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Chinese Diplomacy and the Paris Peace Conference

Qi-hua Tang

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Introduction

This book explores Chinese Peace Conference diplomacy after the outbreak of WWI (1914–1920).

A century has passed since the outbreak of WWI. Many academic conferences and commemorative activities have been held throughout the world. The political framework formed in WWI and the power structure established in East Asia at that time still affect us today. In the brutal contest for imperialism, the emerging Wilsonism and Leninism each proposed an idealist new diplomacy, competing to establish the highest moral vantage point for a new world order. On the other hand, Japan advocated for Pan-Asianism, hoping to lead Asia to free itself from the imperialism of Europe and USA. The emerging nationalism of China interacted closely with all these four ideologies, in tension at times and in cooperation at the other times.¹ Together they constituted the deep structure of East Asia diplomacy since 1920. As we study Chinese diplomacy for the last century, we need to build on past experiences and draw lessons from them. We need to free ourselves from the bondage of outdated political propaganda and concepts. Besides Nationalism, we need also to take into consideration other international perspectives and come up with attractive ideas of the new world order.

The year 1919 has for a long time been used to mark the beginning of modern history of China. One of the reasons is that this year was closely related to the Chinese “diplomatic failure” in Paris Peace Conference and subsequent May Fourth Movement. An academic study of Chinese diplomacy

¹Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East* (Cambridge, MA, 1965), pp. 1–22.

at Paris Peace Conference is not plenty, but the conclusion has already been drawn. The Beiyang government in Beijing was friendly to Japan and sold out China. It borrowed money from Japan and signed the treaty forsaking its own sovereignty. This sowed the seed for the diplomatic failure. As head of the Chinese delegation, Lu Zhengxiang (Tseng-Tsiang Lou) was not well prepared for the conference. He was weak in external matters and not capable of bringing order to the delegation internally. Though Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo) and Wang Zhengting performed excellently as diplomats, the conference still decided to turn the rule of Shangdong over to Japan. The Beiyang government in Beijing went so far as to order the delegation to sign the treaty. Thanks to the May Fourth Movement and the Chinese people's insistence on "striving for sovereignty externally and removing the traitors internally," the three traitors friendly to Japan stepped down and the delegation refused to sign the treaty. The national dignity was saved in some way.

In the structure of historical narrative in the past in China, nationalism and the view of revolutionary history took on too strong color so much so that many historical facts have been covered up.² The general view of the Chinese in the past hundred years is that those who advocated for signing the treaty were traitors and those who advocated for refusal to sign it were patriotic. With this view in mind, it is nearly impossible to conduct an objective study of Chinese diplomacy in Paris Peace Conference. Though in recent years, some scholars pointed out quite a few achievements in Chinese diplomacy at the conference,³ the interpretive framework has not changed much. Up till now, Chinese scholars still have not got straight through basic historical facts, ignoring the points of view of the scholars from other nations and international

²For example, Yuan Chengyi pointed out: in the past, when we studied the Chinese diplomacy at Paris Peace Conference, we usually noted the antagonism between the ruling class and the ruled. We tended to believe that the delegates to the conference simply represented the reactionary Beijing regime, whose diplomacy could not possibly have any element of patriotism. With this understanding, we simply ignored the conscientious efforts made by the delegates to fight for the interest of the people and the nation. When it came to the refusal to sign the treaty, we tended to attribute it to the pressure of the people at home and other factors abroad. We ignored one basic fact: in the semi-colonial China, some members of the ruling class often took national interest in their hand in their fight to maintain national sovereignty. Indeed, they did what was beneficial to the national and the people. Therefore, we must not forget their good deeds just because they were part of the ruling class. Consult Yuan, "A Reassessment of Chinese Diplomacy at Paris Peace Conference", *The Journal of Hangzhou Normal College*, no. 2, 1995, p. 68.

³Robert Pollard, *China's Foreign Relations, 1917-1931*, translated into Chinese by Cao Mingdao, *zuijin zhongguo waijiao guanxi (Zhengzhong shuju Press, 1935)*, pp. 67-68, Zhang Zhongfu, *zhonghua minguo waijiaoshi 中华民国外交史 [The Diplomatic History of the Republic of China]* (Peking University Press, 1936), p. 284, Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization*, translated into Chinese by Ma Jianbiao (Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 283-288, Yuan Chengyi, "A Reassessment of Chinese Diplomacy at Paris Peace Conference", *The Journal of Hangzhou Normal College*, no. 2, 1995, pp. 68-73, Yuan Jicheng and Wang Hailin, "Zhongguo canjia diyici shijie dazhang he bali hehui wenti", *jindaishi yanjiu 近代史研究*, no. 6, 1990, pp. 162-163, etc.

situations. They also pay no attention to the basis of some controversial international law. Basically, the Chinese diplomacy at Paris Peace Conference was treated as the background for the development of domestic political history, rather than a subject for the study for diplomatic history.

With an extensive use of Chinese diplomatic archives in the recent years as well as relatively easier access to foreign archives and research findings, the revolutionary historical outlook is also taking place. The time is increasingly ripe to engage in academic study of Chinese diplomacy in Paris Peace Conference. The main problem remains that nationalistic view still predominates.

1 BEGINNING WITH HISTORICAL SOURCES

The Beiyang (Beijing) archives that were used for research on Paris Peace Conference were principally *Miji lucun* 秘籍录存.⁴ This book was compiled by Wu Jisun⁵ who archived the telegrams during his service as the general secretary of the presidential office when Xun Shichang served as President. He compiled a majority of the important documents relating to Paris Peace Conference and Washington Conference, 1921–1922. In 1927, when the compilation was in a good shape, the project came to a halt and it did not go to print. According to the editorial note: “Considering diplomatic relations, the telegrams which may hurt the feelings of the friendly nations or expose the defects of individuals from individual nations... were mostly deleted. If it would be published in several years and the materials become less sensitive, the deleted part should be restored and added to it.” Unfortunately, when this book was published in 1984, the restoration of the deleted part was not done. *Miji lucun* preserved many telegrams of the time and has great value as historical material. However, as the historical material was touched by the editorial hand with a certain agenda in mind, while historical facts were recognized, many truths were covered. One should be careful when using them. It is advisable that one compares them with the original files.

The first-hand historical data for the study of Chinese diplomacy at Paris Peace Conference was mainly the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Beiyang Government. The Second Historical Archive House in Nanjing

⁴*Miji lucun* 秘籍录存 [A Compilation of Secret Documents], ed. by zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jindaishi ziliao bianjishi 中国社会科学院近代史研究所《近代史资料》编辑室 and Tianjin lishi bowuguan 天津市历史博物馆 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1984).

