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British Foreign Policy toward East Asia and Formosa during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895

OZAKI YOSUKE

要旨

1894-95年の日清戦争は、朝鮮をめぐる日清二国間の対立から始まった戦争であり、加えてヨーロッパ列強の利害や思惑も交錯する多面的な側面を持つ戦争へと発展した。本稿では、このような日清戦争の特徴を踏まえたうえで、イギリスがこの戦争をいかに考え、日本や他の列強とどのように関わっていたのかについて、日本へと譲渡されることになった台湾領有問題における外交政策から考察する。日清戦争をきっかけにして、日本が東アジア国際政治のファクターとして存在感を強めたことにより、東アジア国際政治は再編を余儀なくされた。これらの状況を鑑みると、国際政治において圧倒的な影響力を持っていたイギリスがこの問題を通して選択した政策を考察することは、その後の国際政治を見るうえでも大きな意味があると思われる。

日清戦争が日本に有利に進展していくなかで、1894年の年末にはすでに講和交渉にむけた水面下での動きが起こった。イギリスは、香港を東アジアの拠点として活動しており、また上海

での商業権益が急速に拡大していたため、講和条件の一つである日本の台湾領有による中国本土への悪影響を懸念していた。イギリスにとっての台湾の価値は経済的なものだけでなく、戦略的にも大きな意味を持っていたのである。そのため、日清戦争中、イギリスは台湾の多面的な調査を軍部情報機関など各方面に依頼した。なかでも、海軍省は、台湾を防衛することへの負担の増大というマイナス面や台湾の港を領有することで戦略的重要性が増加するプラス面の報告を本国政府に伝えたが、日本の台湾領有に対してイギリスがとるべき政策を提言することができなかった。外務省も、海軍省と協議をしたが、ぎりぎりまでその判断を先延ばしにした。

同時期の他の領土問題に関しては、ロシア、フランス、ドイツによる三国干渉があった。ロシアはイギリスにも参加を要請し、列強間の協調を図ろうとした。これらの状況も踏まえると、イギリスが日本の台湾領有に対する政策に迷っていた背景には、東アジアの現状を維持するためには、中国における権益への損害の可能性を排除するために日本に抵抗することが重要なのか、日本の領土要求に賛同して、その関係を重視することが将来的な東アジア国際関係を見据えたうえで得策なのか、というその後の東アジア国際政治を左右するような選択になりうると認識していたことが考えられる。

最終的に、海軍省からの報告をもとに、本国政府が決定したことは、日本の台湾領有を含めた領土割譲に異議を唱えないということであった。すなわち、東アジアにおけるロシアなどの列強間との協調政策よりも、日本との良好な関係を維持することが東アジアの権益維持には重要であるとの判断を下したのであった。これは、イギリスが将来的な東アジア国際政治の再編を考えながら行動した結果であると言える。このような日清戦争期の日本の台湾領有をめぐるイギリスの政策は、東アジア国際政治の本質を探るうえで大きな示唆を与えてくれるものだと考える。

1 . Introduction

The 1890s marked a watershed in international politics not only in Europe but also worldwide. Britain had exerted enormous influence in all parts of the world and was pressured to reconsider its imperial defense policy of the period. Two reasons for this existed. First, after Bismarck's resignation from office, Russia and France concluded the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1892. C. J. Bartlett, in quoting P. M. Kennedy's position, suggested that in many ways the race with both Russia and France that began in 1889 was "a more serious matter" for British naval mastery than that of Germany before 1914. There was a threatened danger that these two rivals might initiate action, especially in the waters of the Mediterranean or East Asia. The geographical influence of France and Russia made it impossible for the British to contain their battleships as easily as those belonging to Germany positioned in the North Sea¹⁾.

