



*1937-1939* Bx30

Copies of

COMMUNICATIONS FROM JAPAN

in two binders

Binder No. 1

March 11, 1937 to May 5, 1939

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Telegram No. 215, May 5, 1939, (762.94/340)



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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

COPIES SENT TO  
ONE AND M.I.D.

Tokyo

Dated March 11, 1937

Received 11:05 AM

DIVISION  
OF EASTERN  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 18 1937

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DIVISION OF  
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
MAR 11 1937  
Department of State

85 March 11, 6 p.m.

Department's 44 March 10, 6 p.m.

One. No official English version of Sato's speech was issued by the Foreign Office. The Embassy understood that unofficial translations of practically the entire speech had been transmitted to the United States by press correspondents. The Embassy had proposed to comment by mail.

Two. The first part of the speech dealt with the advisability of continuity of diplomatic policy (paragraph three of Embassy's 69 March 4, 2 p.m.) but also stated that it was necessary at times to revise foreign policies to meet changed conditions.

Three. Soviet Japanese relations. Sato admitted that conditions at present are undesirable and placed the blame for such conditions primarily upon the existence within the Soviet Union of the Comintern. He suggested that if the Soviets should refuse longer to recognize the existence of the

794.00/109

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MAR 18 1937

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of the Comintern within its territory or if the organization should be transferred outside the country Soviet relations with Japan as well as with other countries would be brighter.

741.94  
Four. Anglo-Japanese relations. Sato emphasized the intention of the entire Japanese nation to promote harmony between the two nations and mentioned points of friction. He intimated that the chief point of friction lay in Sino-Japanese relations. (paragraph one of Embassy's 77 March 5, 6 p.m.) because of British fear that their interests in China are menaced by the Japanese advance. He said that Japan does not wish to cause anxiety to Britain or other countries and that Japan should ascertain the causes of such anxiety, should consider such causes and should endeavor to respect the rights of other countries in China. He added that if Japan develops peacefully her interests in China it will win the full understanding of other countries.

793.94  
Five. Sino-Japanese relations. Sato admitted the present impasse which he characterized as inevitable. He stated that an ideal solution could not be found at once and that it would be necessary to start with a new point of view. He said that diplomatic negotiations are normally conducted on a basis of equality between nations and

intimated that

intimated that the difficulties in Sino-Japanese relations have been due to Japan's sense of superiority over China. He proposed to give consideration to China's demands and vital interests and to negotiate with China on a basis of equality and in a conciliatory spirit while maintaining Japanese interests intact.

Six. Sato did not mention the United States in the speech, a favorable indication.

Seven. The speech was generally well received in Japan but only two vernacular newspapers commented on it editorially. The ASAHI praised its outspoken tone and characterized it as highly creditable but criticised as impossible of achievement Sato's suggestion that Soviet Russia separate itself from the Comintern. The YOMIURI praised Sato's determination to break the deadlock in Japan's foreign relations but also adversely criticised the suggestion regarding Soviet Russia. The ADVERTISER, TIMES and CHRONICLE also published editorials commenting favorably on the speech.

Eight. The Embassy has been informed that Japanese financial and business circles warmly approve of Sato's declaration of policy.

Nine. (end of section one)

GREW



## TELEGRAM RECEIVED

lw

1-1334

Tokyo

FROM

A portion of this telegram must  
be closely paraphrased before  
being communicated to anyone.(B)

Dated March 11, 1937

Rec'd 9:25 a.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

85, March 11, 6 p.m. SECTION TWO

To the Embassy it appears that the significant points in Sato's speech are (a) the emphasis upon the fact that improvement of relations with China will react favorably upon relations with other countries, and (b) the intimation revealed by the tone of friendliness and peaceful cooperation on the basis of equality in the speech that Sato diplomacy will assume a more conciliatory tone than previous diplomacy especially in regard to China. Observers point out, however, that the Kwantung army may upset Sato's plans.

Ten. As of significance in this connection one of my colleagues has informed me that Sato told him that before returning to Japan he did not think he could accept the position of Minister for Foreign Affairs owing to the difficulty of reconciling his views with those of other members of the Cabinet, especially those of the War Minister. To his surprise upon consulting with the Cabinet he found that their views and his practically coincided resulting in his acceptance of the position. This indicates a change of policy



lw, 2, No. 85, March 11, 6 p.m., Section Two from Tokyo  
policy on the part of the military probably resulting from  
their past mistakes and failures. It has also been suggested  
by observers that increasing difficulties between Japan and  
Soviet Russia with renewed risk of eventual war has dic-  
tated the wisdom of improving Sino-Japanese relations.

Eleven. (Gray) Sato is being interpellated again in the  
Diet this afternoon. The Embassy will report any signifi-  
cant developments arising from the interpellations.

Repeated by mail to Peiping.

(End of Message)

GRWV

KLF

March 12 1937

U--A portion of this telegram must be \_\_\_\_\_ Tokyo

**TELEGRAM RECEIVED**

*4 paraphrase*

**COPIES SENT TO**  
**ONE AND M.I.D.**

*in Confidence*

before being communicated to anyone. (B)

**FROM** Dated March 12, 1937

Rec'd 9:40 a.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

(GRAY)86, March 12, 7 p.m.

Embassy's 85, March 11, 6 p.m., paragraph 11.

One. In reply to an interpellation in the Lower House in regard to American-Japanese relations, Sato yesterday reiterated the opinion expressed to me that American-Japanese relations depend largely upon Sino-Japanese relations (Embassy's 77, March 5, 6 p.m.). He said that if Japan's policy toward China is fair and is one of which Japan need not be ashamed or afraid to reveal to the world, the United States will feel no anxiety concerning Sino-Japanese relations with resultant benefit to American-Japanese relations. In this connection he asserted Japan's intention of maintaining the principle of the open door in Central and South China (sic).