⁵Wu Jisun (1875–1947), whose courtesy name was Shixiang, came from Gushi, Henan Province. He served as vice-director of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in late Qing. When Xu Shichang was sworn in as governor as three provinces, Wu served as his secretary. In October 1918, Xu was sworn in as President. He appointed Wu as General Secretary of the presidential office. In June 1922, Xu stepped down and Wu quit his job.

has some partial collections, some of which have been published.⁶ However, the files related to Paris Peace Conference preserved in the Second Historical Archives are inaccessible as Beiyang archives section was closed. The digitalization of these files is not foreseen in near future. This author has to wait for future opportunities.⁷

Waijiao dang'an 外交档案 (Diplomacy Archives) (1861–1928) preserved in the Archive Section of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica at Nangang District, Taipei is so far the most important historical data.⁸ The files no. from 03–37 are the documents titled Paris Peace Conference directly related to Paris Peace Conference. Yet, these files are mainly about the minutes of the meetings of the delegation and the official documents from foreign nations received in Paris (They should have been the original copies as there are signatures by Lu Zhengxiang and Wang Zhengting after they read them). Other files are miscellaneous. The most important received and sent off telegrams are missing. In the files no. 03–13 titled “Preserved Files in the Chinese Embassy in Belgium,” one finds the telegrams sent off and received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Lu Zhengxiang from October 1918 to March 1919. They should be the files of the telegrams sent off or received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the delegation. The files are not complete.

In recent years, files no. 03–13 titled “Preserved Files in the Chinese Embassy in Belgium” in the 外交档案 (Diplomacy Archives) had an important addition. In March 1983, “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs”⁹ in Taipei transferred the files of 141 volumes in 37 cases from the Chinese Embassy in Belgium to the Archive Section of the Institute of Modern History of Academic Sinica. After being scanned by the archive section, these files became available for image viewing starting at the end of 2007. These new files include many confidential documents related to Paris Peace Conference and Lu Zhengxiang. Among them, the file no. 03-13-067-069 titled “Minister Lu’s Special Telegrams at the Peace Conference” should be the original telegrams sent off or received by the Chinese delegation. Many telegrams were received with signatures after the reading them (such as ones of Wang Zhengting, Gu Weijun, Shi Zhaoji and Wei Chenzu etc.). A minority of them contained Lu Zhengxiang’s instructions and record of the secretary on how the case was handled. They are very precious. The file no. 03-13-071-01 titled “Telegrams Sent off and Received by Minister’s Office and Other Related Offices” are the telegrams sent off or received by Chen Lu, acting Minister

⁶Consult Beiyang zhengfu dang'an 北洋政府档案, compiled by Zhongguo dier lishi dang'an guan 中国第二历史档案馆 (Beijing: Zhongguo dang'an chubanshe 中国档案出版社, 2010).

⁷Zhang Yongjin made use of these files. Consult Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System, 1918–1920: The Middle Kingdom at the Periphery* (London, Macmillan, 1991), pp. 244–245.

⁸Consult Waijiao dang'an mulu huibian 外交档案目录汇编 (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中研院近代史研究所, 1991).

⁹The quotation mark is added by the editor hereafter—editor.

of Foreign Affairs from January to December of 1919. That was the telegram correspondences between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the delegation. The precious files open to the public in the past two years quite completely reflects the diplomatic situation at Paris Peace Conference.

Why were these two important documents not filed with “Paris Peace Documents” in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but with “Chinese Embassy in Belgium Documents”? It makes sense for “Minister Lu’s Peace Conference-related Telegrams” to be kept at the embassy in Belgium, since it was Wei Chenzu, a minister there at the time, who oversaw document filing for the delegation. In addition, the delegation was disbanded after Lu Zhengxiang and Wang Zhengting signed an accord with Austria on September 10, 1919. Gu was put in charge of any outstanding or leftover matters, until June 1920, when Wei Chenzu took over from Gu. So there were good reasons for this batch of documents to be stored at the Chinese embassy in Belgium. Considering the fact that the original diplomatic documents during the conference are preserved in the Archives of Paris Peace Conference, “Minister Lu’s Peace Conference-related Telegrams” might have been brought to Beijing and then transferred to Europe later on.

However, the “Telegrams Sent off and Received by Minister’s Office and Other Related Offices” should absolutely be stored in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the file no. 03–33 titled “The Archives of Sino-Japan Relations” and the files no. 03–38 titled “The Archives of Archives” both contained copies of the relevant files during Paris Peace Conference. This shows that “Telegrams Sent off and Received by Minister’s Office and Other Related Offices” must have been in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Why were they later stored in the Chinese embassy in Belgium? This writer would hazard a guess: After Lu returned to Beijing in early 1920, he sorted out some confidential files. In August, Lu resigned his position as Minister of Foreign Affairs. In August of following year, he took his wife to Switzerland for health recuperation. These files (perhaps together with “Telegrams Sent off and Received by Minister’s Office and Other Related Offices”) were taken to Switzerland. After Lu was appointed as minister to Switzerland, these files were stored in the Chinese embassy there. In May 1927, Lu resigned his position as minister and buried his wife in Brussels. In October of the same year, Lu joined a Catholic order. Those who were present at the ceremony included Wang Jingqi, minister at the Chinese legation in Belgium. Perhaps, Lu entrusted those files to the care of Wang and had them stored in the legation there. Among the newly declassified files, many were the telegrams that Lu did not want others to see. During the conference, there were fierce competitions among the Powers in China. The political factions in China and the political fights between the forces in the south and the north were entangled. There were many policy changes within Beiyang government in Beijing. In addition, The May Fourth Movement was raging and the nationalistic sentiment was strong. It was difficult to justify many diplomatic moves. And in the situation like that in China, it was difficult

to explain what had been done or not done. Lu could only hide away those files.

Besides, the files no. 03–12 “The Preserved Files in the Chinese Embassy in USA” keeps the telegram correspondences between Gu and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing from the end of 1918 to the early 1919. These telegrams truthfully recorded the contacts between Gu and US President Woodrow Wilson and State Secretary Robert Lansing. They serve as highly valuable reference for understanding the shift of the Chinese diplomacy to “play off USA against Japan”. The part of the files related to the Paris Peace Conference and to the Shangdong matter in the files no. 03–33 titled “the Archives of Sino-Japan Relations” have been published and are easy to use.¹⁰

2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

One of the major research findings by Chinese scholars is *China and Japan in the Past 60 Years* by Wang Yunsheng.¹¹ In chapter 70, volume 7 titled “Paris Peace Conference” of the book he compiled in the 1930s, he quoted much from the confidential telegrams in The Foreign Ministry Archives. Some (original sources) are no longer extant. Besides, Zhang Zhongfu completed his book *中华民国外交史 (1911–1921)* [The Diplomatic History of the Republic China] in the spring of 1936, where one chapter was devoted to the discussion on Paris Peace Conference. His approach to writing is very rigorous. These two books lay the foundation for the study of Chinese diplomatic history relating to Paris Peace Conference. All of the later works generally continue what has been left off by these two works.