Although the alliance between Russia and France was primarily for the purpose of competing with Germany, it was expected that Russia would gain a foothold in the Mediterranean, establishing a Mediterranean fleet with France, and causing Britain to do extensive damage to its own interests in Mediterranean. In addition, Russia had obtained a loan from France and had begun construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway in an attempt to promote its interests in East Asia, even though Russia had already competed with Britain over Port Hamilton in northern East Asia between 1885 and 1887. Between 1884 and 1885, France had engaged in fighting with China in the south and had waited for an opportunity to become involved in China. Great Britain was concerned about Russian and French advances because Britain controlled over 80% of China's foreign trade²⁾ and had established a strategic base in Hong Kong as a result of its victory in the Opium War. Hong Kong had developed into a bridge between South China and the Indo-Malayan world, and Great Britain wanted to protect its interests in East Asia. Although East Asia was the farthest area from Europe, China had become an integral part of

1) C. J. Bartlett, *Defence and diplomacy, Britain and the great powers, 1815-1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.87. P. M. Kennedy, *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1914* (London: Fontana Press, 1984), pp.167-8.

2) L. K. Young, *British policy in China, 1895-1902* (Oxford, 1970), p.5.

the military and economic history of Europe, and in particular, of British imperialism dating from the mid-19th century³⁾.

The second reason the British wanted to reconsider its imperial defense policy was that new rising powers, such as Germany, the United States, and Japan, were ascending into the world of international politics after 1890. After its victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, Prussia was integrated into the German empire. Germany had reinforced its military power and industrial might and moved forward with *Weltpolitik* under Friedrich Wilhelm II. The United States had concluded the Civil War and was making advancements in the Pacific and East Asia. The Japanese had experienced the Meiji Restoration, succeeded in rapid economic growth, and increased its military power⁴⁾. Because these three powers had turned their interests to East Asia, the international situation was thrown into increasing confusion by the participation of new actors, and it was assumed that British policy toward East Asia would have an effect not only on British imperial policy but also on international politics.

Because of the interest of several countries in East Asia, the area was undoubtedly becoming an important factor in the transformation of international politics after the 1890s, and it was the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5 that was one of the triggers. Britain was forced to consider the changes within international relationships to protect its interests in the East Asia. For that reason, the British searched for a new strategic location in East Asia, specifically north of Hong Kong. One of candidate sites for a new foothold was Formosa, an area France had tried to occupy between 1884 and 1885.

In this thesis, I examine the importance of Formosa in British policy in East Asia and the influence Japan had on British policy when it possessed Formosa during Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5. These considerations will serve as an aid to clarify the process of transformation from the old system referred to as the “Concert of Europe” after establishment of “Vienna System” to the new one of 20th century.

3) Jurgen Osterhammel, 'Britain and China, 1842-1914', Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume 3, The Nineteenth Century* (New York, Oxford University Press Inc., 1999), p.146.

4) Hosoya Yuichi, *Kokusai chitsujo, 18 seiki Europe kara 20 seiki Asia* (Chuko Shinsho, 2012), pp.168-170.

2. Strategic Importance of Formosa to Britain

The only strategic foothold that Britain attached great importance to in East Asia during the mid-19th century was Hong Kong, where the China Squadron had been dispatched by the British government to maintain peace in waters surrounding Hong Kong and to pay attention to the activities of other nations, especially Russia. However, as Shanghai developed as a center of commerce, the British government realized it was essential that the China Squadron protect British economic interests in Shanghai because of the growing interests of the French, Germans, and the United States. In addition, the Russian naval assets on the Chinese coast during the 1890s threatened to deprive the China squadron of local superiority and hamper Britain's ability to protect its imperial and commercial interests on the Yangtze and in North China⁵⁾.

To accomplish these goals, the British government thoroughly examined possible suitable location for a new strategic foothold north of Hong Kong⁶⁾. One possibility was Port Hamilton, a point of strategic importance that was considered "the key to the Korean Strait, and an advanced post of great value in connection with the Sea of Japan" because it could provide a coaling station and a harbor north of Shanghai if a war were to break out in East Asia. Vice-Admiral Alfred Phillips Ryder, Commander-in-Chief of the China Squadron in 1875, was interested in occupying Port Hamilton to protect against Russia's possible expansion south from eastern Siberia, but the British government dismissed his idea⁷⁾. Between 1885 and 1887, the China Squadron, under the order of the British government, temporarily occupied Port Hamilton, assuming a war would be forthcoming against Russia. However, the China Squadron eventually withdrew from Port Hamilton for sake of improving Anglo-Russian relationships.