Two. In regard to the German-Japanese agreement, Sato said that Japan had no intention of joining the Fascist camp; that the agreement therefore should not impair Japan's relations with other nations; and that there is no possibility that Japan through the agreement will be dragged

*794.00*

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
MAR 17 1937  
*RM*

*Letter to Secretary*

*109*

DIVISION OF  
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
MAR 12 1937  
Department of State

794.00/110

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MAR 20 1937

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U -2- #86, Mar. 12, 7 p.m. from Tokyo

dragged into an European war.

Three. Sino-Japanese relations. Sato said that he has no intention of including the question of Manchukuo in any future negotiations with China; also that the Japanese Government has full sympathy with the Chinese in their efforts at national unity. He denied in reply to a specific interpellation any fundamental divergence of views regarding China questions between himself and the Premier and War Minister.

Four. In regard to the suggestion in his speech of the 8th concerning the Soviets and the Comintern (paragraph 3 of Embassy's 85, March 11, 6 p.m.), Sato said that he did not contemplate the elimination of the Comintern from Russia but only intended to indicate that the existence of the Comintern in Russia made necessary the German-Japanese agreement.

Five. In the concluding portion of his speech Sato said that the crisis, if by crisis is meant strained foreign relations, is not peculiar to Japan and that whether or not the crisis is to be translated into war depends entirely upon the way in which the Japanese nation thinks; if Japan does not want such a crisis it can be avoided at any time. He added that Japan if it is a great nation should walk the open path in a straightforward and dignified manner.

Six.



U -3- #86, Mar. 12, 7 p.m. from Tokyo

. Six. Sato's comments on the "crisis" contradict the statement of the Premier when, <sup>Concurrently</sup> ~~as communicated to~~ Minister for Foreign Affairs, he said that the situation in the Far East since the Manchurian incident "might explode at a touch". Certain circles in the army (called the "middle stratum") according to this morning's vernacular newspapers have taken exception to Sato's comments holding that he has not a clear conception of Japan's domestic and foreign circumstances. (END GRAY)

Seven. Some observers in Tokyo believe that the Japanese Government with the consent of the present army leaders is abandoning the "diplomacy of desperation" and returning to the "Shidehara diplomacy". Apparently however the radical elements of the army are opposed to any such change. It is as yet too early to attempt any prediction as to the outcome of this conflict of opinions.

Repeated by mail to Peiping.

GREW

HPD



MJD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

March 16 1937

A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A)

FROM Rec'd. 9:47 a. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

COPIES SENT TO  
O.N.I. AND M.I.D.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY ADVISOR  
APR 2 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF EASTERN AFFAIRS  
MAR 13 1937

90, March 13, 2 p. m.

(GRAY) Embassy's 86, March 12, 7 p. m.

One. In view of the widespread criticism that Sato's views do not coincide with those of the Premier it was reportedly decided at a conference yesterday between the Premier and Foreign, War and Navy Ministers that Sato should qualify the statement of policy which he made in the Lower House of the Diet on the 11th. Accordingly yesterday at a meeting of the Budget Committee of the House of Peers Sato explained (a) that by saying that the Japanese nation can avert a crisis at any time if so minded he meant that Japan should avoid a positive challenge to another power, not that Japan should tolerate any provocation; (b) that in advocating a policy of conciliation and patience toward China he did not mean that Japan should be submissive if China Trampled upon international justice or damaged the prestige of Japan; (c) that in stating that economic blocs in the Far East were premature he did not mean to deny the "inseparable relations" between Japan and Manchukuo; and (d) that by asking why Japan did not walk the open path straightforwardly

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MAR 20 1937

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-2- No. 90, March 13, 2 p. m. from Tokyo

straightforwardly he did not mean to criticize past actions of Japan.

Two. Later both the Premier and the War Minister stated at Diet committee meetings that there is no material discrepancy between their views and those of Sato. (END GRAY)

Three. The general opinion among political observers is that Sato has talked too much without sufficient knowledge of domestic political conditions and trends; that his phraseology was poorly selected; and that he was not fully or well advised by his subordinates in the Foreign Office. The NICHU NICHU this morning reports that this last circumstance may lead to extensive changes in the personnel of the Foreign Office, probably including the transfer to the field of the Vice Minister.

Four. (GRAY) Two of the minority groups in the Lower House are taking the lead in opposing Sato's policies and the newspapers this morning report that one of the groups will introduce a motion of non-confidence in the Minister for Foreign Affairs if sufficient support seems to be forthcoming.

Reported by mail to Peiping.

GREW

KLP



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

No. 2370

Tokyo, April 16, 1937.

SUBJECT: SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS



RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
MAY 3 1937

Grade	For	In U.S.A.	✓	✓
		041-		

MID



COPIES SENT TO  
O.N.I. AND M.I.D.



The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's last  
despatch on the subject of Soviet-Japanese relations\*  
and to report that the situation continues to be uncer-  
tain pending the formation of more definite policies  
by either nation.

With

\*Embassy's despatch No. 2351, dated April 2, 1937.