Recent scholarships mainly include: Xiang Liling’s *Zhongmei guanxishi shang de yici quzhe—cong balihehui dao huashengdun* 中美关系史上的一次曲折——从巴黎和会到华盛顿会议 [A Twist in the History of China and US Relations—From Paris Peace Conference to Washington Conference (1921–1922)] (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1993), Ying Junhao’s *Gongzong yulun yu beiyang waijiao—yi balihehui Shandong wenti wei zhongxin de yanjiu* 公众舆论与北洋外交——以巴黎和会山东问题为中心的研究 [Public Opinion and Beiyang Diplomacy—A Study with the Focus on

¹⁰Consult *Zhongri guanxi shiliao—balihehui yu shandong wenti* 中日关系史料——巴黎和会与山东问题 (中华民国七年至八年) [Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—Paris Peace Conference and Shandong Issue (the 7th and 8th year of the Republican era)] (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan Jindaishi yanjiusuo, 2000). If one compares the telegrams in this book with the *Biji lucun* 秘籍录存, one will find where deletions took place.

¹¹Wang Yunsheng, *China and Japan in the Past 60 Years*, vol. 7 (Ta Kung Pao Press, 1934). The same book has a version of 7 volumes published by SDX Joint Publishing Company in 1980–1992 and the reprint in 2005. Besides adding volume 8, there are some revisions of the contents of the preceeding volumes in the reprint. In the 1981 version, “Paris Peace Conference” is treated in chapter 66 and “The Conditions of Hope” in Section 12 is deleted. An important addition is made to the last paragraph in Section 31. And a revision is made of the latter half of the last section of the whole chapter, where the effect of the popular will in May 4th Movement on Chinese diplomacy is extolled.

Shandong Issue at the Paris Peace Conference] (Taipei: zhenzhidaxue lishixi 政治大学历史系, 2001), Xu Guoqi, trans. Ma Jianbian, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* (Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2008), 川岛真, Kawashima Shin, 中国近代外交の形成 [The Formation of Diplomacy in Modern China] (Nagoya: 名古屋大学出版会, 2004), trans. by Tian Jianguo, 中国近代外交的形成 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012), Ma Jianbiao, *chongpo jiu zhixu: zhongguo dui diguozhuyi guoji tixi de fanying (1912–1922)* 冲破旧秩序: 中国对帝国主义国际体系的反应 (1912~1922)》[*Breaking Old Order: Chinese Responses to Imperialist International System (1912–1922)*] (Beijing: shehui kexue chubanshe, 2013). The main MA theses are: Liao Minshu's *bali hehui yu zhongguo waijiao* 巴黎和会与中国外交 [Paris Peace Conference and Chinese Diplomacy], Thesis, National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, 1998 and Zhu Dan's *beiyang zhengfu zai hehui shang de waijiao celue yanjiu* 北洋政府在巴黎和会上的外交策略研究 [A Study of Beiyang Government's Diplomatic Strategies at Paris Peace Conference], MA thesis, Northeast Normal University, 2006.

The English scholarships include mainly: Zhang Yongjin, *China in the International System, 1918–1920: The Middle Kingdom at the Periphery*. The author substantially used the diplomatic archives in The Second Historical Archives in Nanjing as well as historical data and findings in English. He rather completely presented the process of the fight over Shandong question during the Paris Peace Conference. This is the most detailed and accurate academic research I have found so far on this subject. Bruce A. Elleman, *Wilson and China: A Revised History of the Shandong Question* (Armonk, NY; London, M. E. Sharpe, 2002) revised the opinion that US President Wilson betrayed China during the conference in 1919. He argued that the US did not betray China and the Soviet Union did not treat China on an equal term. Xu Guoqi, *China and the Great War: China's Pursuit of a New National Identity and Internationalization* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) used Chinese and English historical data extensively. The author investigated the relationship between the European war and China from the perspective of the history of international relationship. It has won a high acclaim in the international scholarly community.

In Japan, the main monograph is Kawashima Shin's 中国近代外交の形成 [The Formation of Diplomacy in Modern China] (Nagoya: 名古屋大学出版会, 2004). Chapter Three of Part Two is titled "WWI and Solution to Shandong Question." The author mainly used the files no. 03–33 titled "The Archives of Sino-Japan Relations" and the files no. 03–37 titled "The Archives of Paris Peace Conference" in his discussion on Paris Peace Conference and Shandong Question. Especially he discussed the process of the decision on whether or not to sign the treaty during April 30 to June 28.

Generally speaking, the research before 2000 did not make use of the book, *Zhongguo guanxi shiliao*—*bali hehui yu Shandong wenti* (zhonghua minguo qi zhi ba nian) 中日关系史料——巴黎和会与山东问题 (中华民国七年至八年)

[Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—Paris Peace Conference and Shandong Issue (the 7th and 8th year of the Republican era)], while the research before 2008 did not make use of newly arranged and open part of the files no. 03–13 titled “The Preserved Files in Chinese Embassy in Belgium.” The present book makes use of the new historical data mentioned above and supplements them with English and Japanese historical data and findings. Hopefully, after a century of sediments, we are mentally ready to restore the historical truth and break free of stereotypes and distortions and understand the painstaking diplomatic effort made by the Chinese diplomats led by Lu Zhengxiang.



China's Preparation for the Peace Conference During WWI

In the past when the Paris Peace Conference was mentioned, one would think of the Shandong Question. In fact, in the Chinese diplomacy at the time, the Shandong Question came first and was followed by the issue of participation in the Peace Conference and Chinese involvement in the war. In September 1914, the Siege of Tsingtao was launched and China's status as a neutral country was contested. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing already started to realize that China must participate in the Peace Conference and take the podium to present the Shandong Question to the international community. Only by so doing could the question be resolved fairly. When the battle ended in November, Beijing began to think of how to participate in the conference.

At the time, the Beiyang government in Beijing did not believe that the war would last long in Europe. It predicted that the war should be ended by 1915. Therefore, they took quick steps to prepare for the peace conference. Through the negotiation of "Twenty-one Demands," Japan with its "The Treaty of Shandong, 1915" (Shandong Treaty in short) gained all the rights that formerly belonged to Germany. With the debacle of Hongxian Empire, Yuan Shikai perished. After the republic was restored, Li Yuanhong and Duan Qirui were struggling against each other. Beijing's political situation was unstable. Therefore, the preparation for the peace conference basically stopped. In early 1917, the US protested against Germany and ended its diplomatic relationship with the latter. It also invited neutral nations to join common action. A fierce political struggle took place within the Beiyang government in Beijing over whether or not China should declare war against Germany. This led to Manchu Restoration and split between the north and

south. After he insisted on joining the war, Duan Qirui got a huge Nishihara Loans from Japan and signed an agreement to defend against mutual enemies. With “the Exchange of Notes on How to Handle Various Questions about Shandong” (the Exchange of Notes on Shandong Issue for short), Japan’s legal status over the interests in Shandong was increasingly strengthened. During the time, Liang Qichao, Liang Shiyi, and Lu Zhengxiang still made efforts to send workers instead of soldiers to Europe and strove to participate in the peace conference. The State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up several institutions one after another to handle the matters relating to the end of diplomatic relationship with Germany, the declaration of war against it and participation in the peace conference. In the end, China declared war against Germany, which won her a ticket to the conference.

