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## University Degree Thesis

### **Bad or even worse**

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### **Exploring the critical decisions of Japan in 1940 and 1941, in the light of contemporary neoclassical realism**

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### **Abstract**

Several contemporary theories in the neo-realist corpus, modifies earlier assumptions about unit level behavior. The explanatory value of these theories has to be tested. The aim of this research, was to test the explanatory value of Davide Fiammenghis theory about the security curve, and Nuno P. Monteiros theory about unipolarity. In order to test the theories, a case study was designed where Japans aggression against the USA in 1941, was used as a least-likely case. Inspired by the idea from neo-classical realism, that the perceptions of decisions makers can vary considerably from real conditions, I used primary sources to study the perceptions and calculations inside the Japanese government. Three critical foreign policy decisions, made by the Japanese government in 1940 and 1941 were analyzed. Fimmenghis theory were first rejected, yet when it was modified to fit the condition of asymmetric economic dependence, it fit well the data. The study also indicated, that Monteiros theory can explain state behavior, if a state anticipates that it could end up in unipolar, international system.

Key words: Security curve, unipolarity, Japan, neo-realism

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”In general, the prospect if we go to war are not bright...On the other hand, it is not possible to maintain the status quo. Hence one unavoidably reaches the conclusion that we must go to war.” - Japans Army Vice Chief of Staff Tsukada, 1 of november 1941

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## 1 Introduction to study

### 1. 1 Introduction

During the last decade, several theoretical contributions have been added to the neo-realist corpus. I believe that Fiammenghis theory about the security curve,<sup>1</sup> and Monterios theory about unipolarity,<sup>2</sup> are among others the most important contributions. Both Fiammenghis and Monterios theory, modifies earlier accepted assumptions, about unit level (state) behavior. It is vital that we test the explanatory value of these assumptions and investigate if they can contribute to our understanding of international politics.

In order to test the theories, I have chosen conduct a case study of the Japanese aggression, against the USA in 1941. I will use the idea from neoclassical realism, that state leaders act upon their perceptions of international conditions.<sup>3</sup> Using primary sources, I will explore how the political elite in Japan, precived its choices in three critical desicion making situations, leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Finally I will test if the choices that the japanes government made, is line with the predicitons in Fiammenghis and Monterios theories. Japans aggression in 1941 has been a riddle for me, ever since I started my studies of international relations. In this paper I will try solve this riddle.

### 1. 2 Research aim and research question

The main aim of this paper, is to test Fiammenghis theory about the security curve and Monterios theory about unipolarity. More specifically, I will test some explicit or implicit assumptions about unit level behavior, hinted by this these theories. In order to test this assumptions, I have decided to conduct a case study of the Japanese aggression, against the USA in 1941. By testing these assumptions, I also hope that I can contribute to our understanding of this historical case. Given the scope of the study and the voluminous literature that exists about the second world war, it has not possible been for me to study all relevant literature about the case. However I still hope that the use of new theories, can place the case in a new framework, and thus enhance our understanding of its dynamics.

I have chose to work with two research questions:

- Can the critical decisions, made by the japanese government before the attack on Pearl Harbor, be

1 Fiammenghi, Davide (2011) The Security Curve and the Structure of International Politics: A Neorealist Synthesis, *International Security*, Volume 35, Number 4, Spring 2011, pp 126-154

2 Monteiro, Nuno P (2011) Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful, *International Security*, Volume 36, Number 3, Winter 2011/12, pp 9-40

3 Beach, Derek, *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p 64

explained with the help of Fiammenghis security curve?

- Can the critical decisions, made by the Japanese government before the attack on Pearl Harbor, be explained with the help of Monteiro's theory about a unipolar international system?

### 1.3 Limitations

I will limit my study to three critical decisions made by Japan in 1940 and 1941: the signing of the tripartite pact, the decision to move in to southern French Indochina and the decision to attack the USA and Great Britain. I believe that these three decisions, were vital for the political process, leading up to the war in the Pacific. The time period is limited to the decision making period. However I will frame the presentation and the investigation of the three decisions, by an introduction that stretches back to the end of the first world war. I will also present some key events, that influenced the decisions making process.

The study will be based upon neo-realist assumptions. I will assume that actors that lead the Japanese government were rational, that they cared deeply about Japan's survival, and that their preferences and choices were based upon relative power calculations.<sup>4</sup> Based on the theory of bounded rationality, I will also assume that the different opinions inside the Japanese government, were created by access to different information, and by the fact that different actors were focused on different aspects of a problem. Thus I will assume the actors were bounded by human restrictions, that made it impossible for them to access all relevant information, and weigh in all the factors in their calculations.<sup>5</sup> The theory of bounded rationality, fits well with the idea from neoclassical realism, that different elite groups will perceive a state's situation in different ways.<sup>6</sup>

## 2 Methodological Considerations

### 2.1 Method

I have tried to find a least-likely-cases, to put the theories to a tough test.<sup>7</sup> Neo-realist generally assume that states are rational security maximizers.<sup>8</sup> Japan's aggression in 1941, have often been

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4 Mearsheimer, John H (2014) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 2nd edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, pp 30 - 32

5 Jones, Bryan D (2002) Bounded Rationality and Public Policy: Herbert A. Simon and the Decisional Foundation of Collective Choice, *Policy Sciences*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 2002), pp. 269-284

6 Beach, Derek op cit p 64

7 Lamont, Christopher, *Research Methods in International Relations*, London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2015, pp 132 - 134

8 Mearsheimer, John H, op cit pp 30 - 32

considered both irrational and reckless.<sup>9</sup> The USA had eight times the industrial capacity of Japan,<sup>10</sup> and still the Japanese government chose to go to war, against the USA. Japan's seemingly irrational decision and the balance of potential power<sup>11</sup> in 1941, seems to make Japan's aggression, a least-likely-case for any neo-realist theory.

In order to test the theories, I will make some explicit predictions about unit level behavior. In order to test Fiammenghis theory, unit level behavior will be treated as the dependent variable, and relative power will be treated as the independent variable. In order to test Monteiro's theory, the posture of the unipolar power, will be used as the independent variable, and unit level behavior will be treated as the dependent variable. In line with the ideas of neoclassical realism, I will not use objective measures of relative power, or the posture of other states. Instead I will use the perceptions inside the Japanese government, of relative power and the posture of other states. I will then analyze each key decision, in order to test if the decisions made, matches the predictions made about unit level behavior. Finally I will discuss the results and analyze their implications for the theories. If possible, I will use the results of study, to produce some theoretical suggestions in order to develop the tested theories.<sup>12</sup>

When I present and analyze the critical decision made by the Japanese government, I have tried to use primary sources, as much as possible. In any secondary source, there will be layers of interpretations and selections made by the authors, in order to give a coherent image of what happened. By going back to the primary sources, I can hopefully avoid some earlier layers of interpretation, when I analyze the data. The data collected from the primary sources, are arguments used by the most important decision makers, inside the Japanese government. Some vital statements from policy documents has also been included in the data. The arguments have been selected based upon how much they can contribute to our understanding of the decision makers' perceptions. More specifically I have focused on the decision makers' perceptions of: the balance of power in the East Asian region, the posture of important states and different pathways that the decision makers anticipated as a result of their choices. I have also included different scenarios stated by the decision makers, about international events that would have an important effect on the balance of power in the East Asian region. Any minor or less relevant arguments have been excluded. Thus I

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9 Sagan, Scott D (1988) The Origins of the Pacific War, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars. (Spring, 1988), pp. 893-894., Record, Jeffery (2009) *Japan's Decision for War in 1941: Some Enduring Lesson*, Strategic Studies Institute, pp 3 - 5

10 Mearsheimer, John H op cit p 219

11 See Ibid pp 60-67, regarding potential power. While Mearsheimer's uses the concept latent power, I use the word potential power. However the meaning is the same.

12 George, Alexander L., Bennett, Andrew (2005) *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science*, Cambridge (Massachusetts): MIT Press pp 20 - 21

have made a qualitative selection of the arguments that I use as data.<sup>13</sup>

When I present the data, I have simplified and cleared out the main points in the actors argument. Generally I will not present direct quotes from the decision makers, instead I will present a summary descriptions of their arguments. I have only included repetitions of arguments, if the repetitions are vital for our understanding of the actors perspective.<sup>14</sup>

In order to understand the decision making process inside of the Japanese government, I found it necessary to frame the investigation of Japans critical decisions. Thus I did some preliminary investigations. The investigations will be pointed in two directions. First of all I will study the decision making process, inside the japans government, during the period. This investigation will be based upon secondary sources. Secondly I will also investigate the long term preferences of the main actors, inside the Japanese government.<sup>15</sup> This investigation will also be based upon secondary sources and I will not make any analysis of my own, about this long term preferences. Instead I will use secondary sources and present explanations from them, that are in line with my realist assumptions.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 Disposition of the paper

The empirical part of the paper is divided in to three parts. In the first part, I will frame the decision making process inside the japanes government. I will start of with a presentation of the long term preferences of the most important decision makers, inside the japaness government. I will then explore how these preferences were formed in the interwar period. Next I will present the decision-making structures, inside the Japanese government during 1940 and 1941.

In the second part, I will make a presentation of each critical decision. I will present what was decided and give an image of the decision making process. Some events that where vital as a background for the decision, will also be presented. In the third part I will present different arguments, uttered inside the Japaness goverment, to justify or to oppose the decision. Different scenarios hinted in sources will also be presented. I will end the empirical part of the paper, by presenting a collection of statements from the most important actors, about relative power positions

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13 Halperin, Sandra., Heath, Oliver (2017) Political Research. Methods and Practical Skills, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 158

14 Halperin, Sandra., Heath, Oliver op cit pp 442 - 443

15 See Beach, Derek, *Analyzing Foreign Policy*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp 31 – 47, on the formation of state preferences and neo-realist theory

16 see Limitations

in the international system.

In the analysis part, I will analyze each of the critical decision made by the Japanese government. I will start of by identifying the perceived polarity, in the regional international system in East Asia, when each decision was made. In some cases, I will also try to identify how Japan perceived the posture of the USA. The preception of relative power relations, will be carefully analysed. I will then try to clarify all the different scenarios, that the Japaness government anticipated, as a result of different possible desicions. Finally I will test if the decisions made by the Japanese government, are in line with predictions derived form the theories.

### 3 Sources

#### 3.1 Primary Source

The most important source for this paper, will be Japans Decision for War, edited by Nobutaka Ike. The book contains notes from policy conferences held by the Japanese government, during the period. The notes were found in the Japanese military history archives,<sup>17</sup> and they have been compiled and translated by the editor. The editor has also added rich comments to the notes, framing and explaining, the sometimes cryptical notes. Some official documents has also been added to the volume. The first entry in the compilation, are the notes from an imperial conference, held on the 19 of September 1940. The period between the 20 of September 1940, until the 17 of April 1941, is not covered in the book. The notes from the liaison conferences are sometimes cryptic and summary in nature. The notes from the imperial conferences are more voluminous, and they have been very helpful.<sup>18</sup> The material in the book regarding the signing of the tripartite pact, is limited to one imperial conference.<sup>19</sup> Thus I had a rather limited amout of material to work with, when I analyzed this desicion.

My overall impression of the notes, is that they are both reliable and valid for the study.<sup>20</sup> There are many direct quotes, and direct transcriptions of speeches, made by the most important desicion makers at the time. These speeches brings us close to these actors and we can listen to their point of view, as it was expressed behind closed doors. However the notes does not cover everything that was said at the conferences. The author of the notes have only written down, what was considered to be the most important statements uttered. Thus there is a selection bias in the notes. The author of

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17 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt) (1967) Japan's Decision for War. Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences, Stanford: Stanford University Press p xiv

18 see Foreign policy decision making in Japan, during 1940 and 1941, about liaison and imperal conferences

19 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt) op cit pp 3 - 13

20 See Halperin, Sandra., Heath, Oliver, op cit, pp 171 – 174, on validity and reliability, See also Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit, p xiv, on the on the authenticity of the primary sources

the notes, where somebody close the highest commanders in the Japanese army.<sup>21</sup> This background can tell us something about the selection bias. It is clear from the notes, that the decision makers cared deeply about relative power and power projection capabilities.<sup>22</sup> I would argue that the perspective of the actors, justifies the use of a realist theory for this study.

### 3.2 Secondary Source

Secondary sources have been used for two reasons: to frame the study of the primary sources and to fill in the gaps (where the primary sources do not contain enough information). I have tried to use contemporary scientific secondary sources, in order to ensure that they contain the latest scientific findings. However classic studies have been useful in certain cases.