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With respect to specific issues there has been comparatively little development. The border remained quiet. However a telegraphic despatch from the Embassy in Peiping\* reported the Soviet Consul General at Harbin as saying that the present relative quiet in Soviet-Japanese relations is on the surface only, and that he anticipated incidents on the Soviet border or in Suiyan prior to the Japanese general elections on April 30, designed to strengthen the Army's arguments. Affairs at Vladivostok were much the same, with the Soviet officials continuing to exert pressure on the Shosen Gumi (Japanese Steamship Association). The JAPAN CHRONICLE reported that the offices of this company were raided on March 27 by the Ogpu and searches made. The same article mentioned the arrest of the wife of a Russian employee of the Japanese Consulate General in Vladivostok. This is cited in connection with other arrests which have taken place earlier this year and in the latter part of last year, and which are reportedly still the subject of concern to the Foreign Office.

The threatened break in the railway connection at Manchuli between Soviet Russia and "Manchukuo" is scheduled to take place on or about May 1 according to reports from Harbin. Whether or not the Soviet Government will actually go through with this project is still a question, however. The passenger traffic at this point

amounts

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\* Telegram No. 117, April 12, 1937, from the Embassy in Peiping.



amounts to about twenty-five people a day, it seems, and the interruption of the service, even though it would only cause passengers and freight to change trains, would be a considerable inconvenience.

Events in Moscow included a second breaking of a window in the Japanese Embassy by another man said to be under the influence of liquor. This occurred close to the first of the month. A repercussion from the recent trial in Moscow of Trotsky conspirators was the transfer to Warsaw of Mr. Hiroshima, formerly transportation officer in the Embassy. He was accused during the trial of cooperating with Knyazeff and Livschitz, two of the defendants, in planning train wrecks and other destructive activities. The transfer, according to the Associated Press, removed one obstacle in the way of better Soviet-Japanese relations.

Little has been said from official quarters which indicates a definite carrying out of the policies previously enunciated by Mr. Sato. The attitude of the Army was given wide publicity in the papers, however, following the speech of General Sugiyama, the Minister of War, before the annual conference of divisional commanders which started on April 6. He made the following reference to Japan's international situation:

"The relations of Japan with the Soviet Union are being gradually strained while in Japan's relations with China there are problems over which we cannot but be gravely concerned. Despite this situation, it is very regrettable that the people

fail

fail to give their proper recognition to the gravity of the current situation."

The return to Tokyo of the Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Constantin Yurenev, occasioned considerable newspaper comment, and several interviews were published in full in both Japanese and English papers. Although Mr. Yurenev was unwilling to commit himself on several points, some of his answers were pertinent. When interviewed at Seishin, North Korea, he depreciated the importance of the conference of diplomatic officials held in Moscow during his stay, stating that it was only an informal discussion of Far Eastern affairs. Mr. Yurenev would not comment on the Sato policy on the ground that he had not yet studied it. As to any possible change in Soviet policy, Mr. Yurenev said that his Government would continue its invariable policy of peace, but that he could not guarantee that there would never be a change, all depending on the attitude of Japan. When interviewed at Tsuruga the Soviet Ambassador said that he did not believe the Soviet Union was alone to blame for the trouble at Manchuli on the international railroad, and, with reference to the situation at Vladivostok, he believed that Japanese rights and interests were being protected. With reference to the question of a non-aggression pact and also to the border situation Mr. Yurenev intimated that he would not take the initiative.

The most important statement made by Mr. Yurenev was upon his arrival in Tokyo. After references to the

possibility

1

**✓**  
**✓**  
Enclosures:

Respectfully yours,  
*Joseph C. Grew*  
Joseph C. Grew.

CC to A-M

710.

Copy to Embassy, Moscow.  
Copy to Embassy, Peiping.



The Japan Advertiser.

Tokyo, Tuesday, April 13, 1937.

## YURENEV RETURNING HERE THIS EVENING

Soviet Ambassador Says in  
Seishin Moscow's Policy  
Depends on Tokyo

### PEACE INTENT UNCHANGED

Government and Public Believ-  
ed Dissatisfied With Anti-  
Comintern Accord

A change in the Soviet policy of peace with Japan will depend on the attitude of the Japanese Government, the Soviet Ambassador here, Mr. Constantin Yurenev, said when interviewed on Sunday in Seishin, North Korea, on his way back to Tokyo from Moscow.

Mr. Yurenev is scheduled to reach Tsuruga this morning and Tokyo Station at 7:40 o'clock this evening. He left for Moscow early in February.

The Yomiuri gives the following exchange of questions and answers in Seishin:

Q. What is your future policy toward Japan?

A. There will be no new policy, our policy of peace having been invariable, but I cannot guarantee that there will never be a change, all depending on the attitude of the Japanese Government.

Q. What do you think of the dip-

lomatic policy of Foreign Minister Sato?

A. As Mr. Sato announced his policy during my absence from Tokyo and I have been able to examine it only in the papers, I must refrain from commenting on it.

Q. How was the conference on Far Eastern policy held in Moscow the middle of February?

A. There was no Far Eastern conference of the kind reported in the Japanese press. It was only an informal affair in which we who are concerned with Far Eastern affairs got together and discussed the situation. I merely stated my own opinion at the gathering.

Q. How does the Soviet public take the German-Japanese agreement against the Comintern?

A. I do not think the Moscow Government views it with approval, and the Soviet masses are also generally dissatisfied.



The Japan Advertiser.

Tokyo, Wednesday, April 14, 1937.

## UP TO JAPAN, YURENEV AGAIN SAYS

Soviet Ambassador, Back From  
Moscow Visit, Wants to Talk  
With Sato

### SPECIAL PROPOSALS DENIED

Steps to Adjust Relations on  
Basis of Mutual Conces-  
sions Doubted

Friendship between Japan and the Soviet Union is not impossible, but it depends on the attitude of Japan, the Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Constantin Yurenev, stated last night on his return to Tokyo from a brief trip to Moscow, reiterating what he had said on Sunday in Seishin.