The Beiyang government in Beijing’s general policy concerning the peace conference was that during the stage of neutral nation status, it focussed on the research of how international conventions protected the rights of the neutral nation since the Hague Conference, investigating the evidence of how Japan disrupted China’s status as a neutral nation. It also studied the history of European diplomacy to see if there were good precedents for China to participate in the peace conference as well as to find out good arguments from the international law for maintaining China’s rights to Shandong. After China participated in the war, it further responded to the principles laid out in the American President Wilson’s declaration, enlisting the assistance from the new trend of international idealistic diplomacy. It moved further and further away from Japan.

1 THE PREPARATION FOR THE PEACE CONFERENCE IN THE REIGN OF YUAN SHIKAI

1.1 *Preparatory Committee for the Hague Peace Conference*

In August 1914, the European war spread to East Asia. The joint forces of Japan, Britain attacked Qingdao via Shandong. This gave rise to many complicated issues related to diplomacy and international laws. For example, China proclaimed an armed neutrality. But when Japan landed on Shandong and encroached upon Chinese territory, China could not fulfill its neutral obligations and had to designate war zones. Was this conduct legitimate in international law? When the Japanese force moved through Shandong, Chinese officials and civilians suffered the loss in life and property. Which country could they seek for reparation? The Japanese force extended its Qingdao-Jinan railway concession, which went beyond China’s designated war zone. It occupied the railway from Weixian station to Jinan station, which further sabotaged Chinese sovereignty and encroached upon the life and property of officials and civilians. How could the reparation be made? If the railway company suffered damage and sought Chinese reparation, how should China respond? After the negotiation of Twenty-one Demands between China and

Japan, Japan took over Germany's concession, railways, and the interest in Shandong. As a remedial measure, China was active in studying how to participate in the peace conference and the arguments from the international law for the legal disputes over Qingdao. The Beiyang government in Beijing's active preparation for Shandong Question paved the way for the speech made by the Chinese delegation at Paris Peace Conference and the memoranda presented to the conference. Preparatory Committee for the Hague Peace Conference was the most important research institution at the time.

From Hague Conference to the League of Nations, China witnessed its early participation in important international conferences and organizations. WWI and the Paris Peace Conference were the key links. From the end of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, imperialists dominated world politics. The world powers were competing to expand armaments. They formed alliances to scramble for overseas colonies and spheres of influence. The international situation was treacherous and a great war was imminent. In the meantime, international peace movements surged like a rising wind and scudding clouds, advocating for peaceful disarmament. The most influential ones were Hague Conference, or International Peace Conference held in 1899 and 1907, respectively. The third conference was meant to take place around 1914, but was canceled due to WWI. The late Qing Government attended the two peace conferences and signed a number of international conventions. In May 1912 of the Republican Era, Lu Zhengxiang came back from St. Petersburg and led the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was soon appointed to be Premier, but was vetoed and impeached by the House of Senator over the issue of cabinet formation. After he resigned from his position in September, Lu initiated a "society of international law" whose main objective was to prepare to amend treaties and to propose for the third International Peace Conference. In the meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought approval from Yuan Shikai, Provisional President, who entrusted Lu to study Hague Conference. Lu then began to organize a Preparatory Committee for the Hague Peace Conference.¹ From December 12, 1912, when the committee began to function, to April 1916 when the organization stopped its function, the staff of

¹The minutes of the preparatory committee meeting could be found in: (1) the files no. 03-35-003-01 titled "Baohui zhunbeihui diyi zhi liushier huiyilu 保和会准备会第一至第六十二次会议录" in the Foreign Affairs Archives preserved in the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica in Nangang, Taiwan (February 20, 1913–January 30, 1915). Among them, the minutes for the 47th, 49th, 56th, and 61st are missing. (2) Zhang Guogan Dang'an, files no. Jia pp. 350-222 waijiao preserved in the archive section of the Institute of Modern History, Chinese Academy of Social Science, which covered the issues of attending a peace conference. The files contain the minutes from 63rd to 91st preparatory meetings (February 20, 1915–April 22, 1915). Part of the files must have been the minutes for the special meetings, a preparation for peace negotiation with the warring nations when the war would end. (3) Volumes 5–6 of *Minguo chuqi xijian wendian jilu* 民国初期稀见文电辑录 in microform of Guojia tushuguan cang lishi dang'an wenxian congkan 国家图书馆藏历史档案文献丛刊 contain the minutes of 67th to 91st meetings (June 26, 1915–April 22, 1916). The Foreign Affairs Archives and Zhang Guogan Dang'an are the very sources I quote in the following.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other organizations were sent to attend the committee meetings regularly.

The preparatory committee of the Hague Conference in its first phase discussed the terms that were reserved for conventions that China had signed at the Second Hague Peace Conference. The research was completed by March 1913. It was submitted to the President who would order the State Council, the Army, Navy, and the Department of Justice to revise relevant laws. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be asked to contact the governments of Switzerland and Holland to decide whether certain conventions should be abolished in the reservation. In its second phase, it would discuss the conventions that China did not yet sign at the Second Hague Conference. The research would have been completed roughly by June 1914. Except for 设置国际捕获审检所条约 [The International Treaty On Establishing office of Capturing and Trial], which would be kept in reservation, all the rest of the conventions would be subject to the approval of the President.²

The preparatory committee for Hague Peace Conference originally planned to continue to discuss the proposals for The third Peace Conference. However as WWI broke out and Japan sent its troops to Shandong, China soon negotiated with Japan on the Twenty-One demands. The committee switched to discuss the Shandong Question and the issues of how to attend the post-war peace conference.

On July 28, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war against Serbia. Many countries were involved. The war spread throughout Europe. On August 6, Yuan Shikai issued an order: this president wished to maintain peace in the Far East and peace and happiness of our people. As for the war in Europe, China is determined to remain strictly neutral. Therefore, I would declare 24 stipulations for neutrality purposes. According to the first stipulation: “no belligerent nations shall occupy or fight in China’s land and sea. No place in China’s land and sea shall be used as a base to launch an attack on the enemy.”³

However, the European war spread to the Far East anyway. On August 15, under the pretext of maintaining peace in East Asia by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan issued an ultimatum to Germany, requesting:

One, All the German warships must evacuate from the seas of Japan and China. Those that could not evacuate would be disarmed immediately.

²Consult Tang Qihua, “qingmo minchu zhongguo due ‘haiya baohehui’de canyu (1899–1917) 清末民初中国对“海牙保和会”的参与 (1899–1917) [China’s Participation in the Hague Convention at the 19th and early 20th Century (1899–1917)],” *Zhengda lishi xuebao*, 23 (May 2005).