The second possible suitable location was Formosa, a transportation

5) Hamish Ion, 'Towards a naval alliance: some naval antecedents to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', Philips Payson O'brien (ed.), *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1902-22* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.26-7.

6) H. D'Arch Breton, 'Thoughts on Imperial Defence', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol.157, 1895, p.679.

7) Ion, 'Towards a naval alliance: some naval antecedents to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p.32.

crossroads and a place of strategic importance where ships could control the Formosa Strait and the Bashi Channel. Britain has been interested in Formosa since the mid-19th century and had reconnoitered off the coast of Formosa twice in September 1841⁸⁾. In October, Britain bombarded the port of Kelung, which was north of Formosa, and showed more interest in Formosa than before. France and Germany made plans to occupy these islands in East Asia to secure a strategic foothold after the 1880s⁹⁾ and Britain was aware of the possibility that the occupation would greatly affect British interests in Hong Kong.

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in August 1894, Britain studied the importance of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands and considered to possessing them to forestall France and Germany's interests. On December 19, 1894, Joseph H. Longford, Vice-Consul in Tokyo and later Consul in Formosa, submitted a "Memorandum Respecting the Island of Formosa" to the Earl of Kimberley, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in which he analyzed the island's economic and strategic value. He referred to economical influence on Britain in case of Japan's possession of Formosa as follows:

[Japanese] consider that the island, when properly developed, will be capable of supporting a population of nearly 7,000,000 people. It will thus afford an outlet for the surplus of the steadily increasing population of Japan for several years to come, and its advance in trade will be encouraged by making all its port free.

The extended cultivation of the two staples, sugar and raw cotton, in Japanese soil would undoubtedly very speedily seriously affect British trade in the East. The value of the import of raw cotton from British India has during the last two years (1892-3) averaged 4,000,000 dollars, and this trade in addition furnished lucrative employment for diminish, but it would be wholly lost did it ever become possible for the Japanese to obtain an adequate supply, which would be transported exclusively in their own subsidized steamers, from within their own dominion. An immense impetus would also then be given to the already flourishing and extensive

8) Tianzhao Dai, *Taiwan Kokusai Seijishi Kenkyu* (Hosei University Press, 1971), pp.273-4.

9) F. Q. Quo, 'British Diplomacy and the Cession of Formosa, 1894-5', *Modern Asian Studies*, 11-2, 1968, pp.142-3.

cotton-spinning industry in Japan, and the Japanese spinners would advance one step further towards the realization of their ambition to oust English and Bombay yarns and to gain complete control of the whole yarn market throughout the East, a market that is at present supplied entirely by Great Britain and India...It is confidently expected that Japanese refineries will be able to undersell the products of those of Hong Kong, which now practically possess a monopoly of the supply of refined sugar both in China and Japan, the result being the loss of the whole of the valuable trade of Hong Kong in this staple.

Longford was also concerned about adverse effects the construction of a Japanese naval base would have upon Britain. His strategic analysis was that "it will enable Japan, before many years are over, to establish a secure base from which, not only the whole southern coast of China, with the important and wealthy cities of Swatow, Amoy, and Foochow, might be safely threatened, in the event of China ever in the future sufficiently recovering her strength to tempt her to seek revenge on Japan for her present humiliations, but also the entire coasting trade between the northern and southern ports of China, all of which passes through the Formosa Channel, might at any time be stopped" and that "a Japanese arsenal on the west coast, or even on the north in the neighbourhood of the already existing productive coal mines, would be little less threatening to Hong Kong or to British shipping passing to the north of China, than it would to the ports on the Chinese coast or to Chinese shipping."