On the basis of his answers to a number of questions, Domei comments that the Soviet Union is taking a relatively strong attitude toward Japan, holding it responsible for any aggravation of relations, and believes that for at least the time being it will take no steps for adjustment of relations in accordance with the principles of amity and mutual concession. The impression is deepening, it adds, that the outlook for Japanese-Soviet relations is far from satisfactory.

#### Questions Answered

The questions put to Ambassador Yurenev and his answers are given by Domei as follows:

Q. What was the object of your return home? What resulted from the conference of Far Eastern Ambassadors?

A. It was only to hold conferences with the Government. I am not in a position to say anything more about it.

Q. Do you intend to see Foreign Minister Sato and confer on adjustment of Japanese-Soviet relations? Have you any concrete plans for adjustment of relations?

A. I have brought back with me nothing special, but I wish to see Foreign Minister Sato and talk with him.

Q. What do you think about the non-aggression pact that has come up from time to time?

A. You have only to collate the Diet speech of Premier Hayaashi and the Soviet views published in the past. I do not wish to say more about the matter.

Q. The Soviet Union has been adopting an aggressively strong attitude toward Japan in connection with general relations. Why?

A. I do not wish to touch on the matter. The whole world is convinced that the Soviet Union has no tendency toward aggression.

#### Arrest Mentioned

Q. A leading member of the Communist Party was arrested recently, giving the impression that there is disturbance within the Soviet Union. What is your opinion?

A. I wish to say nothing about it, but I think that your question is of little importance.

Q. What do you think obstructs Japanese-Soviet relations? Is the Japanese-German accord on joint defense against the Comintern one of the causes or the principal cause?

A. I do not wish to discuss the matter at present. The press in my country has taken it up repeatedly, and I am sure you will find the answer to your question if you read our papers.

Q. Do you think a Japanese-Soviet war unavoidable?

A. I do not like to touch such a question, but my country is always desirous of peace. It is also not a country with weak armaments and thus has full confidence in its ability to end foreign aggression if necessary.

Q. What is the secret of promoting friendship between Japan and the Soviet Union? What is the basic policy of the Soviet Union toward Japan?

A. That is a big question, and I cannot answer it offhand.

Q. Am I to understand that you think there is a way open?

A. It depends on Japan.

A. I think there is. Everything depends on the attitude of the Japanese Government.

Q. Do you think there is a crisis in Japanese-Soviet relations?

A. I have been away from Japan for some time and therefore am not acquainted with conditions here, making it impossible to answer your question until after I have studied the local situation.

Q. The questions of a new fishery convention and establishment of joint commissions for demarcation of the frontier and settlement of frontier disputes are pending. How do you intend to deal with them?

A. A provisional fishery agreement has been concluded. Beyond that, no concrete negotiations are in progress.

Regarding the frontier commissions, Japan is opposed. For one thing, it is opposed to the composition of the commission for settlement of disputes. It would have Manchukuo treated as a unit. The Soviet stand is that Japan and Manchukuo should be treated as a single unit. As for the demarcation commission, Japan refuses to recognize the existing frontier. It is also reluctant to maintain peaceful conditions on the frontier pending demarcation.

Q. What is the sentiment of the Soviet Union toward Japan?

A. You will be able to find the answer by studying the newspapers of my country.

#### Would See Sato

A report to the Kokumin from Tsuruga, where Mr. Yurenev arrived yesterday morning, credited him with the following remarks:

"A full-time Foreign Minister has been appointed during my absence. As soon as I resume my post, I intend to visit Foreign Minister Sato. If possible, I should like to exchange views on questions relating to the two countries. I do not intend to take up the question of a non-aggression pact in any positive manner in connection with the border problem, but the Soviets will be ready to consider it fully if broached by the Japanese."

"The cutting of the connection with the Molotov Railway at Manchuli is being bitterly criticized here, but I think the Soviet Union alone is not to blame. The Japanese authorities are undoubtedly aware of the reasons. I am not well versed with the Vladivostok shipping trouble, but I think the Soviet Union is giving fair consideration to the rights and interests of Japan. Pessimism is being reported in connection with trade relations between the two countries. I do not think that trade will cease entirely. Mr. Vladimir Kuchetov, commercial councillor of the Embassy in Tokyo, will be leaving soon for home on furlough, and some development in trade is anticipated on his return to Tokyo."

The Hochi gives the following questions and answers in Tsuruga:

Q. Have you brought back anything to improve relations?

A. As a diplomat, I am always endeavoring to maintain friendly relations. I may say that I am not entirely without plans, but I am a bit skeptical as to what can be achieved under present conditions.

Q. Do you intend to propose again a non-aggression pact?

A. I think I shall not take the initiative in the matter.

Q. Do you mean that the step would be premature?

A. I do not know about the future.

Q. How do you intend to dispose of the border question?

A. If Foreign Minister Sato takes the initiative, I shall exchange views. I cannot say, however, whether or not I shall take the initiative.

Q. What is the outlook for a new fishery convention?

A. As the fiscal year has just started, I am unable to say anything about it at the moment.



RECEIVED  
THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIVISION OF WESTERN  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 2 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

937 MAY 3 PM 3 52

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Tokyo, April 16, 1937.  
DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

No. 2371.

SUBJECT: ANGLO-JAPANESE RELATIONS.

DIVISION OF  
EASTERN  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUN 3 - 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF  
STATE

Copy in FE(381)  
Division of  
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
MAY 4 - 1937  
Department of State

Classified	For	By	Date	Initials

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COPIES SENT TO  
U.N.I. AND M.I.D.

