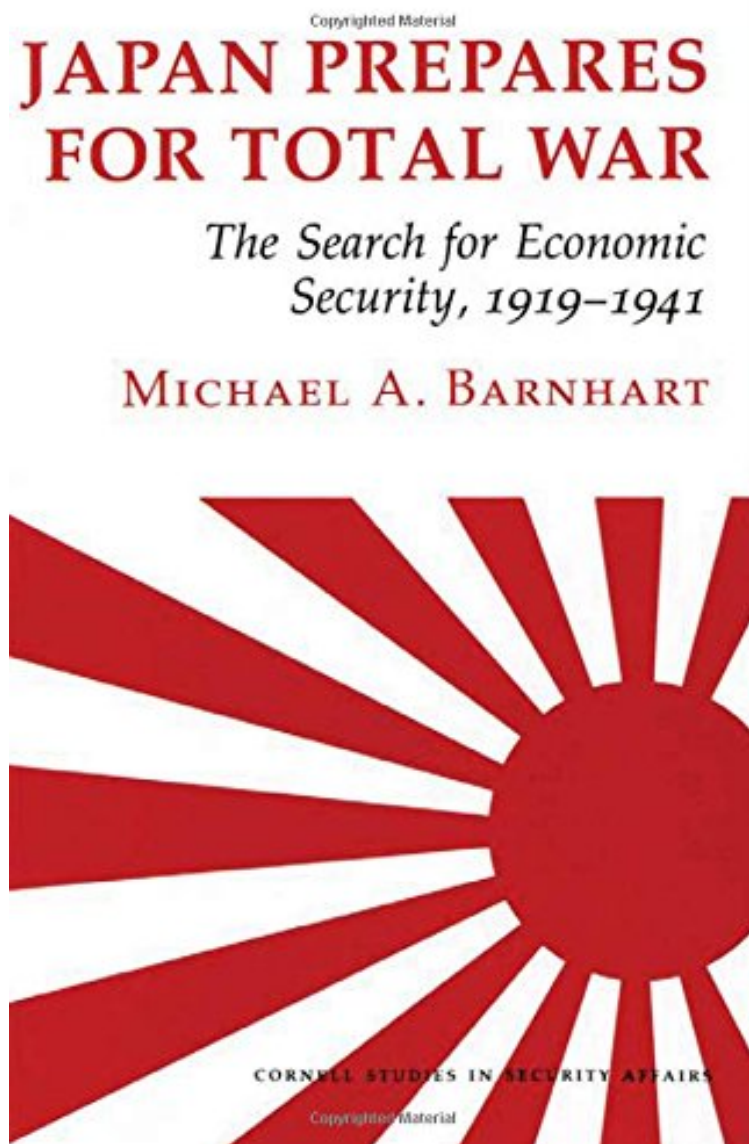


(Pdf free) Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941 (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs)

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Michael A. Barnhart

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Michael A. Barnhart : Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941 (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Japan Prepares for Total War: The Search for Economic Security, 1919–1941 (Cornell Studies in Security Affairs):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Indispensable for students of inter-war East Asia and American foreign policy