## 4.0 Theoretical considerations

### 4.1 Theory

#### *4.1.1. Neo-realism*

Neo-realist theory, starts off from a simple proposition: states seek to survive in an anarchic international system.<sup>23</sup> Neo-realists assume that the pressures arising from the anarchic structure of the international system, are vital for the formation of unit level preferences, and unit level behavior.<sup>24</sup> Anarchy means that there is no central authority in the international system. In an anarchic system, states can never be sure about the intentions of other states,<sup>25</sup> and there are no guarantees that a third party will stop an aggressive state. The only thing that a state can be sure about, is its own capabilities. The international system, is thus a self-help system.<sup>26</sup>

While neo-realists agree about the basic features of the international system, they quarrel about what type of incentives the international system produces. Defensive neo-realists assume that the structure of the international system, produces incentives for states to defend their relative power position,<sup>27</sup> or to balance of threats.<sup>28</sup> Offensive neo-realists assume that states seek to gain more relative power, and that all great powers strive for regional hegemony.<sup>29</sup> Defensive neo-realists often add unit level variables when they try to explain imperial ambitions and over-extensive aggression. Offensive neo-realists have also added unit level variables, when they try to explain passive behavior

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21 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p xiv

22 see Statements from policy conferences, for many examples

23 Waltz, Kenneth N (1979) *Theory of International Politics*, Long Grove: Waveland Press, p 91

24 Ibid p 71

25 Mearsheimer, John H, op cit, p 31

26 Waltz, Kenneth N, op cit, p 91

27 Mearsheimer, John H, op cit, p 22

28 Walt. Stephen M (1987) *The origins of alliances*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp 263 - 265

29 Mearsheimer, John H, op cit, p 22

by states, that had a chance to expand.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.1.2 *Fiammenghi's security curve*

In 2011, Fiammenghi presented an ambitious synthesis of the defensive and the offensive position. Fiammenghi uses the independent variable of relative power, in order to explain the dependent variable of security. According to Fiammenghi, the relationship between the variables, are not linear. Instead they have the form of a modified parabolic function<sup>31</sup> (see appendix 1). The function can be explained by the shifting reactions that states will encounter, when they gain (or lose) relative power. When weak states gain relative power, they become more secure. According to Fiammenghi, this is because other states in the system will find it more attractive to ally with them, when they have more power. The cost of assembling a balancing coalition (or make a balancing reaction), towards the relative power growth of a weak state will be higher than the security gains achieved. Thus states will tend to bandwagon with weak states instead of balancing against them. However as a state grows stronger, the risks of bandwagoning with it will increase, since the state may get in to a dominating position. From its dominating position, a state may threaten the independence of its allies. At this point allies will start to defect from the state, and other states will start to balance against its influence. Fiammenghi calls this point the security threshold.<sup>32</sup> Based on empirical evidence, he assumes that a state reaches the security threshold, when it has accumulated about 30 % of the total capabilities in the system.<sup>33</sup> If a state accumulates more relative power once it has reached the security threshold, its security will decrease. Other state will fear it even more and make even stronger efforts to balance its influence. However if a state continues to accumulate significant amounts of relative power, after it has reached the security threshold, it will eventually start to dominate the international system. Based on theoretical assumptions, Fiammenghi puts this point at an accumulation of about 45 %, of the total capabilities in the system.<sup>34</sup> Fiammenghi calls this point the absolute security threshold. When a state dominates the international system, other states will understand that balancing its influence is an impossible task. Thus they will start to bandwagon with this state instead of balancing against its influence.<sup>35</sup> A state that has passed the absolute security threshold, will thus become more secure if it accumulates more relative power.

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30 Fiammenghi, Davide, op cit, p 129

31 Ibid pp 131- 132

32 Ibid pp 132 - 133

33 Ibid p 142

34 Ibid p 143

35 Ibid pp 136 - 137

Fiammenghi's theory is theoretically alluring. According to the theory, we can assume states will act in a way similar to the predictions of offensive neo-realism before they reach the security threshold. Once a state has reached the security threshold, we can assume that the state will act in a way similar to the predictions of defensive neo-realism.<sup>36</sup> However there is some ambiguity in the theory, about how a state will act if it is close to the absolute security threshold, or if a state has a real chance of reaching the absolute security threshold. In these situations, the structural incentives will be mixed. Reaching the absolute security threshold will cost security in the short term, but it could lead to a long term increase in security, if a state can stabilize its position at the absolute security threshold.<sup>37</sup> If a state can stabilize its position at the absolute security threshold, and then continues to gain relative power, a stable hegemonic order will start to crystallize.<sup>38</sup> The theory can thus explain different forms of unit behavior in an anarchic system (at least in most situations), using only one variable relative power. If the theory has a high explanatory value, it could lessen the need to add unit level variables, when we try to explain foreign policy decisions and grand strategies.

We can finally note that Fiammenghi states that there may be systemic modifiers, that might change the relationship between power and security. One such modifier, could be the presence of nuclear weapons.<sup>39</sup>

#### *4.1.3 Monteiro's theory on a unipolar, anarchic system<sup>40</sup>*

Fiammenghi's theory seems to indicate, that a unipolar system will be relatively peaceful. When a state has accumulated enough capabilities, other states will not be able to balance against the dominant state. Thus more and more states will bandwagon with the dominant state, in order to assure their survival.<sup>41</sup> This should lead to a relatively peaceful system.

However there are empirical problems with this theory. Between the years 1990 and 2011, great powers were involved in wars 59 % of the time.<sup>42</sup> The appointed unipolar power in the system: the USA, fought numerous of wars against small powers, during the period.<sup>43</sup> In light of this evidence,

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36 Fiammenghi, Davide, op cit, p 153

37 Ibid p 137

38 Ibid p 150

39 Ibid p 153

40 My presentation of Monteiro's theory is somewhat simplified. Monteiro presents more causal pathways, than the one I described, and also includes some other possible answer to the dominating states postures. However, the aspects of Monteiro that I present, are the one I believe to be most credible.

41 Fiammenghi, Davide, op cit pp 136 - 137

42 Monteiro, Nuno P, op cit, pp 18 - 19

43 Ibid p 11

Monteiro has presented a modified theory about unipolarity. Monteiro starts by defining unipolarity as an anarchic international system, in which one state has unmatched military capabilities. But the dominating state can not project military power everywhere, all of the time. If a state could project military power everywhere in the system, all the time, Monteiro predicts that international order would become hegemonic. In a hegemonic system, some form of hierarchical world order would eventually manifest.<sup>44</sup>

The dominating power in a unipolar system, has a considerable freedom. Monteiro means that it can adopt three basic postures: defensive dominance, offensive dominance or disengagement. Different postures can be adopted towards different regions, and even towards different nations. If the dominating state adopts a posture of defensive dominance, it will support the status quo in the system. Major territorial or major political changes, will be discouraged by the dominating state. If the dominating state adopts a posture of offensive dominance, it will try to produce major political or territorial changes in the system. Finally the dominating state can adopt a disengagement posture, stating that it will not intervene in a region or against a specific state.<sup>45</sup>

Monteiro proceeds by making some predictions, about how states will react to the postures of the dominating state. If the dominating state adopts a posture of defensive dominance, most states will try to follow the rules set up by the dominating state. However some state can still cross the boundaries set up by the dominating power, by different miscalculations. This can be a causal pathway to war, with the dominating state.<sup>46</sup> If the dominating state adopts an aggressive posture towards a small state, the small state will face an extreme self-help situation. External balancing will be impossible, since there are no other poles in the system. Facing an extreme self-help situation, the small state will desperately engage in internal balancing.<sup>47</sup> Such internal balancing will likely create conflicts with the dominant power.<sup>48</sup> Once again, Monteiro points to a causal pathway to war in a unipolar system. If the dominating state adopts a disengagement posture towards a region, Monteiro predicts that the states in region, will ignore the dominant state. Instead they will engage in regional security competition.<sup>49</sup>

Monteiro's theory highlights two important and often overlooked points, regarding a unipolar system. A dominating state, can act in a revisionist way. And states that are under pressure by a

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44 Monteiro, Nuno P, op cit, p13

45 Ibid p 14

46 Ibid pp 23 – 30

47 See Waltz, Kenneth N op cit p 168, regarding internal and external balancing

48 Monteiro, Nuno P, op cit pp 30 -31

49 Ibid pp 33 - 36

dominant power will face an extreme self-help situation. It seems reasonable to assume, that such states will focus on internal balancing, since neo-realist theory stresses that states seek to survive. Thus Monteiro reaches an important conclusion: unipolarity does not have to be peaceful.

#### *4.1.4 Neoclassical realism and bounded rationality*

Neo-realist theory focuses on systemic constraints and incentives provided by the international system.<sup>50</sup> Neoclassical realism acknowledge this constraints and incentives. However the neoclassical realists, points to the fact that foreign policy decision makers, can perceive the international system in many different ways. The real conditions in the international system, can thus differ from the perceptions of the national decision makers. Domestic political structures decides who it is that will make foreign policy decisions. Since perceptions can vary between different groups, and since domestic political structures have a huge influence on the selection of foreign policy decision makers, domestic political structures can influence a nation's foreign policy.<sup>51</sup>

The theory of bounded rationality, states that decision makers have cognitive limitations. A decision maker can not process all possible information that is relevant, before making a decision. The complexity and ambiguity inherent in many decision making situations, will limit also the decision makers ability to make a rational decision.<sup>52</sup>

The theory of bounded rationality fits well with the assumptions of neoclassical realism. Combining bounded rationality and neoclassical realism we could state that: national decision makers can not process all relevant information about international conditions. Thus the decision makers perception of the international system can differ significantly from the actual conditions. Based on this, I will use the decision makers perceptions of the international system when I try to understand their decisions and their differences.

## 4.2 Key concepts and theoretical framework

### *4.2.1 Measuring relative power*

Fiammenghi uses quantitative measures, to indicate where state are positioned on the security curve.<sup>53</sup> I will instead use qualitative statements, uttered by the decision makers inside the Japanese

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50 Waltz, Kenneth N op cit pp 91 - 93

51 Beach, Derek op cit p 64 - 65

52 Ibid pp 104 - 105

53 Fiammenghi, Davide, op cit, pp 142 - 143

government, to place states on a perceived security curve. In line with my neoclassical assumptions, I will thus use perceptions of reality and not statistical data. In historical cases, I believe that it is preferable to use such qualitative statements. Qualitative statements uttered by the decision makers, will give us an image of how the actors perceived relative power positions (if the statements are reliable). They will include the miscalculations of the decision makers. They will also include the actors' perception of variables such as the quality of different military units, the morale of the different sides, the beliefs in the strategy employed and so on. These intangible factors can not be measured, by counting ships or factories.

#### *4.2.2 Key concepts*

A region is defined as a geographical area, in to which a limited number of states, can project military power. I place states in to three categories, based on their relative power and Fiammenghis theory of the security curve. Small powers does not have the capabilities to dominate a region. If they would gain significant amounts of relative power, they would still not be able to dominate a region. Small powers are thus placed below the security threshold on the security curve. Great powers does not have the capabilities to dominate a region, however they would be able to dominate a region if they gained significant amounts of relative power. Great powers are thus placed close to the security threshold on the security curve. Dominant states are military dominating in a region. Dominating states are thus placed at or beyond the absolute security threshold, on the security curve.

#### *4.3.3 Hypothesis*

With the help of Fiammenghis security curve, I can now make some assumptions about state behavior:

- A small power will not expect a strong balancing reaction, against any attempt from it to gain relative power. Thus we can expect, that small powers will try to gain more relative power.
- A great power will expect a strong balancing reaction, against any attempt from it, to gain relative power. Thus we expect that great powers, will not seek to gain more relative power, rather they will try to preserve their relative power status.
- A dominant states will not expect a strong balancing reaction, against any attempt from it, to gain relative power. Thus we can expect that dominating states, will try to gain more relative

power.

Based on Monteiro's theory about state behavior in a unipolar system, I will make three assumptions:

- States in a unipolar system, will *generally* try to conform to the rules set by the dominant state, if the dominant state adopts a status-quo posture towards them.
- States in a unipolar system, will desperately pursue internal balancing, if the dominating state adopts a revisionist and aggressive posture towards them.
- States in a unipolar system will ignore the dominant power, if the dominant power adopts a disengagement posture towards their region.