741.94/92

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS  
JUN 9 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUL 1 - 1937  
MR. WELLES

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the settlement of the Keelung Incident, reported in recent telegrams\*, is possibly more indicative of the present trend in Anglo-Japanese relations than the liquidation of a minor difference would ordinarily be. It will be recalled that this dispute had dragged on since last October and that little progress was made toward a settlement although the British Government had

\* Embassy's telegrams No. 106, April 12, 4 p.m., and No. 109, April 15, 5 p.m., 1937.

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GMB

had made it amply clear, both through representations in Tokyo and in replies to questions in Parliament, that it considered the affair a most serious impediment to the progress of Anglo-Japanese relations. The matter had settled down to a stubborn battle with few signs of a disposition on either side to make concessions. Suddenly, however, on the eve of Prince Chichibu's scheduled arrival at Southampton the Foreign Office announced an exchange of letters between the Director General of the Formosan Government and the British Consul at Tamsui in which the Japanese Government expressed both regret for the incident and included the admission of improper conduct on the part of the Japanese policeman involved. Those familiar with the practice of the Japanese authorities in such affairs will realize that the admission of improper conduct on the part of Japanese officials is extremely rare and thus the settlement indicates a serious effort on the part of the Japanese to conciliate the British Government and public opinion.

While there is no doubt a connection between the fact of Prince Chichibu's impending arrival in England and the settlement of the Keelung Incident, implying the fear that the warmth of the Prince's reception might have been affected, nevertheless the thought suggests itself that Mr. Sato, whose intelligent grasp of European affairs and of the foreign point of view is perhaps greater because of his long service in Europe, may have decided to seize the opportunity to inaugurate a new era in Anglo-Japanese relations, especially at a moment when the dramatic flight to London of the ASAHI airplane presumably had impressed British public feeling.

Relations



Relations between Japan and Great Britain have noticeably become less favorable since the Leith-Ross mission to China in the fall of 1935. On his visit to Japan Sir Frederick Leith-Ross reportedly attempted to gain Japan's cooperation in consenting to joint investment in China, but his advice in this matter was rejected. Great Britain's progress in China has markedly increased and her prestige there has certainly gained at the expense of Japan following Britain's reported part in the settlement of the Sian incident and the collapse of the Sino-Japanese negotiations at Nanking in the fall of 1936. In addition to this the German-Japanese anti-Comintern agreement was not only badly received in London but its effect has been to throw Great Britain into even closer relations with China, and even to cause the British to lean a little more toward Soviet Russia (with consequent detriment to Anglo-Japanese relations) due to the fact that the anti-Comintern pact is regarded by the British as tending to upset the balance of power. Eden is reported to feel that so long as Soviet Russia is powerful enough to hold off either Germany or Japan singly the equilibrium will not be disturbed, but if the two combine it will upset the balance and precipitate war.

Mr. Sato has given every indication that he is fully aware that Japanese relations with England must undergo a thorough overhauling. On March 23, previous to the dissolution of the last Diet, he was interpellated on the question of whether the Government intended to revive the former Anglo-Japanese alliance, an action which was advocated by a member of the Seiyukai, Mr. Kaju Nakamura. While the Foreign Minister's replies indicated that Japan has no intention of attempting

attempting to restore the former alliance, nevertheless they made it perfectly clear that the Government will exert every effort to improve Anglo-Japanese relations by the best methods available.

The Embassy has examined the proceedings of the Diet on the date of the interpellation under reference and finds that Mr. Sato closed his reply with the following words: "I am of the opinion that some sort of treaty (with Great Britain), based on thorough understanding similar in purpose or in spirit to the former (Anglo-Japanese) alliance, would be highly fortunate and beneficial to both powers. But the question is very delicate - so delicate that I would refrain from expressing my own views at the present moment as to what methods might or might not be efficacious".

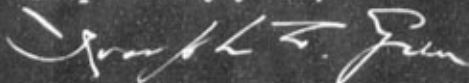
We may also read into Mr. Sato's declaration of policy regarding China\*, in which he proposed to negotiate with that country on a basis of equality and in a conciliatory spirit - a bid for British, as well as American, approval. Certainly little progress can be made toward a substantial improvement of relations with Great Britain without an adjustment of the China issues. The British economic advance in Central and South China during the past year has been marked and there has been during the same period a definite setback in Japan's economic progress in North China. It is quite possible that the Japanese Government now feels that the time may be favorable to approach Great Britain with a proposal of an agreement on the basis of the latter's advantageous condition for some sort of division of economic spheres of influence

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\* Embassy's telegram No. 85, March 11, 3 p.m. 79400/109

fluence in China, possibly in return for a solution of the disarmament issues. At any rate the signs are not lacking that definite gestures designed to improve relations are being made in the direction of Great Britain.

Respectfully yours,



Joseph C. Grew.

710  
ESC:C

Copy to Embassy, London;  
" " " Peiping.



FE  
WE

KLP

Tokyo

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (c)

Dated May 17, 1937.

Rec'd. 9:45 a.m.

NOTE  
794.00

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

129, May 17, 4 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Embassy's 108, April 12, 4 p.m.

841.3394a/14

In the course of an after dinner conversation last evening Foreign Minister Makino told my British colleague that the Emperor, who takes a close and active interest in the day to day details and development of Japan's relations with other countries, regards good relations with Great Britain and the United States as the primary objective of Japan's foreign policy. These precise words were twice repeated by Count Makino with emphasis. He agreed with Clive that the building up of these relations must be a matter of slow and careful development and that the time is not (repeat not) ripe for specific political agreements. Clive assumed that Makino had in mind the recent reported proposal of the Australian Prime Minister Lyons for a nonaggression pact by nations bordering on the Pacific.