Moreover, Longford pointed out that the only harbor available for a fleet was that of Kelung in the north because the island of Formosa was deficient in harbors, and the Pescadores Islands could supply the needed harbors and that "Japanese would find all they require for the construction of a strong naval arsenal." Longford warned the Foreign Office that the British government needed to recognize the importance of having an immediate, large, and permanent increase in both the garrisons and defenses of Hong Kong, as well as possibly those of Singapore and of the China Squadron¹⁰. Early in

10) *FO 46/438*, Mr. Trench to the Earl of Kimberley, December 20, 1894, No.199. *FO 46/438*, Inclose in No.199. Sir Edward Hertlet (ed.), *The Foreign Office List, 1895, British Diplomatic and Consular Handbook*, London.

October, 1894, the Admiralty told Edmund Fremantle, commander-in-chief of China Squadron from 1892 to 1895, to dispatch additional warships to East Asia to strengthen the China squadron. The *Crescent*, which served as the flagship of Australian Squadron and the *Edgar*, *Aeolus* and *Spartan*, serving in the Mediterranean Fleet, were dispatched after Japanese victories over China and the arrivals of Russian naval reinforcements¹¹⁾. According to Longford's report, the British government was forced to provide further economic and military assistance.

To supplement of Mr. Longford's report, the Director of Military Intelligence offered an evaluation of the Formosa situation on January 25, 1895. He reported that "not only the cotton trade but also the rice, sugar, indigo, and tea products would all affect the markets either of India or Hong Kong if opened up by the Japanese" and that "the mineral wealth of island is reported to comprise coal, sulphur, petroleum, and a considerable quantity of gold." He stated that "a remarkable feature of the island is the absence on its coasts of sheltered ports", and that "the harbour of Kelung, which is spacious and independent of tide, and an expensive and excellent harbour between Ponghou and Fisher, the two largest island of the Pescadores, there are only the two treaty ports of Tamsui and Taiwan, neither of which are of great value." The Director of Military Intelligence concluded that it was premature to offer an opinion as to how the occupation of Formosa by Japan would affect Britain strategically¹²⁾.

The Earl of Kimberley received information from the Church Missionary Society that "in the event of Formosa being taken possession of by Japan, ...the Hunan soldiers who occupy Formosa would land at Amoy, and would assuredly devastate the country right up to Foochow"¹³⁾. It was presumed that

11) Arthur J. Marder, *The Anatomy of British Sea Power, A History of British Naval Policy in the Pre-Dreadnought Era, 1880-1905* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), pp.231-2. Edmund Fremantle, *The navy as I have known it, 1849-99* (London: Cassel 1904), p.439.

12) Ian Nish (ed.), *British Document on Foreign Affairs, Part.1, Series E, Asia, 1860-1914, Volume 5, Sino-Japanese War and Triple Intervention, 1894-1895* (University Publication of America, 1989), War Office Intelligence to Foreign Office, January 25, 1895, Doc.49. [Hereafter referred to as 'BDOFA']

13) *BDOFA*, vol.5, Rev. B. Baring-Gould to Church Missionary Society, December 11, 1894, Doc.16.

the devastation could spread to Hong Kong.

Thus, the local reports expressed to the Foreign Office their anxiety about the harmful influence upon Britain and presented a negative conclusion as to the effects of Japan's possession of Formosa.

3. British Policy Regarding the Possession of Formosa by Japan

In February 1895, European powers decided on position they would take if Japan seized territories. On February 21, Sir Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador to Russia, sent a telegram to the Foreign Office that the Russian government would not raise an objection to the Japanese taking Formosa but that they would have serious objections to the Japanese's possession of territory in northern China because it would bring the Japanese into closer proximity to the Russian frontier¹⁴.

France also regarded as unfavorable the cession of territories to Japan, particularly Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. The French fleet had occupied the Pescadores Islands and blocked the Taiwan Strait temporarily during the Sino-French War¹⁵ and had patrolled the islands and conducted coastal and harbor surveys around Hainan island during the Sino-Japanese war¹⁶. As a result, France has strongly recognized the geopolitical and strategic importance of the islands. On February 22, Marquis of Dufferin, the British ambassador to France, reported to the Earl of Kimberley that "French opinion would be very adverse to the cession of the Pescadores Islands, though it was more perhaps a matter of sentiment than policy." However, he stated that he firmly believed France had changed its opinion about Japan's possession of Formosa and it approved the possession because Russia, an ally, had not protested the possession¹⁷.