## 5 Empirical Part

### 5.1 Framing the decision making situations

#### *5.1.1 Japan's foreign policy, and the formation of national preferences in the interwar period*

During 1940 and 1941, the foreign policy decision makers in the Japanese government, shared a revisionist and expansionist vision of Japan's future. Japan's plans for expansion, were often summarized in the phrase, to create the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.<sup>54</sup> A secret policy document, adopted on the 2 of July in 1941, clearly indicated that this meant substantial influence in China, an advancement in the south (ie Southern Pacific), and an expansion in to the USSR. In short, Japan strove to dominate the mainland in East Asia, and extend its influence in to the southern Pacific.<sup>55</sup>

Where did these policy preferences come from? During the first world war, tensions had arisen between China and Japan. At the end of 1921, the great powers of East Asia<sup>56</sup> met in Washington and divided up their spheres of influence in the region. In the treaties from the meeting, the USA tried to create an international order in the region, based upon an independent China, that were open for trade.<sup>57</sup>

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54 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p xxiii

55 Ibid pp 78 - 79

56 This included the colonial powers

57 Overy, Richard (edt) (2015) The Oxford Illustrated History of the Second World War, Oxford: Oxford University Press p 38

Japan was highly dependent on trade, because of a lack of natural resources in Japan. Given the lessons of the first world war, important segments in the Japanese army, anticipated the need for control over more natural resources in the case of a major war. The provinces in northern China were rich with natural resources, and they were seen as strategically important by the army. Two important factors changed the balance of power in the region, during the 1920s. During the second half of 1920s, Chiang Kai Shek's Kuomintang Party started to unify China by force. This was seen as a threat by key segments in the Japanese army.<sup>58</sup> And when the depression hit the USA in 1929, the isolationist opinion grew strong in the USA. This made it more difficult for the government in the USA, to support China's independence.<sup>59</sup>

In 1931 local Japanese army commanders, started a war in Manchuria, trying to get control over the northern provinces in China. The opinion in Japan was in favor of the war and politics in Japan became more militaristic.<sup>60</sup> In 1937 Chiang Kai Shek decided to face the Japanese aggression and a full scale war erupted between Japan and China.<sup>61</sup> Control over natural resources had been a major reason for the war in the first place. Yet the war in China had actually made Japan more dependent on trade with the USA, since the war effort demanded large quantities of metal and oil. Japan expanded on China's behalf, and this caused tensions between the US and Japan. During the years of 1938, 1939 and 1940, the government of the USA enacted several economic sanctions directed at Japan.<sup>62</sup> However the USA did not ban the export of oil to Japan. Oil was the most critical economic dependency, that Japan had on the USA. Japan's navy was totally dependent on the imports of oil, and without oil Japan would lose its naval power projection capability.<sup>63</sup> Under pressure from the American sanctions, the Japanese government expanded its imperialist ambitions, in order to free Japan completely from her economic dependency on the USA.<sup>64</sup>

As stated above, key segments in the army played a vital role in the formation of Japan's imperialist ambitions. The navy felt both the need for economic independence, and the fear of sanctions from the USA, more than any other segment in the government.<sup>65</sup> The civilian government during the period were led by Fumimaro Konoe who supported an ambitious imperialist policy.<sup>66</sup> However Konoe resigned on the 16 of October 1941, in opposition to a coming war with the USA. Heideki

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58 Overy, Richard (ed), op cit p 38

59 Miller, James Harold JR (1981) *Isolationism: Assumptions and Evolution*, Texas Tech University, p 25 - 26

60 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 40

61 Overy, Richard (ed), op cit pp 44 - 45

62 Ibid 53

63 Sagan, Scott D op cit p 897

64 Xijun, Lu (2008) Changes in Japanese strategy in 1939–1940 and the internationalization of the Sino–Japanese War, *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, 2:1, 21-40, p 37

65 Sagan, Scott D op cit p 897

66 Xijun, Lu op cit pp 36 - 37

Tojo from the army, then become prime minister.<sup>67</sup>

### *5.1.2 Foreign policy decision making in Japan, during 1940 and 1941*

After the Meiji restoration in 1868, Japan was formerly a constitutional monarchy. Since the 1880s the civilian government, the army and the navy, answered directly to the monarch. However it was the tradition that the monarch did not intervene in the decision making or lead the country directly. Thus there was no strong, centralised leadership in Japan.<sup>68</sup> This led to a lack of efficient coordination of Japan's foreign policy, during the interwar period.<sup>69</sup>

During 1940 and 1941, the Liaison Conferences had become the most important forum for foreign policy decision making in Japan. A Liaison Conference was a meeting between high representatives from the civilian government, the navy and the army. The goal of the discussions at the Liaison Conferences, were to adopt a common position on important foreign policy issues.<sup>70</sup> The Liaison Conferences were essentially unofficial meetings. When a common position had been reached, an Imperial Conference had to be held, in order to ratify the decisions made at the Liaison Conferences. While the emperor participated at the Imperial Conferences, it was tradition that the emperor never spoke at these meetings. Instead the emperor were represented by the head of the privy council (the privy council where the emperors advisers), who usually questioned the representatives from the civilian government, the army and the navy, about various aspects of the proposed policy. Some advice were usually offered by the head of the privy council, but the decisions made at the Liaison Conferences, were eventually ratified by the emperor.<sup>71</sup>

## 5.2 Critical decisions made by Japan

### *5.2.1 Signing of the Tripartite Pact*

Background of the decision: China had been at war with the Japan since 1937.<sup>72</sup> Japanese forces had been involved in, and lost military confrontations against USSR, in 1938 and 1939.<sup>73</sup> Germany had signed a non-aggression pact with the USSR on the 23 of August 1939.<sup>74</sup> Germany had attacked Poland on the 1 of September 1939. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany on the 3 of

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67 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p184

68 Ibid p xvii-xviii

69 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit p 40

70 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit pp xviii - xix

71 Ibid pp xvi - xvii

72 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit pp 44 - 48

73 Mearsheimer, John J op cit p 219

74 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit p 112

September 1939.<sup>75</sup> By the 22 of June 1940, Germany had defeated Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium and France.<sup>76</sup> The battle of Britain had started on the 11 of July 1940.<sup>77</sup> The USA where opposed to Japan's and Germany's aggression. Between 1938 and 1940, the US had enacted some economic sanctions against Japan as a response to Japan's aggression.<sup>78</sup>

Date: 19 September 1940

Decision making process: On 19 September 1940, an Imperial Conference where held to make the signing of the pact, an official policy.<sup>79</sup>

Decision: Japan decided to sign an alliance, called the Tripartite pact, with Germany and Italy.

### 5.2.2 *The decision to move in to southern French Indochina*

Date: 11 of June 1941 until the 2 July 1941

Background to the decision: When Germany had defeated France in June in 1940, the Japanese government started to put pressure on Vichy France, in order to get control over French Indochina. On the 22 of September in 1940, Japan signed an agreement with Vichy France, that allowed for troops be stationed in the northern parts of French Indochina.<sup>80</sup>

After the decision to sign the tripartite pact, Japan put diplomatic pressure on the Netherland East Indies in order to sign an economic agreement. Japan demanded large quantities oil and other commodities. The officials in the Netherland East Indies refused to bow down to the Japanese pressure.<sup>81</sup> The last diplomatic mission to the Netherland East Indies, left the islands on the 17 of June 1941.<sup>82</sup>

In Europe Germany attacked Yugoslavia and Greece in April 1941 and after three weeks she had

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75 Davies, Norman (2006) *Europe at War 1939 – 1945. No Simple Victory*, London: Pan Macmillan, 2006 p 75

76 Ibid pp 75 - 83

77 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit pp 86 -88

78 Ibid p 53

79 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 2 – 13. I have not been able to track the entire decision making process, inside the Japanese government, before the signing of the tripartite pact

80 Uhalley, Stephen Jr (1966) Japan's southern advance: the indochina phase, *Asian Studies*, 04/1966, Volym 4, Nummer 1, pp 92 - 94

81 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 37

82 Ibid pp 47 - 48

conquered both countries.<sup>83</sup> Germany had also established a position in north Africa.<sup>84</sup> In March in 1941, the USA enacted the Lend-Policy,<sup>85</sup> providing economic support to the United Kingdom, the Republic of China and later the Soviet Union.<sup>86</sup>

On the 5 of June in 1941, Germany secretly informed Japan, that she would attack the Soviet Union. Germany told Japan that she could defeat the Soviet Union in two or three month. She proposed a splitting up of Soviet territory between Japan and Germany, after the victory.<sup>87</sup> On the 22 of June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union.<sup>88</sup>

Decision making process: Important discussions about the decision, where held at the Liaison Conference on the 11 and 12 of June 1941. A policy document that supported a move in to the southern parts of French Indochina, were approved at the Liaison Conference on the 12 of June 1941.<sup>89</sup> However there where continued opposition towards the decision, inside the japanese government, especially from foreign minister Matsuoka.<sup>90</sup> At the Imperial Conference on the 2 of July in 1941, the policy stated on the 12 of June, were finally approved by the emperor and made into an official policy.<sup>91</sup>

Decision: Japan decide to send troops, in to the southern parts of French Indochina, in order to build military bases in the area.

### *5.2.3 The decision to attack the USA and Great Britain*

Date: 3 of September 1941 until the 1 of dec 1941

Background to the decision: Japan put diplomatic pressure on Vichy France, and demanded military bases in the southern parts of French Indochina. If Vichy France did not agree to Japans demands, Japan threatend to use force on the 20 of July 1941. Vichy France agreed to Japans demands and signed a security pact with Japan on the 21 of July 1941.<sup>92</sup>

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83 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit p 91

84 Ibid p 90

85 Overy, Richard (edt), op cit p 147

86 Davies, Norman op cit pp 34 - 35

87 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 46

88 Davies, Norman op cit p 93

89 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 47 - 53

90 Ibid pp 53 - 77

91 Ibid pp 77 - 79

92 Ibid pp 107 - 108

In answer to the Japanese decision to move troops in to the southern parts of French Indochina, the USA froze all Japanese assets in the USA, on the 25 of July.<sup>93</sup> Great Britain and the Netherlands followed in the footsteps of the USA. On the 1 of August 1941, the USA banned all export of oil to Japan.<sup>94</sup>

Decision making process: The decision to attack the USA and Great Britain, were the product of a long and rather complex decision making process. The army and navy argued for the war, on a Liaison conference on the 3 of September 1940.<sup>95</sup> An imperial conference was held on the 6 of September 1940. It was decided that a war would be started, if a diplomatic solution to the crises could not be found, on the 10 of October 1941.<sup>96</sup> On the 12 of October a diplomatic solution had not been found and no war had been started. Prime Minister Konoe where under pressure from the war minister Tojo, to start the war. Konoe chose to resign since he did not want to lead the Japan in to war with the USA.<sup>97</sup>

The emperor then decided that war Minister Tojo should be named prime minister. He also decided that decision on the Imperial Conference on 6 of September 1941, where now null and void.<sup>98</sup> On the Liaison Conference between the 24 of October until the 1 of November, the new government made a lengthy reevaluation if it's options, and Japan's capacity for war.<sup>99</sup> An extraordinary Liaison Conference where held on the 1 of November 1941. It lasted for 17 hours and the tensions at Conference where high. Finally it was decided that Japan should go to war, if a diplomatic solution with the USA, could not be found before midnight on the of 1 December.<sup>100</sup> The policy was made official at an Imperial Conference, on the 5 of November 1941.<sup>101</sup> Since the diplomatic negotiations failed, another Imperial Conference was held on the of 1 December, to make the decision for war final.<sup>102</sup> On the 7 of December 1941 Japan attacked the USA at Pearl Harbor.

During the period of decision making, negotiations where held with the USA, to find a diplomatic solution to crisis between the two nations. The position of the USA, was that Japan had to withdraw all troops of her troops from French Indochina and China, if the USA where to resume commerce with Japan.<sup>103</sup> Under pressure, Japan was finally willing to withdraw troops form the southern parts

93 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 107 - 108

94 Ibid pp 112 - 113

95 Ibid p 129 - 133

96 Ibid p 35

97 Ibid p 184

98 Ibid p 185

99 Ibid pp 187 - 204

100 Ibid pp 199 - 207

101 Ibid pp 208 - 211

102 Ibid pp 262 - 263

103 Record, Jeffery, op cit p 20

of French Indochina. Japan was also willing to withdraw troops from parts of China, but not from the northern provinces of China.<sup>104</sup> No deal was reached between the two nations.