It is

711941/18

- 2 -

129 from Tokyo - May 17, 4 p.m.

794.00  
It is my belief as well as that of my British colleague that Count Makino still plays an important role as an adviser to the Emperor and that his categorical statement to Clive reported above and especially the emphasis with which the statement was made and repeated are highly significant of a new trend in Japanese foreign policy since the consummation of the anti-Comintern pact with Germany. ✓

Repeated to Peiping by mail.

GREW

KLP:WIC



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 2445.

1937 JUN 15 PM 2 11

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Tokyo, May 29, 1937.

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS

SUBJECT: SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS.

SECRETARY OF STATE

JUN 22 1937

NOTED

ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DIVISION OF WESTERN  
AFFAIRS  
JUN 21 1937  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Copy in FE (381)  
Division of  
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
JUN 16 1937  
Department of State  
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
JUN 21 1937  
MR. WELLES

RECEIVED  
JUN 23 1937  
MR. MOORE

761.94/969

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that on May 15, 1937, Mr. Yurenev, Soviet Ambassador to Japan, left Tokyo for his new post as Ambassador to Germany, thus terminating a tour of duty of something over four years in a country whose relations with Soviet Russia have been serious, sometimes critical, and at all times highly important. He arrived in Tokyo in March, 1933, as the successor Mr. Troyanovsky, at present Soviet Ambassador to the United States, at a time when relations with Japan had just been seriously disturbed by a Sino-Soviet rapprochement at the end of 1932 and were entering upon an acute stage.

E/B



stage.

There were at least three factors existing at that time which caused the Japanese military, and through them the public, to think seriously of the possibility of war and there was at least a section of the army and navy which felt that if war were to come, the time to strike was at once, before the Soviet military strength in the East had reached its peak; these were (1) the collective force of the recurring irritating border incidents; (2) the increasing spread of communism southward from Outer Mongolia and along the western boundary of "Manchukuo"; (3) the recognition of Soviet Russia as a permanent obstruction to Japanese plans for further political expansion. It must be recalled that while the Soviets had pretty well established themselves as a military power in the European sphere, in 1932-33 they were only beginning to emerge as a real source of danger to Japan in the East. With the departure of Mr. Troyanovsky the more or less conciliatory policy pursued by Moscow toward Japan - and this was especially in evidence during the Manchurian affair of 1931 - came to an abrupt end, and Mr. Yurenev inaugurated the new policy which reflected firmness, self-assurance and bluff. This was combined with more or less frankness and a refusal to yield in the face of Japanese military bluster. Mr. Yurenev did not hesitate to let it be known that he was fully aware of the possibility of a Russo-Japanese conflict, but at the same time he gave the impression of complete confidence as to the favorable outcome of such an eventuality.

While

While it is true that conditions between Japan and Soviet Russia at the present moment are far from favorable nevertheless during the four years of Mr. Yurenev's incumbency many serious questions were settled and today it is Moscow which is receiving overtures from Tokyo seeking to improve relations.

Of course Mr. Yurenev has been greatly assisted by events since his arrival in 1933. The Soviets have made intensive military preparations in Siberia, including, it is reliably reported, the double-tracking of the Trans-siberian Railway; while in the field of international politics Soviet Russia joined the League of Nations and has been recognized by the United States. Although the effect of the latter action has been largely dissipated, at the time it was an extremely important factor in the situation and may well have helped to restrain the Japanese military. Not only has the U.S.S.R. entered the League of Nations, but she concluded a series of non-aggression pacts with her western neighbors, thus leaving her greater freedom to defend her eastern frontiers. Mr. Hirota appeared upon the scene and inaugurated his policy of attaining results through peaceful diplomacy and conciliation. And lastly, Japan has during the past two years turned away from Russia and concentrated upon the problem of China. All these factors have served to help Mr. Yurenev in his work; at the same time, however, his has been far from an easy task.

Perhaps the most important question settled by him was the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway early in 1935.

Naturally

Naturally the details were worked out by the experts, but under his guidance the affair was brought to a successful conclusion and under terms satisfactory to Moscow. The most unfortunate incident during his tenure of office was the signature of the German-Japanese anti-Comintern pact which was such a blow in the face to the Soviets that all negotiations with Japan were immediately suspended. At the time it looked as if Mr. Yurenev would be censured, if not recalled, for his failure to learn of the negotiations leading to this pact before its signature. He was, however, able to point out that the negotiations were carried on not in Tokyo but in Berlin and not by the Japanese Foreign Office but by the military. Furthermore, he did learn of its existence just in time to prevent the signature in Moscow of the new fisheries agreement with Japan which would have taken place in only three days' time.

Of the problems which remained for settlement after the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway the most important were (1) the delimitation of the "Manchukuo"-Siberian borders; (2) the settlement of the oft-recurring border clashes; (3) the revision of the Fisheries Agreement of 1928; (4) the regulation of the North Saghalien Oil concession; (5) the regulation of the yen-ruble exchange rate. Mr. Yurenev had succeeded in bringing negotiations regarding (1) and (2) above to a point where a successful termination might be expected; a revised fisheries agreement had been initialed and was ready for signature; the North Saghalien oil question had actually been settled,



as well as the yen-ruble exchange rate. But the appearance of the anti-Comintern agreement in November 1936, caused an immediate suspension of all negotiations in progress, and, so far as is known, there the matter rests today. It can be seen, then, that causes beyond his control interfered to prevent the attainment of material and substantial achievements in the field of Soviet-Japanese relations during his term of office.