³“Zhongguo dashiji 中国大事记 [Chronicles of Big Events in China]”, *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志, vol. 11, no. 3, September 1914, p. 21.

Two, by September 15, all the Jiaozhou concessions must be handed over unconditionally free of charge to the Japanese Empire, so that it could be returned to China in the future.⁴

In the meanwhile, it was stated that if by the noon of August 23 no unconditional acceptance was received from Germany, Japan would be forced to take all the measures deemed necessary.

No response was received by August 23. Japan decided to declare war against Germany. Hioki Eki, Japanese ambassador to China negotiated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, requesting that Shandong Province south of the Yellow River be excluded from Neutral Region. The reply from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was: the marching route should be restricted to Pingdu, east of Wei County, which was relatively far from Chinese troops. The Qingdao-Jinan Railway would be protected by China in all possible ways.

On September 2, the Japanese army landed on Shandong. On the 3rd of the month, China set aside the area of Jiaodong as a military zone. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted to the legations of all nations and proclaimed that China shall not be held responsible as a completely neutral nation.

After it landed on Longkou, the Japanese army harassed the people of all counties without restraint. On September 26, the Japanese army trespassed the limit of the military zone that China designated. It occupied Weixian Station and further sabotaged Chinese neutrality, which gave rise to thorny diplomatic and international law issues. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs lodged a protest to the Japanese minister. On September 28, Hioki Eki claimed that Qingdao-Ji'nan Railway was a product of Convention Respecting the Lease of Jiaochow between China and Germany, 1898 and it was purely a property of German government. As part of concession, it should be occupied together with Qingdao. Therefore, it was managed as an occupation, which would be resolved after the war and after the resolution, Japan would completely evacuate from it. On October 5, the Japanese army occupied Qingzhou Station. On the 6th, it occupied Ji'nan Station. On the 7th, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs once more protested against Japan.

On November 7, the Japanese army occupied Qingdao and the war was over. On January 7, 1915, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted British and Japanese ministers and declared that it had nullified Shandong Military Zone. On the 10th, Hioki Eki replied to the note that he would not recognize the nullification. Before long, Japan put forward Twenty-one Demands. China and Japan immediately began to negotiate intensively. The nullification of the military zone became a non-issue.

Because Japan sabotaged China's neutrality and militarily occupied Jiaodong and the line along Qingdao-Ji'nan Railway, China was powerless in its resistance. Therefore, it had an idea of raising this Shandong Question

⁴This and the following paragraphs could be found in Wang Yunsheng, *liushi nian lai zhongguo yu riben* 六十年来中国与日本 [China and Japan Relation for the Past 60 Years] vol. 6 (SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2005), pp. 44–68.

to international conferences or resolve the issue through a peace conference after it participated in the war. On August 17, 1914, Liu Fucheng, a secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs went to the French legation and met with Alexandre R. Conty, the minister of France, asking him about the attack on Qingdao. Conty replied: Conquering Qingdao is an inevitability. After the war is over, there must be a great conference. At the time, China should manage to get permission from all the countries involved to be present at the conference. In so doing, China's matter would not be handled arbitrarily by other nations.⁵

When the battle of Qingdao was over, Wu Chaoshu, a councilor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submitted a memorandum to the President on November 7, saying: When Japan was attacking Qingdao, the British also assisted in sending its army and naval forces. Its intention was not to have Japan claim all the military exploits. It reserved the right to speak later on. Let me try to figure out Japan's strategy. It must first conduct solo negotiation with Germany. After it gets what it wants, it will then negotiate with us alone. It will follow the tactics used after the Russo-Japanese War. It is proper that our country discusses with Britain. Take care not to negotiate with Japan alone. I suggest that we negotiate in a trio with China, Britain, and Japan or in a party involving Germany in addition. Or the best bet is to wait until the war is over and submit the issue to the international peace conference. There may be a nation who upholds justice. Then the loss of our country may be retrieved in some way. I suggest that we make every effort to participate in the international peace conference as a non-belligerent state.⁶

On November 17, Kato Takaaki, Japanese foreign minister met news reporters and stated his views on the current situation, saying: "Whether it will be administrated militarily or civilly, Qingdao must be open soon. Before the European war is over, Qingdao must be protected by us. As for the peace conference, China is not a belligerent power, it is not qualified to be present. This must be stated in a clear term."⁷ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

⁵"mishu liufucheng fu faguan wu kangshi wenda 秘书刘符诚赴法馆晤法康使问答" (August 17, 1914), 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 (上) edited by Lin Mingde, ed. Zhongri guanxi shiliao—ouzhan yu Shandong wenti (shang) 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 [Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—The European War and Shandong Issue(A) (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan Jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1974), p. 53.

⁶"Shou wuchaoshu jiao shuotie 收伍朝枢交说帖 (November 10, 1914)", 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 (下) edited by Lin Mingde, ed. Zhongri guanxi shiliao—ouzhan yu Shandong wenti (shang) 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 [Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—The European War and Shandong Issue(B) (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan Jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1974), p. 437.

⁷"Shou zhuri lugongshi han 收驻日陆公使函" (November 30, 1914), *Foreign Affair archives* File No. 03-37-001-003; "shou zhuri lugongshi (zongyu) han 收驻日陆公使(宗輿)函" (November 30, 1914), 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 (下) edited by Lin Mingde, ed. Zhongri guanxi shiliao—ouzhan yu Shandong wenti (shang) 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题 [Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—The European War and Shandong Issue(B) (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan Jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1974), p. 515.

Beijing took the Japanese attitude very seriously. On December 17, it sent a letter to Lu Zongyu, Chinese minister in Japan: "China has sovereignty over Qingdao. Though it is not a belligerent nation, it should be allowed to participate in the conference. In addition, since the issues of Qingdao and Qingdao-Ji'nan Railway could not be resolved by Japan and China, China must attend this conference to get a possible fair result. Pay particular attention to what the Japanese Authority has to say. You will do well to discuss with Kato and seek his help. Try to lobby him and explain to him, so as to avoid obstruction from him."⁸ In the meanwhile, Xia Xiefu, Chinese minister to the US, sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying:

John W. Foster, adviser of our legation.....said that when the Europe ceasefires, there must be a conference. China should send delegates to attend. That would benefit China a lot..... If China intends to attend, it should make preparations.⁹

The Beiyang government in Beijing then asked the preparatory committee to study how to attend post-war peace conferences and other complicated law issues arising from Japan's attack on Qingdao. On October 3, 1914, the society convened the 48th meeting. Xu Shuzheng acted as an ad hoc chair. They discussed the issue of how Japan occupied Weixian Station and sabotaged China's neutrality. In the end, they decided on a topic: studying Qingdao-Ji'nan Railway: (1) Jointly owned by Chinese and Germany government funds, or (2) Jointly owned by Chinese and German commercial funds, or (3) Jointly owned by both government and businesses of the two countries. Under these three scenarios, what is the best way to handle after Japan uses or occupies it?¹⁰

In the meanwhile, Lu Zhengxiang, who was on leave in Europe, received a telegram from Yuan Shikai, who urged him to come back to China. On October 13, Lu chaired a meeting, where he said: In the first stage, we studied various conventions related to the second Hague Conference. The study was completed before the summer. Our nation will strive to get an approval from various countries and join the conventions. From today on, we are entering into the second stage. We will discuss the proposals for the third Hague Conference. We will first discuss the rights and obligations of maintaining the position of neutrality. This issue is closely related to the conventions of

⁸"Fa zhuri lu gongshi han 发驻日陆公使函" (December 19, 1914), *Foreign Affair archives*, file no. 03-037-001-012.

