful settlement of the dispute. We could have observed literally the provisions of the Covenant.

China was admitted to membership of the League twelve years ago because she was regarded as an organized country with a regular administration. It was in that capacity that she was admitted. Events, however, have brought about a complete change in China. There have been wars between the Chinese generals and this has led to a state of complete anarchy, with the result that the rights and interests of foreigners ensuant from various treaties and conventions have ceased to be protected. That is why the countries with interests in China have been compelled to employ methods which would not have been permitted if the same difficulties had occurred elsewhere in a really organized country. We do not lack precedents in this connection. Our position is similar to that in which several Powers have found themselves in the last few years. We are obliged to take the protection of the lives and rights of our nationals into our own hands. If the use of a method of legitimate defense, or protection, was admitted and recognized as permissible for one Power a few years ago, Japan can claim the same right today. If we are censured for having committed acts of aggression, similar acts should have been censured when committed by certain other Powers having interests by China. If the Council censures the acts of hostility committed by Japan, it must first tell us what view it takes of similar acts we all have in mind that took place previously. All that is the outcome of the circumstances now existing in China. Had the position been normal in China, the Powers which in the past had recourse to extreme measures would not have done so. They would not have found it necessary to do so. They would have appealed to the League Council to settle their dispute by pacific and regular methods. The fact that they were unable to do so proves that the League—and the Council in particular—could not, as would have been natural and normal in other circumstances, apply the Covenant to its full extent and in accordance with the strict interpretation of its wording.

Japan today is under the same imperious necessity. It is solely to protect our interests that we have had to act as we have done.
9.2 PRINCIPLES FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE "MANCHUKUO" GOVERNMENT (1932)

As international pressure increased, Japan sought to justify its dominant economic, political, and military power within the newly established Manchukuo state. The League of Nations, as part of its investigation into China's charges against Japan, asked Japan to provide statements explicating its presence in Manchuria. The following document is Japan's own portrayal of its role in Manchukuo and justifying why Japanese oversight was needed in the region. It must be acknowledged that Japan's actions in Manchuria were quite successful, though not popular with the members of League of Nations. Between 1931 and 1945 nearly 500,000 Japanese immigrated to Manchuria, with most of them working as farmers in the region's fertile farmland. It was not just the Japanese who were attracted to Manchukuo, Japanese-Americans, frustrated with the limited opportunities in pre-war America, immigrated to Manchuria in substantial numbers. The ease with which Japan gained control of Manchukuo, and its subsequent economic success, led Japan to use it as a model for subsequent puppet states in China and Asia.

Questions:
1. Japan suggests that Manchukuo is an independent state. Which aspects in the following list support that claim?
2. What elements suggest that Japan is not simply interested in protecting Manchukuo from potential external threats?

1. Japan, with a view to maintaining and developing her rights in Manchuria, shall establish organs, to direct the affairs of the "Manchukuo." The organ shall, in addition, be given sufficient power so that the new state may rely upon the Japanese for guidance and follow the lines of development as laid down by Japan who, on her side, shall exercise her control with sincerity and goodwill in order that the new state may not have any feelings of distrust. Our attitude should be just and fair.
2. The form of the government shall not be republican. Established on the basis of the "kingly principle," the new state shall adopt a monarchical form of government.
3. The new state shall exercise absolute authority over its internal affairs, and under the direction of Japan, it shall carry out policies based on monarchical principles.
4. With a view to realizing the above object, Japan shall provide the royal family ruling over the new state with sufficient military power to control Manchuria and Mongolia.
5. The political system of the new state and its various organization shall be modeled after those of Japan with modifications according to local conditions in the new state. This principle holds good not only for organizations of a political nature, but also for social institutions as, for instance, customs and usages, which should be gradually assimilated with those of Japan. In the execution of this principle, however, simplicity and practicability should be emphasized so as to avoid the complexity of Japanese laws.
6. The Chinese people do not have the same sense of loyalty to the Imperial House as the Japanese. The authorities should therefore be severe in their rule of the people so that they may have reverence and awe towards their rulers.
7. If the necessity of drafting the Constitution arises, the Constitution shall be modeled after that of Japan. The representative assembly shall be nothing more than an advisory council and an organ to publish statements respecting the finance of the state. (Toward the last decade of the Qing dynasty, the evils of the Advisory Council which was established to prepare for a constitutional government were too obvious).
8. Legislative and executive powers shall reside with the supreme authorities, but the judicial power
shall be respected in accordance with laws so that its independent spirit may be maintained.