For several weeks prior to his departure Mr. Yurenev carried on a series of important conversations with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Sato, the nature of which is not exactly known. Owing, however, to the strict secrecy with which they were surrounded and to the lack of progress reported, as well as to other factors discussed in a recent despatch\* it is believed possible that the Soviets are demanding some sort of nullification of the anti-Comintern pact as the price for resumption of the negotiations which were suspended upon the announcement of the pact. This, however, is purely speculative at the present time.

Upon his departure Mr. Yurenev gave out a statement to the press in which he characterized relations between the two countries as "unstable" but not bad, and said that there was no question which could not be solved amicably. Although regretting that his conversations with Mr. Sato\*\* had not resulted in a settlement, he believed a solution could be found by a thorough discussion of the existing issues, the only requirement being that each nation demonstrate sincerity. It is difficult to suppress a smile at

\* Embassy's despatch No. 2426, May 14, 1937

\*\* Embassy's despatch No. 2426, May 14, 1937

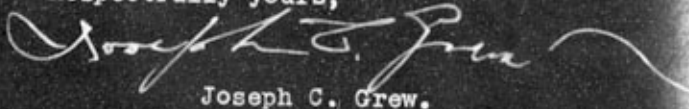
the Soviet Ambassador's reference to the word "sincerity" as his parting shot. This familiar and much-used word, with the special significance which it holds for the Japanese, may be regarded as contributing a faint tone of mockery to Mr. Yurenev's final comment after four years of difficult and skilful work in Tokyo during which period he has most adroitly handled his Government's relations with Japan, yielding little but never permitting the situation to get out of hand or to approach the brink too closely. If indeed the Soviet Embassy has presented its point of view as outspokenly to the Japanese Government as Mr. Yurenev and other members of his mission have expressed themselves to their colleagues and others, then even the Japanese can hardly accuse the Soviets of insincerity. It has apparently been made clear to the Japanese Government that Moscow is perfectly willing to come to an agreement on any or all the outstanding questions at issue provided the Japanese will yield to the Soviet demands.

If we can believe what Mr. Yurenev has often intimated and even stated, the Soviet Government has consistently shown its willingness to come to an agreement on any question in which the Japanese would give way. While this may not contribute much to an improvement in relations with an adversary nevertheless it must be admitted that insincerity cannot be charged.

Therefore it is possible to see in Mr. Yurenev's parting words the essence of the spirit which has motivated the Soviets in their dealings with Japan during the past four years.

It is a spirit of frank unwillingness to yield an inch without some substantial gain in return and a spirit of confident reliance upon the Soviet Union's military strength to back up its policy in the Far East. In no case has Moscow placed the Japanese Government in a position from which it could not retreat without loss of face, thereby seriously threatening the peace, but the Soviets have not shrunk from employing from time to time such irritants as were deemed necessary to prevent the Japanese from continuously seeking to improve relations. It is significant that in the relations between these two countries during the period under discussion the initiative for settlement of outstanding questions has been preponderantly from the Japanese side and consequently it is fair to draw the conclusion that Mr. Yurenev has been a successful Ambassador during his term of duty in Tokyo.

Respectfully yours,

  
Joseph C. Grew.

*copy to*  
710.

ESC:r

Copy to Embassy, Peiping.  
Copy to Embassy, Moscow.  
Copy to Embassy, Berlin.



FE  
EU

JR

A portion of this telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A)

Tokyo

Dated July 29, 1937

Rec'd 9:15 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

232. July 29, 4 p.m.

One. (GRAY) The Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday made in the Dist the following statement:

"The fact is that before the situation (in North China) arose conversations between Japan and Great Britain with regard to Far Eastern question had made substantial progress. However, even though methods were to be devised for the rendering of assistance to China by Japan and Great Britain, such methods would be entirely inapplicable in the existing circumstances, and due to the deplorable situation which has arisen the conversations have terminated for the time being".

Two. The papers yesterday evening took notice of the calls which Dodds and I made yesterday on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and although the purposes of Dodds' visit were discussed at some length from a conjectural point of view, the purpose of my visit was merely stated to be to convey the earnest hope that hostilities in North China would be avoided.

Three.

NOTE  
741.94

793.94/9056

JR 232, July 29, 4 p.m., from Tokyo.

Three. This morning the Japanese papers closely examine the attitude shown by Great Britain toward the present Sino-Japanese crisis, and certain facts are stressed, as follows: (a) The British Government through Dodds has offered to the Japanese Government its good offices as mediator; (b) Eden stated in the House of Commons that the situation in North China was not a matter for local discussion but one to be settled by negotiations between the Japanese and Chinese Governments; and (c) the House of Commons was informed that the Anglo-Japanese conversations had been suspended. The conclusion is drawn that the British Government is seeking a favorable opportunity to intervene in any military action which may be taken by Japan and that it is building up for this purpose a close association between Great Britain, United States, Soviet Union and France. Several papers charge Great Britain with hostility and bad faith toward Japan (END GRAY).

Four. It is to be specially noted that the Foreign Office has waited until now to disclose to the Japanese press the purport of the statement made by Dodds to Horinouchi (see my telegram No. 206, July 16, 7 p.m.).

Repeated to Nanking.

GRV

KLP:V C



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Tokyo, August 6, 1937.

No. 2532.

SUBJECT: ANGLO-JAPANESE RELATIONS.

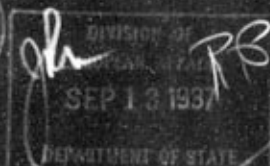
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1937 AUG 23 PM 1 59

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

Grade		For	
In U.S.A.			