⁹"Shou zhumei xia gongshi (xiexia) han 收驻美夏公使(偕复)函" (December 25, 1914), 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题(下) Sino-Japan Relation Historical Sources—The European War and Shandong Issue(B), edited by Lin Mingde, pp. 599–600. John W. Foster, 1836–1917 was a former Secretary of State, who served as an adviser to Chinese legation in the US at the time.

¹⁰"Baohchui zhunbeihui disishiba ci huiyilu 保和会准备会'第四十八次会议录", *Foreign Affair archives* 03-35-003-01-043.

the second Hague Conference, which has a great bearing on the status of our nation.¹¹

On October 17, the 50th meeting of Preparatory Committee for the Hague Peace Conference was convened. Lu held that the discussion on the issue of Qingdao-Ji'nan Railway was the root of the problem and therefore we should discuss the sovereignty of concession. We could prepare the conditions for the proposals raised at the third Hague Conference, and we could also study the territorial sovereignty within the confine of these issues. The meeting reached a consensus that China had sovereignty over the concession and that without the permission from China, no country could arbitrarily use force to attack it. It was resolved that this committee was a research institute and that it should research and advise on how to ultimately solve the problem rather than paying attention to temporary issues in current situation. It was resolved that they would proceed with the study of the issues of concession.¹²

On October 24, the 51st meeting of the preparatory committee for the Hague Peace Conference was convened to discuss the issue of concession. Lu said: there was no precedent for concession in international law. In the second Hague Peace Conference in 1907, when the rights and obligations of the neutral country were discussed, the issue of concession was not broached because it involved the matters related to the treaty of two parties only. It was resolved: they would proceed to study Convention Respecting the Lease of Jiaochow between China and Germany, 1898.¹³

On October 31, the committee convened the 52nd meeting. Lu said: a conference would surely be convened after the European War. Non-belligerent nations would be able to attend. If China attends it, it could raise the issue of Qingdao Battle. Now that we study the issue of concession, it would prove useful for the coming conference and the 3rd Hague Conference. Gu Weijun (Wellington Koo) proposed that topics should be restricted in light of the treaties. The meeting then decided that Gu put forward some topics.

On November 7th, the committee convened the 53rd meeting, where they discussed the topics proposed by Gu. The outline of the topic that would be raised at the European conference and the 3rd Hague Conference is: "when-ever a concession borrower nation is engaged in the war against other nation while the concession lender nation maintains neutrality, the concession should

¹¹"shiyue shisanri fu pinghe zhunbeihuo shoulue 十月十三日赴平和准备会说略" did not indicate the year. It should be 1914. See *Foreign Affair archives* 03-35-003-02-011. The 49th meeting of the preparatory committee of Hague Peace Conference was scheduled to take place on October 12, 1914. No record was found. I suspect that "平和准备会" mentioned here referred to. The 49th meeting of the preparatory committee for the Hague Peace Conference.

¹²"Baohahui zhunbeihu 'diwushi ci huiyilu 保和会准备会'第五十次会议录', *Foreign Affair archives* 03-35-003-01-044.

¹³For this and following passages, please consult the records for the 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, and 55th meetings of the preparatory committee, *Foreign Affair archives* 03-35-003-01-044.

by all mean remain neutral.” On 14th, the 54th meeting was convened, where the attendees continued to discuss the reasons that the concession belonged to China both *de jure* and in fact. It was decided that every attendee at the meeting study one aspect of the issue, seeking precedents and compose an essay of argument. On 21st, the 55th meeting was convened, where the attendees continued to discuss various factual reasons. There was no record for the following meetings. In early 1915, Lu Zhengxiang resumed his position as Foreign Affairs Minister. He was responsible for negotiating with Japan about Twenty-one Demands and was absent for meetings.

On the evening of January 22, 1915, “the society for the aftermath of Qingdao” held a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lu chaired the meeting. Cao Rulin, Wu Chaoshu, and Gu Weijun were present. The attendees studied the aftermath of Qingdao: (1) the issue of returning Qingdao to China; (2) The reparation for Qingdao-Ji’nan Railway; (3) the issue of compensation for the loss of private property; (4) the issue of compensation for the loss of government property; (5) the issue of Japan’s violation of neutrality and war zone. The purpose of the study was to provide a basis for presentation as the war of China ended and the conference of belligerent nations was convened. It was decided at the meeting that different attendees study different aspects of the issues.¹⁴

On January 30, the committee convened the 62nd meeting. The attendees put forward the statement of reasons for the European conference and continued to discuss the procedure of how to get invited to the conference. They also discussed how to get their proposal considered by foreign nations. The attendees were asked to seek precedents for the sake of discussion.¹⁵ Possibly affected by the negotiation of “Twenty-one Demands,” the meeting was convened again after three weeks.

In the meanwhile, the Beiyang government in Beijing was actively preparing itself for attending post-war conference, as the Japanese troops occupied Qingdao and the Japanese Foreign Minister indicated that China was not qualified to attend the conference. On January 13, Wang Tingzhang, a secretary of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, went to the Russian legation. He sounded out the stance of Russia: The Qingdao Question must wait to be resolved at the peace conference after the European war was over. As China had various interests and sovereignty over it, China naturally was qualified to attend the conference. V. N. Krupensky, the Russian envoy to China said: I suspect that the

¹⁴“qingdao shanhou wenti yanjiuhui huiyilu 青岛善后问题研究会会议录”, Beiyang zhengfu dang’an 北洋政府档案, vol. 77, edited by zhongguo dier lishi dang’an guan 中国第二历史档案馆 (Beijing: zhongguo dang’an chubanshe 中国档案出版社, 2010), pp. 1–39; “waijiao 外交” (third one in the series) zhonghua minguo dang’an ziliao huibian 中华民国史档案资料汇编 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe 江苏人民出版社, 1979), pp. 152–157. No record of the subsequent meetings of this nature is found. It seems that this topic continued to get discussed at the preparatory committee meetings.