Decision: Japan decided to go to war against USA, the Netherlands and Great Britain

### 5.3 Statements form policy conferences

#### 5.3.1 Vital statements, during the decision making process

##### *5.3.1.1 Signing of the Tripartite Pact*

19 of September 1940 - Imperial Conference

Privy council: The president of the privy council Hara, explained that pact was a way for Germany and Italy to deter the USA, from an entry in to the war in Europe. Hara anticipated that the USA, would put economic pressure on Japan by banning the export of oil, if Japan signed the pact. The president feared that it would be impossible get oil from the Netherland East Indies, since the government of the Netherlands, had fled to England.<sup>105</sup> He also feared that USA might try to encircle Japan, by placing troops in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>106</sup> Hara stated that USA had acted as watchdog in east asia, taking Great Britains place.<sup>107</sup>

Civilan government: Foreign Minister Matsuoka stated that the pact could help to ease tensions between Japan and the USSR. Germany would help Japan with the establishment of better relations, since better relations lay in the german national interest.<sup>108</sup> Matsuoka also anticipated that the USA could start a war with Japan, if Japan did not take a firm stand against the USA.<sup>109</sup> He discussed the prospect of using force against the Netherland East Indies, and he anticipated that this would lead to a war with Great Britain.<sup>110</sup> He thought the Germans could put pressure on the Netherland East Indies, since Germany occupied the Netherlands. He also anticipated that other states would not follow in the footsteps of the USA, if the USA punished Japan by economic sanctions, and that Japan would be able to buy commodities from other nations.<sup>111</sup>

The minister of the cabinet Hoshino, said the USA will place sanctions on Japan where "it hurts

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104 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit pp 209 - 211

105 Ibid pp 9 - 10

106 Ibid p 12

107 Ibid 9

108 Ibid p 5

109 Ibid p 10

110 Ibid p 12

111 Ibid p 10

Japan the most and the United States the least".<sup>112</sup> He anticipated that large amount of oil could be obtained from the Soviet Union, with the help of Germany.<sup>113</sup>

Army: War minister Tojo, anticipated that it would be necessary for Japan to obtain oil from the Netherland East Indies. He hoped that the war in China would end soon, and that additional pressure could placed on the Netherland East Indies after that. He argued that force should used against the Netherland East Indies, as a last option.<sup>114</sup>

Navy: The chief of the navy staff Fushimi, approved the decision to sign the pact, if everything possible was done to avoid a war with the USA. And if everything possible was done, to get the oil from the Netherland East Indies by peaceful means.<sup>115</sup>

### *5.3.1.2 The decision to move in to southern French Indochina*

11 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Navy: The chief of the navy staff Nagano, argued that bases in French Indochina were needed for a military operations against the Netherland East Indies. He argued that force should be used against anyone how tried to stop Japan, form acquiring the bases.<sup>116</sup>

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama argued forcefully for the militarization of to the southern parts of French Indochina. He anticipated that the USA and Great Britain would refrain from action, if Japan acted in a forceful manner.<sup>117</sup>

Civilian Government: The foreign minister Matsuoka, feared that a move against French Indochina, would provoke the USA and Great Britain.<sup>118</sup>

12 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama argued that the purpose with an occupation of the southern

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112 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 11

113 Ibid

114 Ibid

115 Ibid p 13

116 Ibid pp 50 - 51

117 Ibid p 50

118 Ibid

parts of French Indochina, was to put additional pressure on China and the South West Pacific.<sup>119</sup>

#### 16 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Civilian Government: Foreign minister Matsuoka anticipated that the USA would enter the war on Britain side, when Germany attacked the Soviet Union. He questioned if this anticipation has been included in the plans for the militarisation of southern French Indochina.<sup>120</sup>

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama, argued that Japan should go ahead with the invasion of southern French Indochina, even if a war broke out between Germany and the USSR.<sup>121</sup>

War minister Tojo argued that it was necessary to proceed into the southern parts of French Indochina, otherwise Japan would have to give up it's plan to control the Asian mainland.<sup>122</sup>

Navy: Admiral Oikawa argued that that an alliance between the USSR and England, might give him second thoughts about the plan to move in to southern French Indochina.<sup>123</sup>

#### 25 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Civilian Government: Foreign minister Matsuoka argued that Japan should move north and support the German attack on the Soviet Union. Japan needed to do some sacrifices, if she wanted to get part of the fruits, from Germanys coming victory against the USSR.<sup>124</sup>

Navy: Navy minister Oikawa states that the navy could handle a war against Great Britain and the USA. However if the Soviet Union also got involved, the situation would become very difficult for naval operations. The navy particularly feared that the USA could use bases in the Soviet Union, for it's navy and airforce.<sup>125</sup>

Army and Navy: The army and navy stated that Japan had not completed its preparations for war. They stated that Japan should be careful to enter a war with the USSR, since this could push the

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119 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 52

120 Ibid p 54

121 Ibid p 55

122 Ibid p 56

123 Ibid p 55

124 Ibid p 59

125 Ibid p 59

USA in to war with Japan. <sup>126</sup>

27 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Civilian government: Foreign minister Matsuoka, argued that Japan would be surrounded by the USA, Great Britain and USSR, if she adopted a wait and see policy. He also anticipated that Germany's war against Great Britain, would be over before the end of the year. The foreign minister also expressed doubts about a US intervention, if Japan attacked the Soviet Union. He anticipated that the USA could be held down with diplomacy and kept calm, until the war with the USSR was over.<sup>127</sup>

30 of June 1941 - Liaison Conference

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama argued that Japan had to proceed with her territorial expansion in the south and take the Netherland East Indies, even if the USA and Great Britain tried to stop her.<sup>128</sup>

2 of July 1941 Imperial Conference

A policy document was accepted, that stated that increased diplomatic pressure would be placed on the southern region. Force would be used in the southern region, as a last option. Preparations for a possible war against the USA and Great Britain would be made, and Japan should not let the USA or Great Britain deter her, from a militarisation of the southern parts of French Indochina. Japan would also strengthen its military preparedness against the Soviet Union. However Japan would not participate in the German war against the Soviet Union, at the time being.<sup>129</sup>

Army: The army chief of staff Sugiyama, stated that an occupation of the southern parts of French Indochina, would sever the links between Chiang Kie Shek, Britain and the USA. That would make it easier for Japan to make a peace deal with China.<sup>130</sup>

Sugiyama also argued that a quick victory for Germany, against the Soviet Union, would deter the USA from starting a war over southern French Indochina. However he recognized that a quick

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126 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit pp 59 - 60

127 Ibid pp 64 - 66

128 Ibid p 74

129 Ibid p 78

130 Ibid pp 80 - 81

victory was probable, but not certain. If the war against the Soviet Union was prolonged, it was more likely that USA would use force against Japan. Given the German success in the war against the USSR, Sugiyama did not think the USA would attack Japan.<sup>131</sup> He also said that the Soviet Union had considerable forces along its border with Japan, and that Japan should strengthen its army along the border.<sup>132</sup>

Navy: The navy chief of staff Nagano, stated that a push to the south, could help Japan to become self sufficient.<sup>133</sup>

Civilian Government: Foreign minister Matsuoka anticipated that an invasion of the southern parts of French Indochina, might lead to a war with the USA. He also anticipated that Germany would invade Great Britain.<sup>134</sup>

### *5.3.1.3 The decision to attack the USA and Great Britain*

#### 3 September 1941 - Liaison Conference

Army and Navy: Navy and army chief of staff demanded a war soon, if a diplomatic solution to the crises could not be found.<sup>135</sup>

#### Between the 3 and 6 of September - The Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's

The Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's, was a document compiled by three secretaries (one from the civilian government, one from the navy and one from the army) after the Liaison Conference on the 3 of September. The document was written in preparation for the Imperial Conference, on the 6 of September.<sup>136</sup>

The document states that Japans stockpile of oil would last for a maximum of two years, without new supply.<sup>137</sup> It also anticipates that a war with the USA could end because of a favorable change in the American opinion.<sup>138</sup> It was further stated that it was not possible for Japan to stop an alliance

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131 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 88

132 Ibid p 89

133 Ibid pp 81 - 82

134 Ibid p 88

135 Ibid pp 130 - 131

136 Ibid p 152

137 Ibid p 154

138 Ibid p 153

between the USSR and USA.<sup>139</sup> And that Japan could expect little support from Germany and Italy, in the case of a war with the USA.<sup>140</sup>

In the document, it was estimated that the German army would have destroyed most Soviet forces, at the beginning of November. German operations would then be stepped up in the Caucasus, the Near East and in North Africa. The document stated that the probability was very high, that the regime in the USSR would have to flee east, over the Urals. Robbed of its European parts, the USSR was anticipated to be weak and to lack the ability to perform large military operations. A German invasion of Britain was anticipated for the spring or summer of 1942.<sup>141</sup>

6 September 1941 - Imperial Conference

A policy document was approved, in which it was stated that Japan would attack the USA, Great Britain and the Netherlands, if a diplomatic solution had not been reached before the 10 of October. A list of Japanese demands for a diplomatic solution were included. One of them was restored commercial relations with the USA, and that Japan would be able to buy the commodities she needed, from the south west pacific.<sup>142</sup>

Navy: Navy chief of staff Nagano said that military supplies, including oil, were dwindling each day. The USA and Britain were strengthening their military positions in East Asia. Nagano also anticipated that USA would try to prolong a war with Japan. The USA would use her vast industrial potential, her great supplies of commodities and her uninvadable homeland, to make the war long. Japan should therefore seize territory in the south west pacific and build a strong defensive position there. Nagano admitted that he could not anticipate what would happen next.<sup>143</sup>

Army: The army chief of staff Sugiyama stated that Japan did not have to worry about the Soviet Union, during the initial phase of the war. He did anticipate that the USA and the Soviet Union would form an alliance in the future. However the Soviet Union's power projection capability would be low during the winter time.<sup>144</sup>

Civilian Government: Foreign minister Toyada stated that trade with USA was at a standstill,

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139 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 155

140 Ibid p158

141 Ibid pp 157 - 159

142 Ibid pp 135 - 136

143 Ibid pp 138 - 140.

144 Ibid pp 141 - 142

since the 26 of July.<sup>145</sup> The chief of the planning board Suzuki stated Japan has traditionally been dependent on trade with the USA and Great Britain. Japan had tried to establish economic ties with Germany and the Soviet Union, to get extra supplies of commodities. Since the war had started between Germany and the Soviet Union, Japan had given up on this efforts. Now Japan experienced a lack of commodities and oil was the biggest problem. The director feared that stockpile of oil in Japan, would be almost empty in June or July next year. If the regions in the Southern Pacific where concurred within three to four month, commodities could start to flow in to Japan, after six month. The director anticipated that it would take two years, before Japan could make full use of the concurred resources. The director also stated that Japan had the moral and the manpower for the war. Material resources was the problem.<sup>146</sup>

#### 25 September 1941 - Liaison Conference

Before the Liaison Conference the army and navy had set a deadline for negotiations to the 15 of October. Then they wanted to go to war.<sup>147</sup>

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama stated that a diplomatic solution had to ensure stability for many years, and not just buy Japan a few years of peace.<sup>148</sup>

#### 23 October 1941 - Liaison Conference

Navy: Rear Admiral Maeda predicted that the war in Europe would probably be long, because of Germany's success against the USSR and Englands growing power. The next anticipated battleground was the near east.<sup>149</sup>

24 and 25 of October 1941 - Liaison Conference (the notes from the two conferences were combined in the primary source)

Army: Army vice chief of staff Tsukada stated that the army could leave the front against China, as last option. It might be forced to leave this front, if troubled stirred along the border against USSR.<sup>150</sup>

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145 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p146

146 Ibid pp 147 - 148

147 Ibid pp 176

148 Ibid p 177

149 Ibid p 186

150 Ibid p 188

All parties: All parties agreed that USA might use military bases in the Soviet Union, or that Soviet might get support from USA and Great Britain to attack Japan.<sup>151</sup>

27 of October 1941 - Liaison Conference

Navy and Civilian Government: The navy and foreign ministry agreed, that the Netherlands, the USA and Great Britain, could not be separated in a war.<sup>152</sup>

30 October 1941 - Liaison Conference

All Parties: Everyone except the foreign minister, agreed that Japan would lose its great power status, if it agreed to the demands of the USA<sup>153</sup>

Civilian Government: Prime minister Tojo announced that a final decision had to be reached on the 1 of November.<sup>154</sup>

1 November 1941 - Liaison Conference

Civilian Government: Finance minister Kaya stated that he did not believe that USA would attack Japan. Foreign minister Togo stated the same.<sup>155</sup>