Although Russia and France acted pursuant to the term of the Franco-Russian Alliance and did not object to the possession of Formosa by Japan, they did object to Japan's obtaining the Liaotung Peninsula in northeast

14) *FO 405/62*, Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley, February 21, 1895, No.122.

15) Ito Kiyoshi, *Taiwan* (Chuko Shinsho, 1993), p.60.

16) Quo, "British Diplomacy and the Cession of Formosa, pp.143-4.

17) *BDOFA, vol.5*, The Earl of Kimberley to Marquis of Dufferin, March 20, 1895, Doc.216.

China¹⁸⁾. Russia emphasized the importance of its cooperation with Britain on this question and wanted Britain to require Japan moderate the peace terms for the three countries.

The Earl of Kimberley faced the dilemma of deciding whether to accept the demands of Japan relating to the territories. He agreed that international politics in East Asia had reached a turning point¹⁹⁾. On the one hand, it was of great significance for Britain to maintain good relationships with other powers, especially Russia, and to act in concert with them because the Russian naval squadron in the Pacific had been strengthened; if the envisioned concerted action failed, Russia would have the option of pursuing a different course²⁰⁾. On the other hand, Britain feared that if Russia took the initiative in international politics in East Asia, it would replace Britain.

Thus, the Earl of Kimberley was pressed to make a final decision whether to object the confirming actions of both Russia and France²¹⁾. The rational reasons why Britain was troubled with making a decision was that it could not decide how to treat Japan or know what kind of relationship it should build with Japan in the future. After serious consideration, the Earl of Kimberley perceived that it was more important for Britain to preserve its present interests rather than to take into account uncertain situations in the future. He decided to follow Britain's original policy, searching for cooperation with Japan rather than with Russia and France. He requested information from Admiralty before making his final decision.

Thereupon, the Admiralty immediately asked Fremantle for his views on the situation relating to Formosa and the Pescadores Islands. Fremantle strongly urged Britain to purchase, or otherwise obtain, the Pescadores Islands to assure that British products would securely continue to pass through the Taiwan Straits. Fremantle believed that Makung in the Pescadores, being only 300 miles from Hong Kong, was a good harbor to control the Straits so long as it remained a strong naval power²²⁾. However, his idea did not find

18) *FO 405/62*, Sir F. Lascelles to the Earl of Kimberley, March 25, 1895, No.218

19) T. G. Otte, *The China Question: Great Power Rivalry and British Isolation, 1894-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007), p.63.

20) *Ibid.*, p.49.

21) *BDOFA, vol.5*, The Earl of Kimberley to Marquis of Dufferin, February 22, 1895, Doc. 126.

22) *ADM 1/7248 S32*, Confidential, Sir Edmund Fremantle to Admiralty, March 7, 1895.

approval from the Admiralty. On March 23, 1895, in response to the Foreign Office, Evan MacGregor, the Permanent Secretary to the Admiralty during the Sino-Japanese war, forwarded a letter "as to the naval value of Pescadores" stating the opinion of the Admiralty. The substance of letter provided:

...these islands [Pescadores Islands] contain excellent anchorages and a good harbour at Makung, whose value is considerably enhanced on account of those in the neighbouring Island of Formosa being very poor. Moreover, the position of the islands would give that harbour great weight in the eyes of a naval Power which had either aggressive designs on China or Formosa.

It appears certain that the Pescadores group would be occupied or used by the Power having undisputed command of the sea, but it is doubtful, in their Lordships' opinion, whether Makung Harbour would be worth turning into a permanent naval base, as, from the land being comparatively low and accessible to naval attack from many points, the difficulty and cost of efficiently defending it would be great²³⁾.