9. With regard to the laws, Japanese laws, and particularly Japanese procedural laws, shall be made use of. As to the laws of the family, the authorities shall take into consideration the special customs and usages of the population. In cases where the foreign nationals are involved, it seems better that Japan should assume the responsibility of supervising the final decision.

10. All executive acts shall be performed in accordance with the existing customs and usages, and simplicity and practicability shall be emphasized. The complexity of Japanese local organizations shall be avoided and the corruption of officials shall be eliminated.

11. The police force of the new state shall be under the control of a strong organ which shall also be given the power of bandit suppression. The force shall be organized on a semi-military basis and well distributed in the state so that under strict supervision and able direction bandit activities may be eliminated.

12. The national defense of the new state shall be left entirely to Japan. In order to complete its nationhood, the new state is not yet in a position to defend itself from China and Russia under its present conditions. Moreover, the national defense of the state coincides with that of Japan; therefore, under no circumstance, shall the new state have the right of defending itself.

13. The foreign relations of the new state shall be entrusted to Japan so that serious diplomatic blunders may be avoided and national safety assured.

14. The military forces shall be maintained to a degree sufficient to suppress internal disorders. The royal family ruling over the new state shall directly command the forces so that the symbol of authority may be deeply impressed upon the imagination of the people. But the ultimate strength of the new state resides in the military power of Japan, so that there is no necessity of maintaining a large force. Whenever the need of suppressing internal disorders arises, the new state can always apply to Japan for aid, because she has special rights and duties of maintaining order in Manchuria.

15. The South Manchuria Railway shall have the exclusive right of railway enterprises in Manchuria. The new projected railways shall be always in the form of joint enterprises so that the spirit of the idea of “mutual dependence to promote mutual glory” may be realized.

16. As regards the right of existence in Manchuria, the Japanese people shall enjoy the same rights and privileges at the nationals of the new state. Besides concluding treaties with the new state to that effect, Japan shall devise means to facilitate Japanese immigration.

17. Because of many complications, Japan will consider carefully the desirability of appointment of Japanese people as the officials of “Manchukuo.” But in any case, Japan shall exercise actual control and disciplinary supervision in the execution of the basic policies of the government in order to prevent corruption and achieve political success. The present organization should be submitted for revision, but in the selection of the personnel, if sufficient care is not taken, there will be grave consequences. Japan shall therefore take very seriously consideration of the matter.

18. With regard to military organs, there shall be careful selection of Japanese people to enforce discipline and supervise the training of the soldiers. As regards matters relating to the distribution of Japanese officials in the various executive organs, to their appointment and dismissal, their control and supervision, the new unified Japanese organ in Manchuria shall assume full responsibility of deciding upon them.

9.3 LYTTON COMMISSION REPORT
(OCTOBER, 1932)

In 1931 the League of Nations sent a commission to China and Manchukuo headed by Lord Lytton, the former Viceroy of India, to investigate both Japan's and China's claims. The Lytton Report, or officially “The Report of the Commission of Enquiry,” ran over 400 pages, including supplementary documents. The commission initially sought to offer

LYTTON REPORT (1933)—A League of Nations report indicting Japan for its role in seizing, subjugating and continuing to manage the northeastern area of China under the puppet Manchukuo government. Japan withdrew from the League a month after the international body voted to accept its conclusions.