Navy: Navy chief of staff Nagano stated that he did not know, if the USA would attack Japan or not within three years. He estimated that there where a 50 % chance, that the USA would make such an attack. However it would be much more difficult to win a war in three years, then it would be now. The enemy would have more ships and stronger defensive points at that time. Thus Japan should go to war now.<sup>156</sup>

Army: Army vice cheif of staff Tsukada said: "In general, the prospect if we go to war are not bright...On the other hand, it is not possible to maintain the status quo. Hence one unavoidably reaches the conclusion that we must go to war."<sup>157</sup> He stated that Japan should build an strong

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151 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p189

152 Ibid p193

153 Ibid p 198

154 Ibid p198

155 Ibid pp 201 - 202

156 Ibid

157 Ibid p 207

defensive position in the south, against the USA. If Japan could hold out in the south, there was a chance that Germany and Italy could defeat Great Britain and that Japan would defeat her enemies on the Asian mainland. Then Japan and Germany could force the USSR to surrender. This would make the USA isolated in the international system, and she would sue for peace.<sup>158</sup>

#### 5 November 1941 - Imperial Conference

A policy document was approved, in which it was stated that Japan should go to war against the USA and Great Britain, if negotiation with the USA were not successful, by midnight on the 1 of December 1941.<sup>159</sup>

Civilian government: Foreign Minister Togo stated that China, the Netherlands, Great Britain and USA were trying to encircle Japan. The Soviet Union might also try to extend its influence, with the help of Great Britain and the USA.<sup>160</sup> The president of the planning board Suzuki stated that even if Japan conquered the Netherland East Indies, her stockpile of aviation fuel could still run out in three years.<sup>161</sup> Japan had no chance of becoming self sufficient by the production of synthetic oil. The materials needed for the war would be hard to acquire, however the situation would be even worse if Japan maintained the status quo.<sup>162</sup>

Army: Army chief of staff Sugiyama stated that Japan would easily conquer the enemy positions in south Asia. The enemies were spread out in the south west pacific, and Japan could concentrate her forces, since she had initial naval superiority. He also stated the USSR's power for war was declining, military and morally. The risk for a Soviet attack where low. However the americans could use Soviet bases, and put pressure on the USSR to act against Japan.<sup>163</sup>

The Navy: Navy chief of staff Nagano stated that fleet strength in the Pacific between the USA and Japan, were pretty evenly matched in the pacific. Nagano anticipated that the naval power projection capabilities of Great Britain, would be low in the pacific.<sup>164</sup>

#### 1 December 1941 - Imperial Conference

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158 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit pp 207

159 Ibid p 208 – 209

160 Ibid p 214

161 Ibid p 140

162 Ibid pp 220 - 222

163 Ibid pp 226 - 227

164 Ibid p 233

Navy: Navy Chief of staff Nagano stated that Great Britain had been able to send some more ships to the Pacific, since the German and especially the Italian navy, had been less active. However the reinforcement were still not significant enough, to have any major effect on Japans operational capabilities.<sup>165</sup>

### 5.2.3 Key statements about relative power

#### Germany

Foreign minister Matsuoka (on the 8 of may 1941): If USA participates in war against Germany, the war will be very long.<sup>166</sup>

#### Italy

Foreign minister Matsuoka (on the 22 of april 1941): Italy is totally dependent on German support, but loyal Germany<sup>167</sup>

#### China

Foreign minister Matsuoka (on the 8 of may 1940): Even if Chiang wants peace, he can no sue for it without the approval of the USA<sup>168</sup>

Foreignminister Matsuoka (on the 10 of july 1941): If Japan withdrew her troops from China, a civil war would erupt in China. The USA and Great Britain would intervene in the war and strengthen their positions in China. This would eventually lead to the dominance of the USA, in east Asia.<sup>169</sup>

Between the 3 and 6 of September 1941 - The Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies': If Japan managed to isolate Chiang Kai Shek regime, so that it could not get material support from Great Britain and the USA, Chiang Kai Shek would sue for peace.<sup>170</sup>

## 6 Analysis

### 6.1 Analysis of the critical decisions

#### 6.1.1 *Signing of the Triparite Pact*

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165 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 280

166 Ibid p 30

167 Ibid p 23

168 Ibid p 27

169 Ibid pp 95 -96

170 Ibid p 156

Perceived Regional (East Asian) Polarity: I have defined great powers as states that does not have the capabilities to dominate a region, however they would be able to dominate a region, if they gained significant amounts of relative power.<sup>171</sup> Japan's aim was to dominate the mainland in east Asia and regions in the south west pacific.<sup>172</sup> It seems reasonable assume, that Japan believed that she could succeeded with her expansionist ambitions, otherwise she wouldn't have pursued an imperialist policy. If Japan had manage to fulfill all of her imperial ambitions, Japan would definitely have achieved a dominating position in east Asia. Thus we can assume that the japanese leaders, did perceive Japan as a great power in the east Asian region, when they signed the tripartite pact. There are no direct statements about the power projection capabilities of the USA, from the conference on 19 of September in 1940. However statements from the conferences on 6 of September 1941, clearly indicates that Japan viewed the USA as a very dangerous contender. It was stated that the main strength of the USA, were her vast industrial potential and Japan's inability to invade the USA. Shifts in potential power are usually long term processes and geography does not change at all. Therefore we can assume that the statements from the 6 of September 1941, where relevant for Japans calculations, when Japan signed the Tripartite Pact. Statements from the 10 of July 1941, also indicates that Japan anticipated that the USA would expand its influence in China, if Japan left China. This clearly indicates the power for significant expansion, and the power to compete with other great powers for regional domination. Thus Japan perceived the USA as a great power.

The primary sources contains no direct information about the power of the USSR, in the east Asian region before the German invasion. However the great power of Japan, had lost two wars against the Soviet Union in 1938 and 1939.<sup>173</sup> Thus it seems reasonable to assume, that Japan did perceive the Soviet Union as a great power. The statements about Chinas (Chiang-kai Sheks) relative power, shows that Japan did not view China as an independent actor. Japan believed that China would surrender, if Japan could cut of her support from the USA and Great Britain. Thus China was not perceived as great power.

On the 19 of September 1940, Hara stated that USA had taken over Great Britain's role, as the status quo power in east asia. Great Britains strategic position in september 1940 were terrible. Germany had conquered France and the german forces stood at the atlantic cost. The battle of

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171 See Key Concepts

172 See Japan's foreign policy, and the formation of national preferences in the interwar period

173 See 5.3.1.1 Signing of the Tripartite Pact

Britain where underway and Britain had no allies.<sup>174</sup> Jeffrey Record claims that Great Britain did not have the military capabilities needed, to defend her colonial empire in southeast Asia against Japan.<sup>175</sup> Given the threat towards the core region of Great Britain, it seems unlikely that Japan anticipated that any British reinforcement would be sent to east Asia. I believe that Hara's statement has to be interpreted in the light of this situation. My interpretation is that Hara perceived that Great Britain did not have the capabilities to defend her empire in east Asia, and that the USA defended her positions, when Great Britain was weak. Thus it seems reasonable to assume, that Japan did not perceive Great Britain as a great power in the east Asian region, when Japan decided to sign the tripartite pact.

I conclude that Japan perceived three great powers in the region, at the time for the decision: Japan, the USA and the USSR. The perceived international system was thus tripolar.

Perceived Balance of Power: The notes from the conference on the 6 of September 1941 (noted in the paragraph above), showed that Japan perceived itself as the weaker part, in a conflict with the USA. The statements from the conference on the 19 of September 1940, shows that Japan felt economically dependent on the USA, especially as a supplier of oil. The economic dependency gave Japan less relative power against the USA. I have not found any indication in the primary sources, about the perceived relative power relation between Japan and USSR, at time of the decision.

Analysis of the Decision and Different Scenarios: At the conference on 19 of September 1940, Hara stated that the pact was directed against the USA, as a way of deterring her from entering the war in Europe. Obviously Japan decided to sign the pact, to deter the USA from an intervention in east Asia. Matsuoka feared that the USA could attack Japan, if Japan did not deter the USA.

Several actors at the conference on the 19 of September in 1940, anticipated that the USA would ban the export of oil to Japan, if Japan signed the pact. Some anticipated that Japan could import oil from other states, particularly from the USSR. Some anticipated that diplomatic pressure could be placed on the Netherlands East Indies and that Japan could acquire oil that way. Some actors thought that the use of force would be necessary, in order to get oil from the Netherlands East Indies. Matsuoka anticipated that use of force against the Netherlands East Indies, would lead to a war against Great Britain, (see appendix 2 for a sketch of the anticipated pathways). No actor anticipated that the use of force against the Netherlands East Indies, would lead to a war against the USA. Some fear of a

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<sup>174</sup> See 5.2.2 Signing of the Tripartite Pact

<sup>175</sup> Record, Jeffrey, op cit 23

war with the USA were expressed by the navy, but the navy's statement seems to indicate, that a war could be avoided if Japan proceeded with some care.

Statements from the conference on 19 of September in 1940, shows that Japan anticipated that her relationship with the USSR, would become better because of the tripartite pact. In a tripolar system, one would anticipate that the USSR would try to balance any growth in relative power, that Japan achieved through the pact. One interpretation is that the pact was directed against the USA and not the against the USSR. Thus Japans relative power did grow against the USA, but not against the USSR. Given this, there where no need for the USSR to balance against Japans actions. Another interpretation is that Japan anticipated that the USSR feared Germany's military capabilities, and that a balancing action by the USSR against Japan, would anger Germany.<sup>176</sup> Thus the german threat would force the USSR to establish better relations with Japan.

I can now conclude the analysis. Japan anticipated that she would gain relative power in relation to the USA, by external balancing, when she signed the tripartite pact. She anticipated that the USA would try to balance Japans rising power, by using Japan's economic dependency on the USA. But Japan predicted that she could offset this balancing act, and that USA would not dare to use force against Japan, as she countered the balancing act of the USA. Thus Japan predicted that she would gain enough relative power to deter the USA, from any efficient balancing action.

Hypothesis testing: Japan perceived her self as a great power in the east Asian international system. By signing the tripartite pact, Japan perceived that she gained enough relative power against the USA, to deter the USA from any efficient balancing action against Japan. Thus Japan perceived, that she had become a dominant state in relation to the USA (when Japan had the support of Germany and Italy).

According to my hypothesis, great powers are not expected to strive for more relative power. This is because great power will expect a powerful balancing reaction, against any move to gain relative power. This balancing reaction will make the great power less secure. However in this case, the Japanese leadership perceived that Japan gained enough relative power, to incapacitate the balancing reaction and deter any hard balancing. Japan become strong enough, to act like dominating state in relation the USA. Yet Japan had to calculate with the possibility that she could encounter hard forms of balancing, if she were unable to maintain her strong position against the USA. There are no direct predictions for this situation, in the hypothesis of the study. Fiammenghi

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<sup>176</sup> All the statements available, about the relative power relation between Germany and the USSR, indicates that Japan perceived Germany as the stronger state. See 6.1.2 The decision to move into southern French Indochina

clearly states that it is ambiguous, if a state will try to reach absolute the security threshold or not, when it has the possibility to do so.<sup>177</sup> Thus the decision cannot confirm nor reject the hypothesis of the paper.

### *6.1.2 The decision to move into southern French Indochina*

Changes in the Perceived Regional (East Asian) Polarity, since the signing of the tripartite pact: The most important event in the international system, between the 19 of September 1940 and 2 of July in 1941, was Germany's attack on the USSR on 22 of June in 1941. Matsuoka stated on the 25 of June in 1941, that Japan had to sacrifice some blood, to get some of the fruits from Germany's coming victory against the USSR. This indicates that Matsuoka anticipated that the USSR was weak in east Asia. The navy and the army opposed a Japanese attack against the USSR, because an attack might drag Japan in to a war with the USA. Neither the foreign minister nor the representatives from the navy, seems to have seen the USSR as a powerful independent actor, after the German attack. On the 2 of July 1941, Sugiyama stated that a quick German victory was anticipated, although one could not sure about it. Sugiyama acknowledged that there were significant Soviet forces along the japanese border, yet Japan could handle them by the sending of some reinforcements. The overall picture is that Japan did not perceive the USSR as great power in east Asia, after the start of Operation Barbarossa. It seems like the japanese decision makers thought that the USSR had to much problems in the war against Germany, to be a serious contestant from dominance in east Asia.