¹⁵“Baohuhui zhunbeihu di liushier ci huiyilu 保和会准备会,第六十二次会议录”, *Foreign Affair archives*, 03-35-003-01-044.

only country to oppose your participation would be Japan. However, as China is not a belligerent nation, it could only be present at the discussion on the issues relevant for the nation. It could not fully participate in the conference.¹⁶

Yuan Shikai administration was rather active in striving for the qualification to attend the conference. Indeed, the government received several memoranda on this. On the days between 1914 and 1915, Ariga Nagao, a Japanese advisor to the president's office, completed a report "On Peace Conference" after investigating the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Congress of Paris in 1856 and Berlin Conference in 1878. Ariga Nagao made a distinction between "directly relevant nations" and "indirectly relevant nations" among the participating nations, pointing out that there was a great difference between these two kinds of nations. Though indirectly relevant nations could participate in the conference with an introduction from a belligerent nation, the proposal from a directly relevant nation could more easily get passed after directly relevant nations negotiate and reach an agreement. But the proposal from an indirectly relevant nation was hard to get accepted. It must rely on one or more directly relevant nations' efforts. Though China was not a belligerent nation, it had a high stake on how to settle Jiaozhou Bay. Therefore, China had the right to participate in the conference. It was proper that as the peace conference was being prepared, China asked a powerful and directly relevant nation for introduction to participate in the peace conference. Especially, it was very important to get approval from three allied powers (Britain, France, and Russia; the US maintained neutrality at the time and it was only an indirectly relevant nation).¹⁷

In January 1915, Xia Yiting's memorandum said: After Japan sent its troops to Shandong, it did many acts in violation of the law. Our nation can find a way to resolve the problems. We plan to wait until the end of the war and attend the peace conference to get a fair solution. In Japan, we had advisor Ariga Nagao who based his arguments on the precedents in the Congress of Vienna, the Congress of Paris, and the Berlin Conference. Ariga discovered that an indirectly relevant nation must get an introduction from a belligerent nation to attend the conference. In the Russia-Turkey War of 1877 for example, Romania was a belligerent nation. When it came to the negotiation of peace, Romania sent a delegate to state his view, Russia strongly resisted it. Ours is a neutral nation. When we seek to participate in the peace conference, it is difficult to guarantee that there would be no obstruction. For our benefit,

¹⁶"wang mishu fu e guan wenda 王秘书赴俄馆问答" (January 13, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao--ouzhuan yu Shandong wenti (xia)* 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题》(下), edited by Lin Mingde, p. 660.

¹⁷Ariga Nagao, "Gouhe dahui lun 媾和大会论", un-dated. According to "wajiao: xuanzhan anjian juan" 外交:宣战案件卷", *zhang guogan dang'an (jia)* 张国淦档案》甲 350-203, the essay must have been written at the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915. For an earlier research on this topic, see 王建朗, "Beijing zhengfu canzhan wenti zai kaocha 北京政府参战问题再考察", *jindaishi yanjiu* 近代史研究, no. 4, 2005.

we must manage to participate. This would be the first stage in our preparation. After we are accepted, we can then prepare various kinds of proposals. That would be the second stage of our preparation. We also need to prepare ourselves when we are refused. That would be the third stage of preparation. Xia put forward various suggestions on how to act in three different stages.¹⁸ In the meantime, Jin Bangping submitted a memo, which raised 11 points of the issue related to Qingdao and offered his answers to each point.¹⁹

On January 18, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs telegraphed all the legations abroad that Liu Shixun would be sent to Europe for possible participation in the peace conference. It ordered all the ministers to secretly find out the stand of their residing nation's government to assist Liu in finding a way to participate.²⁰

While the Twenty-one Demands were under negotiation, Lu Zhengxiang was still concerned with the matter related to the participation in the peace conference. When Lu first met Hioki Eki on February 3, he asked for an amendment of the first group: Japanese government declared that when the Chinese government recognizes Japan's intention to inherit Germany's rights in Shandong, Japan will return Qingdao to China and recognize China's intention to participate in the upcoming peace conference.²¹ On their third meeting, Lu once again asked Japan to introduce China to the peace conference, Hioki Eki refused to add Lu's request to the treaty on the ground that China was not a belligerent nation.²² When the negotiation between China and Japan was over, Lu suggested to Yuan Shikai: the only remedial diplomatic method is for China to engage in the war and raise the issue to the

¹⁸“Shou zhengshitang jiao xiaying tiaochen 收政事堂交夏诒霆条陈” (January 15, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao---ouzhuan yu Shandong wenti (xia)* 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题(下), edited by Lin Mingde, pp. 664–669.

¹⁹“Shou zhengshitang jian (Jinbangping) cheng 收政事堂交(金邦平)呈” (January 16, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao---ouzhuan yu Shandong wenti (xia)* 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题(下), edited by Lin Mingde, pp. 670–674.

²⁰“Fa zhuwai ge shiguan han 发驻外各使馆函” (January 18, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao---ouzhuan yu Shandong wenti (xia)* 中日关系史料——欧战与山东问题(下), edited by Lin Mingde, pp. 678–679.

²¹“Zhongzhang yu rizhishi diyi huiyi wenda 总长与日置使第一次会议问答” (February 3, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao---ershiyi tiao jiaoshe (shang)* 中日关系史料——二十一条交涉(上), edited by Lin Mingde (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1985), p. 15.

²²“Zhongzhang yu rizhishi disan huiyi wenda 总长与日置使第三次会议问答” (February 27, 1915), *zhongri guanxi shiliao---ershiyi tiao jiaoshe (shang)* 中日关系史料——二十一条交涉(上), edited by Lin Mingde (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1985), pp. 61–63.

participant nations for revision.²³



The Building of Foreign Ministry, Beiyang government in Beijing

When China and Japan's negotiation on the Twenty-one Demands began, the preparatory committee for the Hague Peace Conference stopped convening meetings for three weeks. On February 20, the 63rd meeting began. The subsequent meetings were also called "special meeting of the committee for the Hague Peace Conference." These meetings focused on how to participate in the post-war peace conference. The meeting of the 20th was chaired by Gu Weijun, councilor of Foreign Affairs Ministry, as Lu Zhengxiang went to the presidential office to discuss the negotiation with Japan. The meeting decided on how to follow the procedure of participating in the peace conference and to seek out precedents and relevant books. It also asked all attendees to study Ariga Nagao's "On Peace Conference" and maintain confidentiality.²⁴

On March 6, the Preparatory Committee convened the 64th meeting, chaired by Gu. After studying 12 precedents from the international conferences between 1648 and 1878 in the history of diplomacy in Europe, Ma Derun from the Department of Justice reported: after the war is over, the belligerent nations will surely convene a conference for settling for peace. Our nation should surely manage to attend. Those who would reject us must use the pretext that only the belligerent nation has the right to be present at the conference. Gu believed that it would be easier if we could obtain an introduction from one or two great powers. Xia Yiting proposed that it would serve us best if we study the precedents carefully and collect our arguments as the basis for our diplomatic dealings.

On March 20, the Preparatory Committee convened the 65th preparatory meeting, chaired by Gu. It was decided that the attendees sought out relevant books and documents separately, investigated the conference matters as well as

²³Luo Guang, *Biography of Lu Zhengxiang* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1967), pp. 105–106.