MacGregor also provided information about the island of Formosa to the Foreign Office. The Admiralty considered that the island possessed no really good harbor and that the only good harbor, Kelung, was exposed to strong northeasterly winds and to the sea but that the island would have considerable value because Kelung could be improved by artificial means and easily made defensible in the hands of an energetic sea power²⁴⁾. After duly considering these reports, the Admiralty concluded that Britain would have no choice but to approve Japan's possession of the islands. However, it may be gathered from the Admiralty's remark that it wavered in its judgment as to whether the objection against the possession of those islands by Japan would serve the best interests of Britain.

Much to the credit of the Earl of Kimberley and Earl of Rosebery, the prime minister, realized the necessity of continued cooperation with Russia and decided not to purchase it and risk confrontation with Japan. This decision was the result of a rationalization of the refocusing of British policy in favor of Japan²⁵⁾. On April 18, 1895, with the approval of the British

23) FO 405/62, Admiralty to Foreign Office, March 23, 1895, No.216.

24) FO 405/63, Admiralty to Foreign Office, April 6, 1895, No.12.

25) Otte, *The China Question*, p.63.

government, the Earl of Kimberley stated to Kato Takaaki, the new Japanese minister to Britain, that Britain concluded it was logical for Japan to demand the cession of the territories of Formosa, the Pescadores Islands, and Liaotung Peninsula as a result of its victory over China, even though it was not appropriate for Britain to agree to the cession of those territories to Japan or to state that it indicated approval of the possession of those territories by Japan²⁶⁾.

Russia requested that Britain participate in the Triple Intervention, in which Russia, France, and Germany forced Japan to give up the possession of the Liaotung Peninsula. However, the British attitude regarding the cession of territory to Japan did not change.

4 . Cession of Formosa to Japan and British Policy toward China

In March 1895, in the midst of pressuring Britain for an answer about Japan's possession of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands, China tried to maintain close relationships with Britain to prevent Japan from possessing the islands and proposed two plans to Britain. One plan proposed that "Formosa might be hypothecated to a syndicate of British bankers as a security for a loan." The other plan proposed that "it might be made over to a British Company"²⁷⁾.

In February 1895, Li Hung Chang, the Viceroy of Chihli and Minister of Pei-yang Commerce, had already applied to Nicholas Roderick O'Connor, the British minister to China, to obtain British support to oppose the possession of Formosa by Japan because the Chinese believed it would be harmful to Britain's interests and that Russia would be adversely affected by the cession of Liaotung Peninsula to Japan. O'Connor received instructions from the Earl of Kimberley and urged Li to accept peace terms to rapidly regain peace in China, rejecting the Chinese proposition²⁸⁾. Chinese authorities believed Britain might accept its demands and had the intention of raising the issue of the possession of the islands as a diplomatic problem because it was convinced that Russia would raise an objection to the cession of the Liaotung Peninsula

26) *Nihon gaiko bunsho*, Meiji 28 vol.2, no.721.

27) *BDOFA*, vol.5, The Earl of Kimberley to Mr. O'Connor, March 15, 1895, Doc.189.

BDOFA, vol.5, The Earl of Kimberley to Mr. O'Connor, April 1, 1895, Doc.253.

28) *FO 405/62*, Mr. O'Connor to the Earl of Kimberley, February 24, 1895, No.137.

to Japan.

The Earl of Kimberley responded to the Chinese Minister, indicating that “it would be impossible for Her Majesty’s Government to support either of these arrangements” because he believed it would not be advantageous to the Chinese Government at that time²⁹⁾. There were several reasons why the suggestions were not rejected. First, the Chinese proposal for raising money was very vague, and the Chinese appeared to be under the impression that the British government might be willing to advance a large sum of money as security for Formosa³⁰⁾.

Second, the British were worried that the Japanese troops would advance to the area south of Shanghai and obstruct the British trade on the Yangtze River if Britain decided to accept the Chinese proposals³¹⁾ because Japan had unconditionally accepted a British demand for the neutrality of Shanghai early in Sino-Japanese War³²⁾.