Statements from 27 of June and 2 of July 1941 regarding Great Britain, indicates that the japanese decision makers, still anticipated a German invasion of England. The invasion was anticipated even if Germany where at war with the USSR. Thus it seems reasonable to assume, that Japan believed that Great Britain couldn't send any large naval forces to the Pacific. At least we can assume that Japan anticipated, that Great Britain wouldn't be able to send any naval forces to the pacific, as soon as the German invasion had begun. A statement from the 1 of December 1941 indicates that Great Britain's present naval forces in the pacific, where not conceived as significant. This statement was made, after the arrival of some recent naval reinforcements from Europe. Thus we can assume Japan believed, that Great Britain did not have any significant naval forces in east Asia, before the of 1 december in 1941. In a vital statement on the of 5 November 1941, it was also stated that naval power projection capabilities, were absolutely necessary for anybody how wanted to fight for the south west pacific. Putting the pieces together, we see that Japan did not believe that Great Britain

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<sup>177</sup> Fiammenghi, Davide, op cit, p 137

had any significant naval forces in the Pacific region. Naval forces were seen as absolutely essential. On the 2 of July in 1941, Japan anticipated that the pressure on Great Britain would increase in Europe. Thus British reinforcements to the Pacific were not likely. The overall picture is that Japan did not perceive Great Britain as a great power, in the East Asian region.

My conclusion is that Japan perceived that there were three great powers in the East Asian region, before the 22 of June in 1941. After this date, Japan perceived that there were only two great powers left: Japan and the USA. Thus the polarity had changed from a tripolar to a bipolar system.

Changes in the Perceived Balance of Power, since the signing of tripartite pact: Given the changes in the regional polarity, Japan's relative power became stronger, in relation to the USSR. At the same time, the deterring effect of the tripartite pact became weaker, as Germany locked up military capabilities in her war against the USSR. This meant that Germany had less capabilities available, as a deterrent against the USA. This logic is clearly stated by Sugiyama on the 2 of July 1941.

Analysis of the Decision and Different Scenarios: On the 2 of July 1941, Japanese officials motivated the decision to militarily occupy the southern parts of French Indochina, in two ways. The army stated that the move would help Japan to sever the link between Chiang Kai Shek, and his supporters Great Britain and the USA. The navy stated that the move would help Japan to become self-sufficient. Looking at statements from the 11 of June 1941, we can notice that the military bases in southern French Indochina, would be used for a potential invasion of the Netherlands East Indies. The need for military bases, for a coming invasion of the Netherlands East Indies, was thus a vital reason for the decision. What choices did Japan have, when she made the decision? Three possible options were discussed at the conference, leading up to the decision. Stay passive, attack the USSR together with Germany or militarily occupy the southern parts of French Indochina. During the first meetings of the period, the actors shifted their positions quickly and their opinions had not been stabilized. It seems reasonable to assume, that the major change in the international system, caused by the anticipated German attack on the USSR made the actors confused. On the conferences held between 25 of June until the 2 of July, we can see that actors' positions had stabilized. Probably because they had some time to think over their calculations, and arrive at a stable position. On the 27 of June, Matsuoka anticipated that Japan could be surrounded by the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, if she stayed passive. There are no indications in the source, that the other actors shared Matsuoka's fear. Yet the fears make Matsuoka's desire to attack the USSR understandable, since he hoped that Japan could quickly secure its border in the north, in order to avoid an encirclement.

Both the army and navy supported the move in to the southern parts of French Indochina. What the army and navy representatives feared if Japan would stay passive, is not clear in the sources. On the 16 of June 1941, Tojo stated that Japan would have to give up her imperial ambitions, if she did not proceed with the militarisation of the southern parts of French Indochina. What did Tojo fear?

When Japan signed the tripartite pact, the government anticipated three possible ways to counter an American oil embargo: import oil from the USSR, that diplomatic pressure would force the Netherland East Indies to export oil, or the use force against the Netherland East Indies.<sup>178</sup> On the 6 of September 1941, foreign Minister Toyota stated that Japans efforts to buy oil from the USSR, had been cancelled when the war between Germany and the USSR had started. Japan failed in her diplomatic efforts, to acquire oil from the Netherland East Indies.<sup>179</sup> Thus there was only one option left for Japan, if she wanted to counter a potential oil embargo from the USA. This option was the use of force against the Netherland East Indies.

Thus there seems to have been two scenarios if Japan stayed passive: Matsuoka's scenario of a military encirclement and the fear of a potential oil embargo from the USA. The fear of a potential oil embargo, seems to have been more fearsome for the majority of the decision makers. If Japan attacked the USSR, the Navy and Army feared a war with the USA and Great Britain. If Japan moved against the southern parts of French Indochina, Matsuoka feared that the USA and Great Britain could use force against Japan. On the 11 of June 1940 army chief of staff Sugiyama, stated that he did not believe that the USA would intervene, if Japan moved in to the southern parts of French Indochina. However on the 30 of June, Sugiyama said that Japan should proceed with the move in to French Indochina, even if the USA and Great Britain tried to stop her. In the final policy document adopted on the 2 July, the risk for a war with the USA and Great Britain were openly acknowledge. Statements from the 2 of July 1941 shows that different decisions makers, calculated the risk of war a with USA and Great Britain differently. Some were more afraid of war, while others were less afraid. No decision maker could rule out the possibility of a war. (see appendix 3, for a sketch of the anticipated pathways).

With the information above we summarize the analysis. When Germany attacked the USSR, Japan lost relative power against the USA. She lost relative power, because some military and industrial capabilities from her ally Germany, could not be used against the USA. The japanese government were not sure that the tripartite pact would deter the USA, from a hard balancing move against Japan, if Japan made any moves to gain more relative power. Even if Japan anticipated the risk of a

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<sup>178</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>179</sup> See 5.2.2 The decision to move in to southern French Indochina

war with a superior opponent, the Japanese government decided to militarise the southern parts of French Indochina.

Hypothesis testing: When Japan had signed the tripartite pact, Japan (together with the capabilities of Italy and Germany), had predecided herself as a dominating state in relation to the USA. With Germany's attack on the USSR, Japan was uncertain about her relative power in relation to the USA. Japan anticipated that she could have lost her dominating status, in relation to the USA. And Japan anticipated that the USA, might balance Japan's attempt to gain relative power. Disregarding this risk, Japan tried to gain more relative power by militarising the southern parts of French Indochina.

My hypothesis states that great powers will expect a strong balancing reaction, against any attempt from them to gain relative power. Thus I expected that great powers will not try to gain more relative power, rather they will try to preserve their relative power status. Japan tried to gain relative power, even if there were a significant risk for a powerful balancing reaction. Thus we have to reject the hypothesis in this case.

### *6.1.3 The decision to attack USA and Great Britain*

Changes in the Perceived Regional (East Asian) Polarity, since the decision to move in to southern French Indochina: We have a few statements regarding the USSR, in the primary sources from the period. Statements from the 6 of September 1941, 24 and 25 of October 1941 and 5 of November 1941, convey the same message. The USSR could be a threat to Japan, because of the support she could get from the USA, and because of an American use of Soviet bases. Thus the USSR were not seen as an independent powerful actor. This picture is strengthened by the policy document called the Essentials of Carrying out the Empire's Policies, and statements from the 5 of November 1941, that describes the power of the USSR as dwindling. Thus Japan did not perceive the USSR as a great power in the East Asian region.

On the 23 of October 1941, it was anticipated that war in Europe would be long, because of Great Britain's growing power. The next major battleground would be the near east. This idea is connected with anticipations in the document called the Essentials of Carrying out the Empire's Policies. In the document, it is stated that Germany will probably be able to send significant forces from the eastern front, against Great Britain in 1942. Thus Japan anticipated that major battles would be fought between Great Britain and Germany, in Europe and in the near east. On the 5 of November in 1941, it was stated that Great Britain had a low naval power projection capability in

east Asia. In the Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's, it was stated that Japan could not expect much support from Germany in a coming war with the USA. Putting the pieces together, it seems like Japan anticipated that both Germany and Great Britain would be lock up there capabilities in Europe and in the near east, during 1942. None of them would have any significant power projection capabilities in east Asia.

Thus Japan still perceived the international system in East Asia as bipolar. There were only two great power in the system: Japan and the USA.

Changes in the Perceived Balance of Power, since the decision to move in to southern French Indochina: Statements from the Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's, from the 6 of September 1941 and from the 5 of November 1941, all gives us the same image: Japan's relative power was dwindling fast. There were two reasons for this: the dwindling oil reserves and the growing unity among Japans neighbours. The oil embargo by the USA, meant that Japan had to live of her stockpile of oil. Great Britain and the Netherland East Indies were following the political lead of the USA, clearly taking her side. The USA sent economic supplies to the USSR, with the help of the lend lease program.<sup>180</sup> All these states were bandwagoning with the USA, giving Japan less relative power in relation to the USA. On the 5 of november in 1941, Toyota stated that Japan was becoming encircled by her enemies.

Analysis of the Decision and Different Scenarios: Three different courses of action were debated at the policy conferences leading up to the decision. One were to accept the US demands, and leave China and French Indochina. On the 30 October 1941, almost all participants at the conference agreed that this would turn Japan in to a minor power. Another cause of action was to do nothing. The document called the Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's, and statements form the 6 of September 1941 shows that it was anticipated that Japan would eventually use up all of her oil, if she did not act. In a statements form the 5 of November, it was anticipated that synthetic oil could not solve Japans need for oil, and without oil Japans navy could not operate.<sup>181</sup> Thus it was anticipated that Japan would lose her naval power projection capabilities, if she adopted a wait and see policy. Without her navy, Japan would become a minor power. How did Japan believe that the USA would treat her, if she become a minor power? This issue were debated at the crucial conference on 1 of November 1941. Some actors thought that the USA would not attack Japan if she became a minor power. Other actors thought that USA might attack Japan, if she become a minor power. No actor seems to have been sure about the eventual outcome.

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180 See 5.2.3 The decision to attack the USA and Great Britain and 5.2.1 The Signing of the Tripartite Pact

181 See Japan's foreign policy, and the formation of national preferences in the interwar period

The last course of action was to go to war against Great Britain and the USA. On the 5 of November in 1941, it was predicted that Japan could conquer the regions in south east Asia. Thus Japan would be able to conquer the oil rich Netherland East Indies. In a statements form the 6 of September 1941, it was anticipated that there would be no disturbances from the USSR during the initial phase of the war, because of the winter in the north. However statements form the 5 of November 1941, shows that Japan could eventually run out of aviation fuel, even if she councerd the Netherland East Indies. However Japans material situation would become better when she had control over the South West Pacific region.

In the primary sources I have found two scenarios about a possible Japanese victory in the coming war. In the Essentials of Carrying out the Empires Policies's, it was stated that the public opinion in the USA might turn against the war and that this could end the war. On the 1 of November in 1941 another scenario was presented. It was stated that if Japan could hold her ground against the USA, Germany could defeat Great Britain, Japan could defeat China and together Japan and Germany could defeat the USSR. Thus the USA would become isolated and beg for peace. What was the most likely outcome according to the Japanese government? Tsukadas comment on the 1 of November is very telling: "In general, the prospect if we go to war are not bright...On the other hand, it is not possible to maintain the status quo. Hence one unavoidably reaches the conclusion that we must go to war."<sup>182</sup> The whole agonizing decision making process, interrupted by political crisis, supports this statement. The Japanese leadership know that decision for war, was a terribly risky decision. (see appendix 4, for a sketch of the anticipated pathways).

In summery: Japan anticipated that she would lose her great power status, if she gave in to the American demands or adopted a wait and see policy. If she lost her great power status in the international system in east Asia, the system would become unipolar. Japan was uncertain about how a dominating USA would treat Japan. Japan anticipated that a war with the USA would be very difficult to win. By conquering the regions in the south west pacific, Japan would get some resources that could help her to hold out against the USA, but the USA would still be the stronger part. Japan chose war.

Hypothesis testing: Japan perceived her self as a great power that where losing relative power. The anticipated behavior according my hypothesis, is that Japan would try to preserve her relative power status, trough external or internal balancing. Thus Japan would maximize her security. However

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182 Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 207

internal balancing was impossible, Japan could not produce enough synthetic oil. External balancing was also perceived as impossible. The most important minor states in the international system in east Asia, where bandwagoning with her opponent. Potential allies in other regions, had locked up their capabilities in wars. Thus the hypothesis about expected great power behavior is not very relevant in this case.