By Stoyan S. Stoyanov

This is an extremely important book for any student of the Pacific War and Japanese-American relations leading to it. The major contribution of Barnhart is to have very carefully waded through a true maze of archives on both sides of the Pacific. This is especially valuable with respect to Japan. Barnhart reveals how Japan's policy makers sought to make Japan self-sufficient in resources and materials so it would be able to win a protracted (future) war. Japan's predicament in being resource-poor and the lessons it drew from observing Germany's defeat in World War I, appeared to call for remedying this problem by expanding production capacity and acquiring resources, especially in Manchuria. Eventually, conflict with Japan's military (army vs navy) as well as an ongoing and expanding war in China, subverted and ultimately upended these goals. In pursuing self-sufficiency, Japan became less and less self-sufficient in the course of the 1930s, imposing increasingly painful restrictions on civilian consumption, while never really resolving the constant fight for supremacy between army and navy in allocation of scarce and diminishing resources. Japan's increasing belligerence during the 1930s was a product of that inter-service rivalry as well as a siege mentality that never really allowed for questioning of basic assumptions and re-examination of priorities. With respect to policy in the US, Barnhart demonstrates a remarkable (and regrettable) lack of clarity in policy objectives. Different groups of officials within the State Department (esp. Cordell Hull and Stanley Hornbeck), within Treasury (Morgenthau) as well as FDR himself, did not clearly articulate objectives to US policy with respect to Japan. While WW II unfolded in Europe, it seems that the only consensus within the US government was a distaste and a repudiation for Japan's behavior in East Asia, and especially in China. But there was never an attempt to foresee Japan's ultimate goals, never a serious effort to clarify American goals with respect to Japan. For a while, there was hope that economic problems would discourage Japan from further aggression. When that did not happen, many steps were taken that seemed to send contradictory signals to the Japanese government. On one hand, FDR determined to keep MOST of the Pacific Fleet at Hawaii (as opposed to sending a substantial part of it to the Atlantic), perhaps in the hope that its mere presence would serve as a deterrent to further Japanese aggression. On the other hand, for most of the 1930s the US continued to supply Japan with oil and other vital materials which were immediately applied in the ongoing Japanese war in China -- as if the US did not really mind what Japan was doing there. The US continued to act in the misguided hope that a civilian (and peaceful) group of Japanese politicians, temporarily evicted from power, were about to come back and introduce dramatic, peaceful changes to Japanese policies. Ultimately, Barnhart's greatest achievement here is to highlight the fundamental misunderstanding that persisted between Japan and the United States for most of the 1930s. Japan, continually seeing in the US a model for itself, but also a dangerous rival in the Far East. Japan, moreover, which continually misread American policies -- seeing support in continued trade relations, or outright hostility in American demands to evacuate China. America, on the other hand, appears as lacking well-considered policy objectives. Both Joseph Grew, American Ambassador to Tokyo, and a group within the State Department, continued to hold out hope that a pacifist political elite was just below the surface of Japanese politics and that America's objective was to not make its return to power more difficult. Americans at a fundamental level did not have an understanding about the rivalry between Army and Navy in Japan. And, American policy makers never managed to perceive how different policies affected Japanese perceptions or Japanese intentions. Barnhart offers a rather pessimistic view. He argues that the conflict between Japan and the United States was virtually impossible to prevent once certain conditions obtained. Certainly, after 1937, and especially after the German attack on the Soviet Union, he believes the Pacific War could not have been prevented. This is both because Japan and the United States held very different visions about the future of East Asia, and also because there were fundamental flaws in how the two sides viewed each other and (mis)interpreted each other's actions. This study is, indeed, an eye-opener with respect to how nations approach their vital interests and how an inability to understand the other side leads directly to missteps, and, ultimately, war. Very highly recommended

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Japan's Search for Autarky

By DFMBarnhart examines how the search for economic security influenced the actions of Japan during the interwar period. A modified version of his doctoral dissertation, Barnhart's study is heavily supported by self-translated research conducted in Japanese archives. Challenging the assumption that Emperor Hirohito and Tojo were the most influential players in the decisions leading up to war with the United States, the author outlines the complex internal workings of a state seeking economic self-sufficiency. Looking to avoid the same fate as Germany during World War I, Japan's "total war" officers sought domestic reforms with hopes of achieving state autarky. However, unlike the United States, Japan held few natural resources, forcing the nation to heavily rely on international trade. Recognizing that this reliance would prove detrimental should future war break out, Japan sought to be dependent on no one. As Barnhart writes, "a nation that could not supply all of its own needs in wartime, a nation that was vulnerable to economic pressure from other nations, would be neither truly secure nor truly sovereign." In order to achieve self-reliance, Japan needed to conquer resource rich neighboring territories; however, this objective was at odds with a United States "committed to a world with fewer barriers to international trade and political liberalism." Japan was caught in a predicament, requiring the absence of conflict to amass the necessary resources for economic independence, but needing to engage in conflict to obtain those very resources. The Diet held little sway over the military, which was split between an army and navy that rarely agreed on an appropriate course of action.