²⁴For the subsequential passages, please consult the records of the 63rd, 64th, 65th, and 66th of the meetings, "waijiao: jiaru dahui wenti, juan 1" 外交:加入和平大会问题,卷1" zhangguogan dangan (jia)张国淦档案》甲 pp. 350-222.

the procedure for joining the conference. They also investigated the historical circumstances of those nations who had wished to join the conference and were refused but were able to join after they went through certain formality. All in all, the attendees were asked to investigate carefully the evidence to support this endeavor to join the conference.

On April 3, the Preparatory Committee convened the 66th meeting, chaired by Gu. Liu Guangqian suggested that the focus be on the three major conferences, namely, the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Congress of Paris 1856, and the Berlin Conference in 1878. At these three conferences, some nations wished to participate and met with difficulties. Therefore we should study the cases carefully and let them serve as reference points as we apply for participation in the peace conference. After the meeting, Liu Guangqian wrote an essay "The Neutral States in the Congress of Paris and Berlin Conference," saying: In the future, the post-war peace negotiation should not use belligerent and non-belligerent nations as the basis to decide who is to participate in the conference. All the 44 nations who have a stake in the war should be allowed to participate in the conference for peace negotiation."

Subsequently, as China's negotiation with Japan became urgent, the preparatory committee meeting stopped for two months and a half. On May 25, China and Japan signed the Treaties of the Fourth Year of the Republic of China. In it, according to the first clause of the Shandong Treaty, "Chinese government promises that it would recognize all the treaties or relations that Japan inherits from Germany's claim to Shandong and all the rights and benefits thereof."²⁵

On June 26, the Preparatory Committee convened the 67th meeting. Lu invited Liu Shixun to chair the meeting. Liu just came back from Europe.²⁶ Liu said: now it is time to study the conference after the European war and how to participate in it and how not to be burdened after we participate. Gu said: Whether the neutral nations could participate in the conference could be an issue, but ours is different as we have a Qingdao factor. We should manage to participate. Wang Jizeng held that we could perhaps take two steps: one, follow the procedure for participating in the conference; two, present the requirements after being accepted by the conference. The procedure for participating in the conference has to start with the issue of the aftermath of Qingdao. After the discussion, the meeting decided that the general theme was participation in the peace conference. Three steps were involved: the first one was the procedure of participation; the second was how not to be burdened

²⁵Wang Tieya, *zhongwai jiu yue zhang huibian* 中外旧约章汇编, vol. 2 (DSX Joint Publishing Company, 1957), p. 1112.

²⁶Liu Shixun left Brazil on December 24, 1914. He arrived in Europe on January 2, 1915. He traveled through Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia before he came back to Beijing on May 28. On June 1, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered Liu to stay in Beijing temporarily and had him focus on the peace conference. If possible, China would strive to participate in the conference. For details, please consult Sect. 2 of this chapter.

after participation; the third one was how to prepare for possible rejection. Gu was asked to draft the proposals.²⁷

After the meeting, on the basis of Xia Yiting's "Conditions for Participating in the Conference" and Ariga Nagao's "On Peace Conference," Lu Zhengxiang appointed Jiang Tingzi, Lieutenant General, Wu Chaoshu, councilor, Wang Jizeng, a director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wang Hongnian, section chief, and Gu himself to prepare the outline of the Qingdao proposal.²⁸ Gu added a few items that he thought of on his own and compiled a proposal titled "An Analysis of the Questions Related to the Participation in the Conference," which would serve as a basis for future discussions at the committee meetings.

"An Analysis of the Questions Related to the Participation in the Conference"

A, The Questions on How to Participate in the Conference

One, Proposal for Participation

(One) Whether we should join other neutral nations to simultaneously participate in the conference

(Two) Whether we should provisionally ask one or more than one belligerent nation to introduce us. Which nation is most suitable?

Two, The reasons for participation

(One) Settling the question of Qingdao concerns our territorial integrity

(Two) The battle of Qingdao violated our neutrality and life and property. We must find out who is responsible for the compensations.

(Three) China has a great bearing on the peace in East Asia.

B, The questions that must be prepared before we submit the proposal to the conference

One, The questions arose before the Qingdao Battle

(One) Was Germany's installation of various armaments in violation of the Convention Respecting the Lease of Jiaochow between China and Germany, 1898?

(Two) Was the installation of the armaments mentioned above in violation of China's neutrality?

(Three) What was the justification of British and Japanese battle in Qingdao?

²⁷ "Baohchui zhunbeihui 'diliushiqi ci huiyilu 保和会准备会' 第六十七次会议录", waijiao jiaru heping dahui wenti juan 1 外交:加入和平大会问题,卷1" zhangguogan dang'an (ja)i 张国淦档案 甲 pp. 350-222.

²⁸ "Wuchaoshu guweiju deng suo ni 'shandong wenti zhi fenxi gao 伍朝枢顾维钧等所拟"山东问题之分析"稿", zhonghua mingguo danganziliao huibian disanji "waijiao" 中华民国史档案资料汇编第3辑"外交", pp. 161-164.

(Four) Was British and Japanese occupation of Qingdao in violation of territorial integrity?

(Five) If at the time Germany was willing to return Qingdao to China, did Britain and Japan have good reason to resist?

(Six) If at the time Germany returned Qingdao to China, was China justified to take it?

Two, Handing Qingdao case (According to the exchange of notes between China and Japan on Qingdao: if Japan has complete freedom to handle Jiaozhou concession, under specific condition, it will return the concession to China. However, if its freedom is compromised, Japan can find excuses not to return the concession. Therefore, this issue should be studied).

(One) How are we to explain “returning Qingdao” as mentioned in Japanese ultimatum to Germany?

(Two) Should China reclaim Qingdao from Germany?

(Three) If Germany returns Qingdao to China, can China take it?

(Four) If Germany submits Qingdao to the care of Japan, can it be handled in accordance with section five of clause one in the 1898 Convention?

(Five) If Japan returns Qingdao to China, can it be handled in accordance with section five of clause one in the 1898 Convention?

(Six) If Japan occupies Qingdao permanently, how should China respond?

(Seven) Should Qingdao change its status into a public land?

(Eight) How does Japanese in Qingdao perceive China's status and its rights?

(Nine) Qingdao was conquered jointly by Britain and Japan. When handling the issue of Qingdao, how should China deal with Britain?

Three, The Military Zone

(One) Regarding this battle, is it necessary for China to designate the military zone?

(Two) Which legal justification and precedent should be relied on to designate the military zone?

(Three) How does the designated military zone today compare with Laodong in Russo-Japanese War?

(Four) Did the designated zone in the Russo-Japanese War gain approval from the two belligerent nations?

(Five) 1, Did we contact the various belligerent nations before we designated the military zone? Did we gain their approval? 2, Do the belligerent nations have responsibility to abide by the limits of the military zone?