Japan did perceive her self as a great power. Yet she feared that Japan could end up in a unipolar international system, as a weak state if she did not go to war. Japan did not know how the dominating state would treat her, in a future unipolar system. Yet Japan feared that USA could adopt a revisionist and aggressive posture towards her, if the system became unipolar. Japan faced a security dilemma situation,<sup>183</sup> since she were uncertain about the future intentions of the USA. Japan could not could balance of treat from the USA by internal balancing. However by concurring territory, she could perform some desperate acts of internal balancing, strengthening her relative power. In my hypothesis I wrote that: states in a unipolar system, will desperately pursue internal balancing, if the dominating state adopts a revisionist and aggressive posture towards them. Japans decision is far from a perfect match the with the predictions made in this hypothesis. However there seems to be some important connections with this hypothesis, and Japans behavior.

## 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 The implications of the results. A theoretical discussion

#### *7.1.1 The security curve and critical economic dependency*

The results of the hypothesis testing, showed little support for Fiammenghis theory. In two of the decisions, the hypothesis stated were not relevant and in the third case there was a clear rejection of the hypothesis. However Japans critical economic dependency on the USA, seems to have been a very important factor in each of the decisions. Fiammenghi states that there may be systemic modifiers that could manipulate the security curve. Critical economic dependency is not a unit level variable, rather it is a systemic modifier since it affects the relationship between the dependent part and the supplier. Based on the lessons from the case study, I will some theoretical suggestions about critical economic dependency and the security curve.

How would critical economic dependency shift the security curve? If a state is critically economic dependent, the cost of balancing against the dependent state becomes lower for the supplier. Cutting supplies will generally be less costly then a pontial war or an arms race. Thus we can anticipate that

<sup>183</sup> See Booth, Ken., Wheeler, Nicholas J, *The Security Dilemma. Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 pp 4-5, regarding the security dilemma

the supplier will balance earlier than otherwise, pushing the security threshold to the left on the security curve. And since balancing will be less costly for the supplier, we can anticipate that the supplier will balance more efficiently, as the dependent actor gains more relative power.<sup>184</sup> Thus the incline of the curve will have a steeper downward trajectory, when the dependent part has passed the security threshold. Of course the dependent part can not reach the absolute security threshold, a state can not dominate an international system if it is critically dependent. (see appendix 5 for an image of the modified security curve)

How do we expect that the dependent state will act? A state can move from the dependent curve, to the normal security curve by internal balancing or external balancing. State can also use force to conquer territory and acquire the missing resources. A state can acquire high security gains by shifting from the economically dependent security curve, to the normal security curve. Thus it seems reasonable to assume, that states will act in manner similar to the predictions of offensive neo-realism, trying to gain more relative power in order to shift curves. Using this model, Japan's choices become more understandable. When Japan signed the tripartite pact, the Japanese government perceived that Japan moved from the economically dependent security curve, to the normal security curve. When Japan lost relative power in relation to the USA, because of Germany's attack on the USSR, Japan was sliding back towards the dependent security curve. Japan acted forcefully, trying to get back to the normal security curve, according to the predictions of the model. The USA answered as the model predicted with a very harsh balancing act, cutting vital supplies and demanding that Japan should give up its empire. A model where one state will act aggressively to gain relative power, and the another state will punish it severely, is likely to be very unstable. Neither Japan nor the USA wanted a war in 1941,<sup>185</sup> however the structural incentives for both parties, made a conflict more likely.

There are two other interesting aspects of the case and Japan's economic dependency. When Japan perceived that it moved from the dependent curve, to the normal security curve, she did so by adding military capabilities (through external balancing). A state can free itself from a critical economic dependency by military capabilities alone, because a state can build up stockpiles of economic resources. With the help of the stockpiles a state can use force or threaten to use force, to get to a hold of the missing resources. If a state has enough military capabilities, it doesn't have to fear its dependency on its supplier. A state can thus move from the economically dependent

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<sup>184</sup> The minister of the cabinet Hoshino, expressed this logic on 19 of September in 1940. He said that USA would place sanction on Japan where: "it hurts Japan the most and the United States the least". (Source: Ike, Nobutaka (Edt), op cit p 11)

<sup>185</sup> Record, Jeffery, op cit pp 11 - 12

security curve to the normal security curve, without direct control over the missing economic resources. We can also note that as long as the international system in east Asia where tripolar, Japans economic dependency had less systemic effects. Japan hoped that she could import oil from the USSR instead of the USA, when she had signed the tripartite pact. It seems reasonable to assume that economic dependency will have less systemic effect, the more great powers there are in the system. With more great powers it will be easier for the dependent actor to make alliances, countering any threats to cut the supply.

### *7.1.2 Unipolarity, anticipations, and asymmetric strength of interest*

Monteiro concludes that states in a unipolar system will face an extreme self-help situation, if the dominant state adopts an aggressive posture towards them. He predicts that states will desperately engage in internal balancing when they face an extreme self help situation. He also predicts that this internal balancing could be a casual pathway to a war, with the dominating state. Drawing upon the lessons of the study, I will make theoretical suggestion. The case seems to indicate that if a state *anticipates* that it could end up in unipolar system, and that the dominant state *could* adopt an aggressive towards it, it will likely engage in desperate internal balancing. In this case the balancing did start a conflict between the potentially dominating state and the weaker state. However it was the weaker state that went to war. The weaker state had to conquer territory, in order to acquire the resource needed to start the internal balancing. And the weaker state anticipated that conquering territory would lead to a war with the pontalliy dominating state. Thus Japan did not wait for an American attack, instead she tried to use her first movers advantage at Pearl Harbor. Generalizing from the case, we can thus note that internal balancing against a dominating state in unipolar system (or pontially unipolar system), can be a casual pathway to war. However a war can be started both by the dominating state and by the weaker state.

Finally we can note that Japan anticipated that she might avoid a catastrophic defeat in the war, by a change in the public opinion in the USA. Jeffery Record has claimed that this anticipation was irrational and based upon culture stereotypes of the American people.<sup>186</sup> Such an explanation misses the rational aspect in the Japanese calculation. According to Japans calculations, Japan could not threaten the American homeland with its military capabilities. However the capabilities of the US, could threaten the core regions in the Japanese empire.. Thus one can assume that the Japanese government, perceived an asymmetric strength of interest in the war. Japan and its people would be fighting for the survival of there state and the safety of there core regions. The USA and its people

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186 Record, Jeffery op cit pp 29 - 30

were not under the same immediate threat from Japan. Thus the Japanese government had rational reason to believe that the American people wouldn't be as interested as the Japanese people, in the conflict. Generalizing from this case, we can note that in any conflict between a dominating state and weaker state in unipolar system, the threat towards the weaker state will be higher. The dominating state can usually disengage from a conflict and survive. The weaker states that faces the dominating state, will rarely have the option to disengage and survive. Thus the security gains from a favorable resolution to a conflict, will usually be higher for the weaker actor. Since the security gains will greater for the weaker state, it will accept a higher cost for a favorable resolution to a conflict. The asymmetric strength of interest can thus work as leveler, making it possible for the weaker states to achieve a favorable outcome, in a conflict with a dominating state. In fact I would argue that the asymmetric strength of interest, is one of the main reasons why any rational state would try to resist a dominating state, in a unipolar system.

### 7.2 Ideas for future research

It would be interesting to compare the conclusions made about economic dependency, with existing theories on the subject. Such a comparison would probably be useful, for a refinement of my model on economic dependency and the security curve.

The case has indicated that Monteiro's theory about unipolar, could be useful for international systems that could become unipolar. And that the theory could also be useful for predictions about unit level behavior, if a state fear that a system could become unipolar. Further research about the connections between anticipations and Monteiro's theory, might help us clarify the casual relationships hinted by the study.

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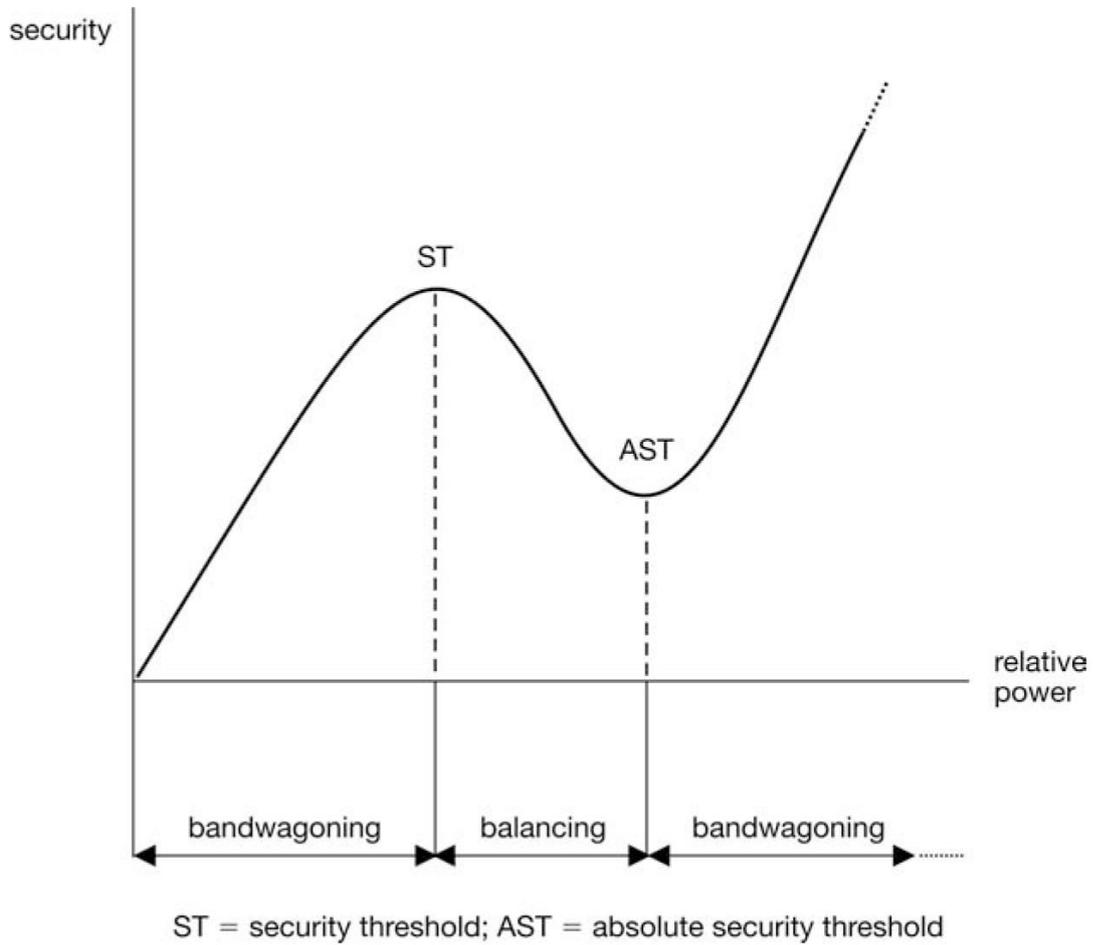
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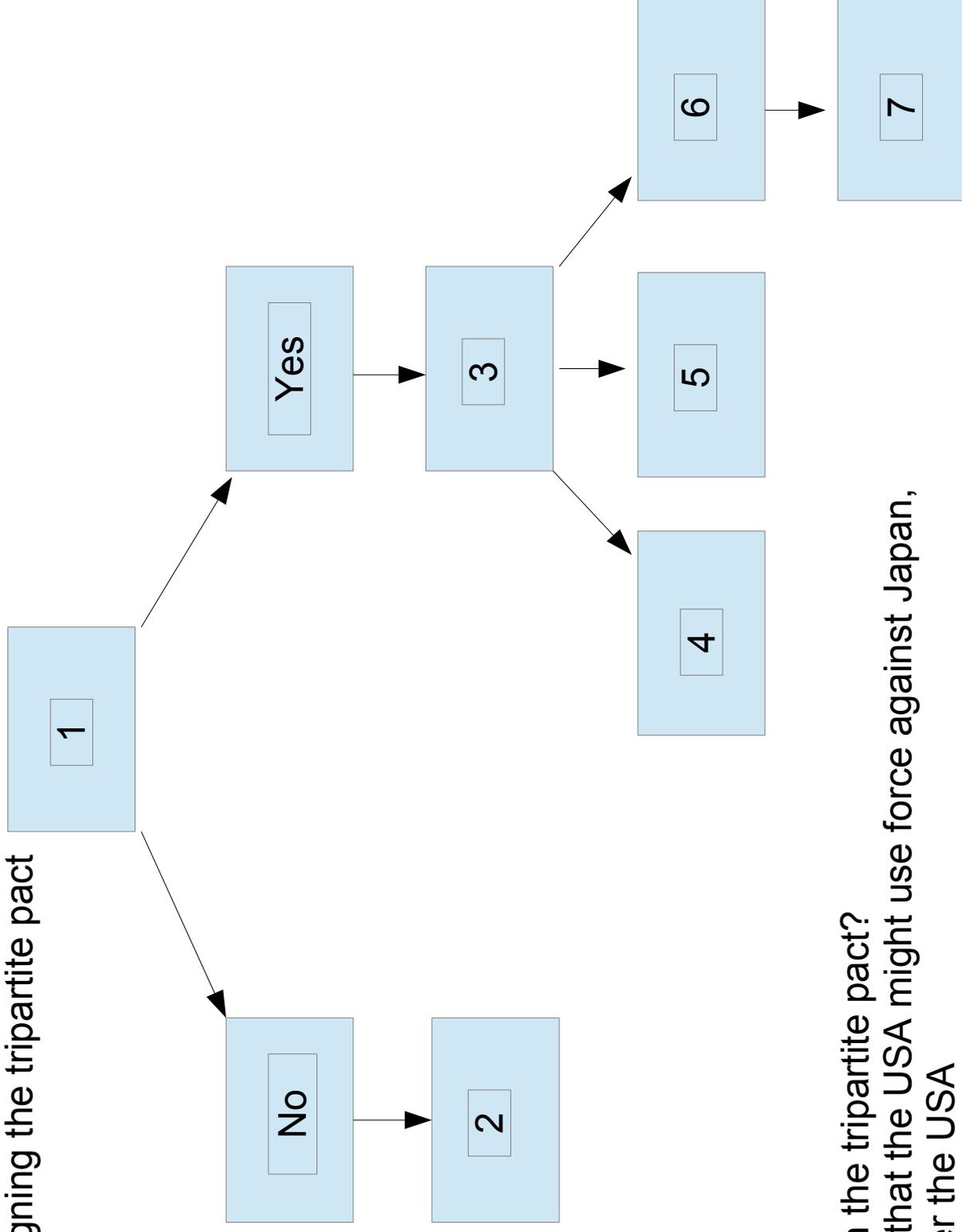
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Figure 1. The Security Curve