Barnhart argues that inter-service politics--including disagreements over resource allocation (specifically steel)--managed to overwhelm a coherent imperial strategy of autarky. A major point of contention highlighted in the book was the army/navy split on whether to focus their efforts on driving north or south. The army, concerned with the possible coming conflict with the Soviet Union, directed its efforts to the conflict in China. Meanwhile, the navy sought a southward advance for resources and materials. This inter-service rivalry adversely affected Japan's ability to effectively engage in long-term planning. In addition to providing an overview of internal differences within Japan, Barnhart highlights disagreements within the US government. The author provides a detailed synopsis of the debates occurring between civil servants within State, Treasury, and the White House. Specifically, he spends a good deal of time on the thoughts of Stanley Hornbeck and Joseph Grew, who attempted to decipher the empire's motives while constructing an appropriate response. It is revealed that decisions to economically sanction Japan--be it steps taken before the embargo or the embargo itself--were far from uniform, and often reached due to reliance on available intelligence (which was not always accurate). Barnhart's study does a fantastic job of outlining the internal disputes and motives that ultimately drove Japan to engage in southward expansion. However, the book would have been enhanced by the inclusion of an additional concluding chapter that tied these motives to the decision to strike Pearl Harbor. In fact, the author refrains from mentioning the attack during his conclusion, which is surprising considering the amount of research and analysis that went into explaining Japanese courses of action during the interwar period. Perhaps if the author had shed a light on the internal debates that surrounded this particular tactic, his work would have benefited. With that said, this study offers an important contribution to the understanding of how prewar Japan's search for autarky resulted in a substantial inter-service rivalry, influencing an aggressive foreign policy that made conflict with the United States inevitable.²¹ of 24 people found the following review helpful. A very good book for one with some background.

By W. D ONEIL This volume tells a very important part of the story of the Japanese Army and its part in dragging the nation into a catastrophic war. It is well and clearly written and generally quite strong in its sources. It is not the first book one should read about interwar Japan and its march to war, since it really does not present a rounded view of Japanese politics and the army as an institution. But for someone who understands the general background, it is fascinating and useful. One caution: in common with many books written by specialists in Japanese history, it presents a very distorted picture of the mindset and actions of the Roosevelt administration. The central problem is an implicit assumption that Japan was the central concern when in fact its importance to FDR and his lieutenants lay in its relationship to the problem of Hitler. Deprived of this context, the actions of the administration are truly inexplicable. Will O'Neil

The roots of Japan's aggressive, expansionist foreign policy have often been traced to its concern over acute economic vulnerability. Michael A. Barnhart tests this assumption by examining the events leading up to World War II in the context of Japan's quest for economic security, drawing on a wide array of Japanese and American sources. Barnhart focuses on the critical years from 1938 to 1941 as he investigates the development of Japan's drive for national economic self-sufficiency and independence and the way in which this drive shaped its internal and external policies. He also explores American economic pressure on Tokyo and assesses its impact on Japan's foreign policy and domestic economy. He concludes that Japan's internal political dynamics, especially the bitter rivalry between its army and navy, played a far greater role in propelling the nation into war with the United States than did its economic condition or even pressure from Washington. *Japan Prepares for Total War* sheds new light on prewar Japan and confirms the opinions of those in Washington who advocated economic pressure against Japan.

From *Library Journal* Though the subject has been much studied, this book belongs to a small corpus of works based upon both English- and Japanese-language sources. In emphasizing that Japan's drive for empire was rooted in its economic insecurity, the book is in the tradition of James Crowley's *Japan's Quest for Autonomy, 1930-38* (1966). Barnhart's work, however, covers a broader time span, is based upon a wealth of documentation that has become available in the past two decades, and also covers U.S.-Japanese diplomatic relations more thoroughly than Crowley's did. Barnhart's book is even-handed and scholarly in tone. Though its appeal will be limited mainly to specialists, general readers who have some knowledge of the topic will find it rewarding. John H. Boyle, History Dept., California State Univ., Chico Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A first-rate, original account of Japan's road to war, fortified with documentation largely unavailable in English. Michael A. Barnhart's unique perspective is sure to enrich our understanding of the 1930s and of the origins of the Pacific War." Akira Iriye About the Author Michael A. Barnhart is Distinguished Teaching Professor and Chair, Department of History at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He is the author of *Japan and the World since 1868* and editor of *Congress and United States Foreign Policy: Controlling the Use of Force in the Nuclear Age*.