The Earl of Kimberley thought that it would be advisable for Britain to agree to the cession of Formosa and the Pescadores Islands to Japan to prevent Japan from conducting reprisals against it. Thereupon, he urged the Chinese minister to consider that “the Chinese, looking to the present state of affairs in China, should make every effort to conclude peace without delay”³³⁾.

Public opinion in Britain kept in step with its government’s view; and public was strongly pro-Japanese³⁴⁾. For example, on April 8 1895, *The Times* carried an article indicating that Britain should not interfere with the cession issue because China might not honor its obligation to develop resources in Formosa and because, from a geographic standpoint, it was beneficial for Britain that Japan possessed Formosa as a trading port³⁵⁾.

China, failing to win Britain’s approval, approached Russia to obtain the protection it needed to gain possession of Formosa and the Pescadores

29) *Ibid.*, Doc.253.

30) *BDOFA*, vol.5, The Earl of Kimberley to Mr. O’Conor, March 15, 1895, Doc.190.

31) *BDOFA*, vol.5, The Earl of Kimberley to Mr. O’Conor, April 1, 1895, Doc.253.

32) Cf. Ozaki Yosuke, British diplomatic strategy toward East Asia in the end of the 19th century: the Anglo-Japanese relations over the Shanghai neutrality problem during the Sino-Japanese War, *Seiji Keizai Shigaku*, no.525, 2010.

33) *BDOFA*, vol.5, The Earl of Kimberley to Mr. O’Conor, April 1, 1895, Doc.253.

34) Otte, *The China Question*, p.67.

35) *The Times*, April 8, 1895.

Islands. But China did not obtain Russia's approval because Russia was not interested in the islands. After Britain and Russia rejected China's request, China approached France for help. Because France had become interested in the islands after the Sino-French War, it decided to dispatch troops to the area. However, because a revolt occurred on the Island of Madagascar, a French protectorate, France canceled the troop dispatch³⁶⁾.

Although European powers such as Britain, Russia, and France decided not to accept the Chinese proposal for preventing Japan from getting possession of Formosa, China did not give up its requests during or after the Triple Intervention. China offered to transfer the island to Britain again, paying the expenses of defending it. On April 18, a confidential agent of the Viceroy of Nanking secretly communicated to Mr. Hopkins, British consul in Tamsui (Formosa), a message on behalf of the governor of Formosa, stating that rather than relinquishing the island to Japan, China would enter into a treaty with Britain, giving Britain immediate protection³⁷⁾. On April 20, the governor of Formosa told Mr. Hopkins that his control had been weakened by the cession of island to Japan and that he had no power to protect the lives or property of foreigners. Additionally, Mr. Hopkins was informed that a consensus of people on Formosa "prayed that the island might be placed under British and Germany protection, proposing that these Powers should receive the duties from coal, camphor, tea, gold, sulphur, while China should retain territory and administration, and continue to receive land-tax"³⁸⁾. The information failed to cause Britain to change its mind, and it consistently rejected China's proposal, because Britain had decided to convert Japan, not China, over to the British side.

In May, shortly after the Triple Intervention, 36 men from Her Majesty's ship *Leander* landed at Anping, in southern Formosa, and 30 marines from Her Majesty's ship *Centurion* landed at Twa-tu-tia, in the north. A rumor spread quickly that Britain might occupy the island, and government officials quickly took advantage of the rumor. Hayashi Tadasu, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, asked G. Lowther, Charge d'Affairs in Japan, to explain the true meaning of the rumor. At the behest of the Earl of Kimberley, Lowther

36) FO 46/451, Mr. Trench to The Earl of Kimberley, March 22, 1895, No.95. Dai, *Taiwan Kokusai Seijishi Kenkyu*, pp.240-242.

37) FO 405/63, Consul Hopkins to Mr. O'Connor, April 20, 1895, Inclosure 1 in No.373 A.

38) FO 405/63, Consul Hopkins to Mr. O'Connor, April 20, 1895, Inclosure 2 in No.373 A.

replied that British government did not have any intention of occupying Formosa, and denied the rumor immediately³⁹⁾.