Source: Fiammenghi, op cit, p 137

## Appendix 2 – Signing the tripartite pact



1 Should Japan sign the tripartite pact?

2 Some anticipated that the USA might use force against Japan, if Japan did not deter the USA

3 Several actors anticipated that USA would enact an oil embargo against Japan

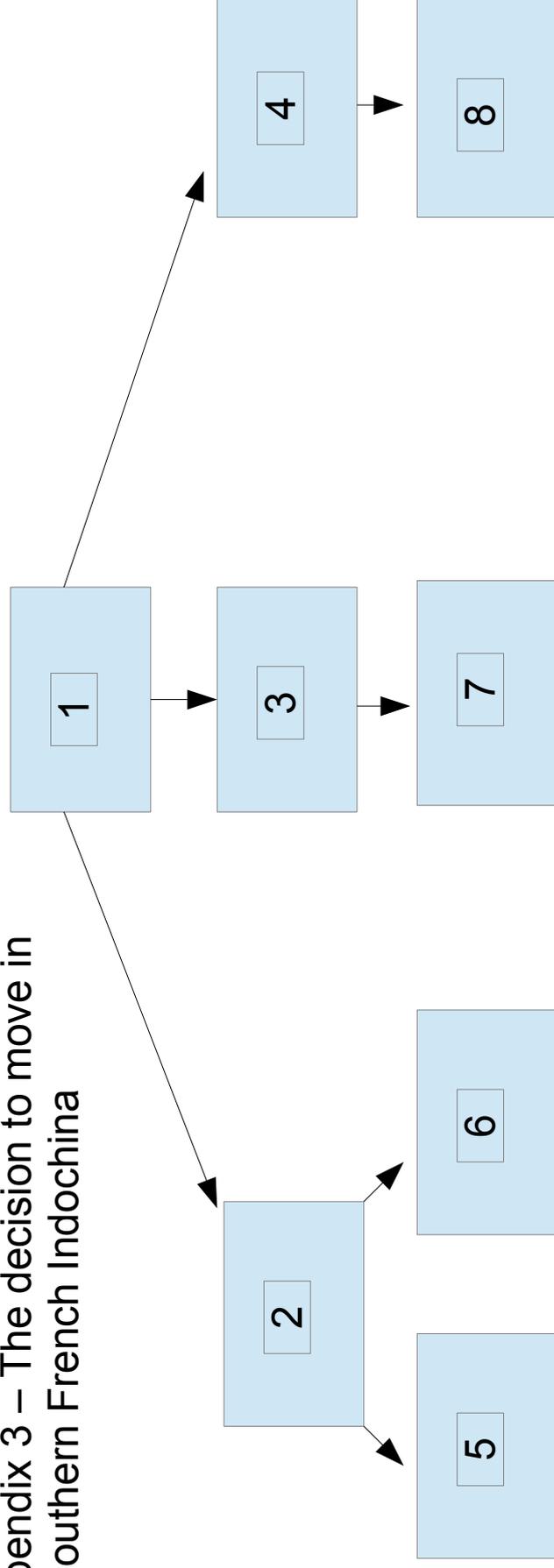
4 Some anticipated that oil could be acquired from other states, especially from the USSR

5 Some anticipated that oil could be acquired from the Netherland East Indies, through diplomatic pressure

6 Some anticipated that Japan would have to use force, to acquire oil from the Netherland East Indies

7 It was anticipated that this would lead to a war with Great Britain

### Appendix 3 – The decision to move in to southern French Indochina



1 What should Japan do, given the German invasion of the USSR?

2 Adopt a wait and see policy

3 Attack the USSR together with Germany

4 Move into southern French Indochina

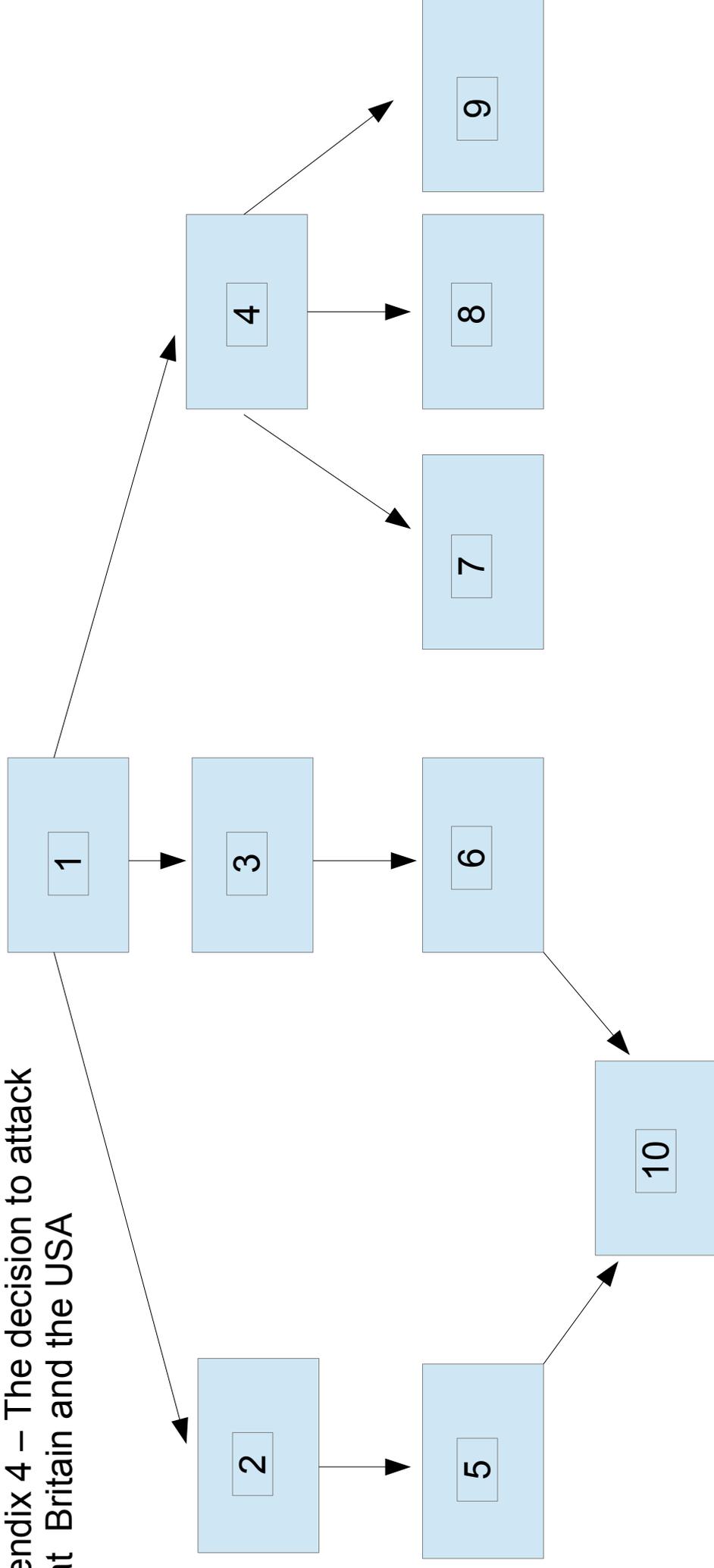
5 A minority feared that Japan would be encircled by the USSR, the USA, China and Great Britain, if Japan did not act

6 A majority feared an american oil embargo

7 A majority feared that Japan would end up in war with the USSR, the USA and Great Britain

8 With the help of military bases in southern French Indochina, Japan could put additional pressure on and prepare for an invasion of the Netherland East Indies. However everyone recognised the risk of a war with USA and Great Britain, if Japan moved in to the southern parts of French Indochina.

## Appendix 4 – The decision to attack Great Britain and the USA



1 What should Japan do, when the USA had banned all export of oil to Japan?

2 Accept the american demands for the removal of the embargo (leave French Indochina and China)

3 Adopt a wait and see policy

4 Attack the USA and Great Britain

5 Japan anticipated that she would lose her great power status

6 Japan anticipated that she would run out of oil, thus it be would become impossible to use her navy and she would lose her great power status

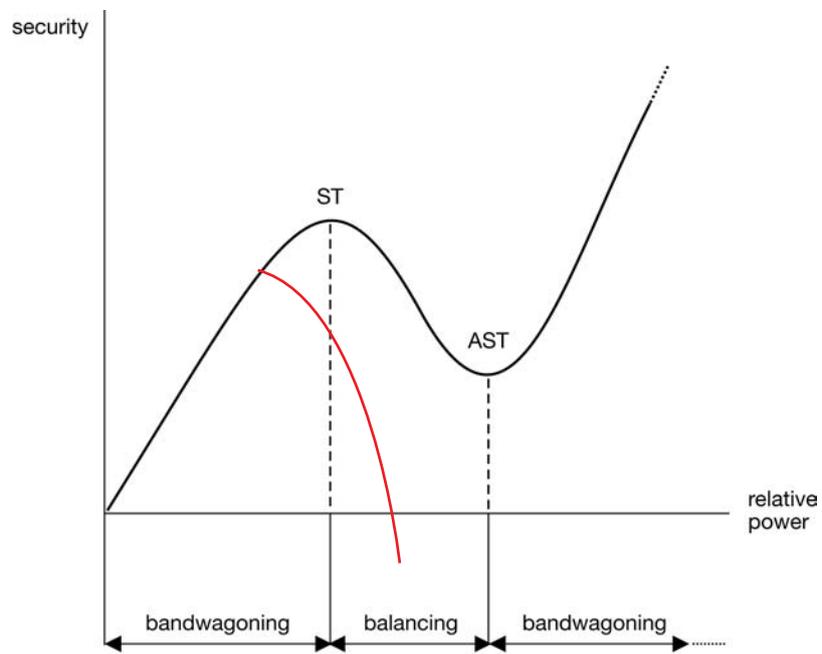
7 Japan anticipated that the american public could turn against war, thus USA would sue for peace

8 Japan anticipated that international situation could turn against the USA, thus USA would sue for peace

9 Japan anticipated that she could lose the war, and that the prospects for the war, where not good

10 Japan where unceartin about how the USA would treat her, if she lost her great power status

Appendix 5 - The economically dependent security curve



ST = security threshold; AST = absolute security threshold

The red curve is the economically dependent security curve

Appendix 6 - The Japanese Empire's Evolution, 1870-1945



Source: <http://media.web.britannica.com/eb-media/64/105764-004-3A00734A.gif>