5. Conclusion

British diplomacy relating to the problem of Japan's possession of Formosa exposed the limitations of the British imperial defense policy under "Splendid Isolation." The British government decided to reinforce the China Squadron to protect against a case of unforeseen emergency in the expansion of the war in October, 1894; however, its efforts were insufficient. Although further reinforcement of the China Squadron was necessary, its efforts were limited because a reinforcement of the China Squadron weakened the effectiveness of the British fleets at home and in the Mediterranean⁴⁰⁾.

Britain had analyzed and compared the military power of both Japan and China and had rated Japanese military power as modern and potential during the Sino-Japanese War⁴¹⁾. Britain began to recognize that it was important and necessary to cooperate with Japan to maintain its interests in East Asia without further burdens and, as a result, decided to adopt its own policies such as nonparticipation in the Triple Intervention and agreeing to peace terms, including the cession of the territory. In this way, Britain intended to take advantage of Japan's being the bulwark against Russia and establishing good

39) *FO405/63*, Mr. Lowther to Mr. Earl of Kimberley, May 11, 1895, No.419.

40) Ion, 'Towards a naval alliance: some naval antecedents to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance', p.35.

41) *FO 405/60*, Comparative Statement of the Chinese and Japanese Navies, July 16, 1894, No.90. *FO 405/60*, Memorandum on the relative Values of the Armies of China and Japan, July 16, 1894, No.92. On July 16, 1894, Admiralty submitted a report titled "Comparative Statement of the Chinese and Japanese Navies" to Foreign Office. Admiralty estimated that "the organization of Chinese fleets is still to a large extent provincial; on the other hand, the Japanese navy is a purely Imperial force, and its organization has been copied with considerable fidelity from that Western navies."

Intelligence Division also submitted a report to Foreign Office, to the effect that the Japanese Army "is well equipped and organized, and ready for work. They are very rapid marchers, willing, obedient, and nationally enthusiastic. Their transport and medical services are well organized and in efficient condition, their arms are good and bears comparison with Chinese much in the same way as the forces of nineteenth century civilization compare with those of mediaeval times."

relationships with Japan⁴²⁾.

In this way, Britain attempted to apply the system of “balance of power” to international politics in East Asia and play a role as a balancer. The strongpoint of British diplomacy during 19th century was to play a key role as a balancer in traditional European international politics for the geopolitical reason that Britain was away from European continent and had been more interested in overseas expansion than in European problems. In doing so, Britain had maintained the system of “balance of power” in Europe and had contributed to the stabilization of the European international order. It seems fair to say that it was the result of the system of “balance of power” and Britain’s role as a balancer that prevented a great war from the time after the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars to the beginning of World War I in Europe.

In East Asia, Britain feared that Russia’s plan had been made clear in the Triple Intervention, and that the plan would deprive Britain of a position of leadership as a result of Russia’s expanding interests and aggressive intervention in affairs of this area. Therefore, Britain was under pressure to take measures to meet the situation, to maintain the status quo, and to restrain Russia’s rapid expansion of the influence. One such measure was to approve the cession of the territories to Japan and convince Japan to its way of thinking. Britain tried to revise international order based on the system of “balance of power” by recognizing Japan as one of the main actors in international politics of East Asia and use its strength to influence and maintain the 19th century system of international politics.

Britain clearly recognized the strategic importance of Formosa in terms of the necessity of protection for its interests in East Asia. Nevertheless, when Britain unconditionally consented to the cession of Formosa to Japan, it quickly realized that the international politics in East Asia would have an influence on Europe and that the countries would be linked. It may be said that the beginning of the transformation of the international order before World War I was established during the Sino-Japanese War, particularly in British diplomacy toward the cession of Formosa to Japan.

42) Sasaki Yoh, ‘Igirisu kyokuto seisaku to nisshin kaisen’, *Saga daigaku kyoikugakubu ronshu*, 29-1, 1981. Sasaki insists that Britain had already regarded Japan as the bulwark against Russian southward advance at the time of the start of War.