The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch No. 2482 of June 24, 1937, relating to the preliminary Anglo-Japanese conversations which had taken place in London between the Japanese Ambassador there and Sir Alexander Cadogan, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and also with Mr. Eden. It will be recalled that although these conversations were largely of an exploratory

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and preparatory nature, they had nevertheless reached the point where it is evident that formal negotiations were about to begin. While the results might have fallen far short of the expectations on the part of certain enthusiastic instigators and supporters of the plan, it may be supposed that the conversations would not have been permitted to develop unless there were prospects of the net result being favorable to Anglo-Japanese relations.

79394  
However, with the outbreak of the present Sino-Japanese hostilities conditions have rapidly changed in Anglo-Japanese relations. Whether or not we were correct in our reasoning in the despatch under reference that one of the main reasons which impelled the Japanese to seek a rapprochement with Great Britain was a further effort to seek to emerge from her isolated position in the family of nations, it is becoming increasingly evident that this North China affair has already greatly damaged Japan's chances for gaining additional friends among the major powers and it is practically a certainty that should the present situation become more serious or should be greatly protracted, Japan's position will rapidly revert to the same state of isolation in which she found herself from 1932 to 1936. Even the anti-Comintern agreement with Germany appears to be failing in the present instance to evoke for Japan any great measure of open sympathy on the part of Germany, at least so long as the struggle with China does not involve the Soviet Union.

Within a week of the first incident in the present Sino-Japanese difficulties, Mr. Eden informed the Japanese Ambassador at London that the expected negotiations with Japan could

could not be hoped for if further Japanese troops were sent into China and the British Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo recommended to his government that "in certain eventualities" he be authorized to make a similar statement in his conversations with the Foreign Office in Tokyo. The obvious implication was, of course, that the British Government wished to use the proposed negotiations as a lever to force Japan to employ moderation in dealing with the Chinese situation. This belief on the part of the British that a threat to break off the Anglo-Japanese conversations would be really effective in preventing Japanese action in North China is clearly indicative of the naïveté, if not fatuity, of the British attitude toward Japanese policy on the mainland as well as a lack of comprehension of the motives behind the Japanese desire for the negotiations in London. Among the chief benefits to Japan from the successful conclusion of the negotiations would have been the removal in some part of the friction which has recently marred the interests between the two countries due to the conflict between their respective interests in China; but the advantages to be gained by such a step are not to be compared, in Japanese eyes, to the conversion of North China into an area completely dominated by Japan and in which her commercial advantages will become even greater with a corresponding detriment to the interests of Great Britain and others.

If we are correct in our analysis of the arrangement with Great Britain which was contemplated by the Japanese Government, namely, that Japan would refrain from molesting British commercial and economic interests in China, in return for which Great Britain would undertake not to discriminate against Japanese commerce with British areas (see

pages 5 and 6 of the despatch under reference) we must see that the uncertainty of any assurances which Japan could give for non-molestation of British interests in China has become much greater in view of the present situation. The record in "Manchukuo", where as implacably as the flow of the incoming tide, the Japanese are driving out the established interests of other nations, speaks for itself. While Japan may not be seeking to set up in North China a second "Manchukuo"\*, the form which their domination of the North China area takes is of no consequence. It is perfectly obvious that the Japanese are now determined that this area is henceforth to be under their exclusive control under one guise or another, whether it be out and out separation, semi-autonomy or by any other device by which the Nanking Government is forced to relinquish all effective control.

If, then, the prospects of the Anglo-Japanese negotiations reaching a successful conclusion were somewhat uncertain prior to the North China incident, it appears probable that these prospects will become even more uncertain in proportion to the seriousness with which affairs with China develop. It must be increasingly clear to the British that while the Japanese may sincerely desire a rapprochement with Great Britain they are not in a position to offer the British any proposition sufficiently attractive to compensate the latter for the sacrifices which they would be called upon to make.

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reflected  
affirmed  
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It may be of interest to report a remark made by a highly placed official of the British Embassy to a member of my staff. This official stated that he felt the best thing

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\* Embassy's despatch No. 2506 of July 23, 1937.



thing for us all (meaning the United States and Great Britain) would be for Japan in the present instance to become involved in a long and difficult military campaign in China which would become such a drain upon the resources of Japan that she would suffer a financial collapse and thus be removed from the field as an economic and a naval threat for years to come. While, of course, such remarks are irresponsible in themselves, they do indicate the trend of feeling in some British quarters toward Japan.

During the frequent contacts which I have had during the past month with the British Chargé d'Affaires I have been surprised, not by the firm determination of the British Government to resist within practicable limits any extension of Japanese influence in China, but by their indifference to (and at times ignorance of) the elements of Japanese policy. The Japanese for their part have shown little confidence in the disinterestedness of the efforts of the British Government toward resolving the present difficulty between China and Japan. There has, in short, developed on the part of both Great Britain and Japan an attitude of irritation, suspicion, and resentment which seems to have effectively removed for some years to come any possibility of there being concluded between the two countries a political agreement such as that contemplated a few weeks ago.

Respectfully yours,

*Joseph C. Grew*  
Joseph C. Grew.

710  
ESC:C

Copy to Embassy, London  
" " " Peiping  
" " " Nanking

*Which I  
remembered  
to Mr. Welles  
two weeks  
ago.*

FS  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (B)

Tokyo

Dated August 27, 1937

Rec'd 1:35 p.m.

NOTE  
2/11/94  
Secretary of State,  
Washington.

321, August 27, 4 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

One. Recent despatches from London state that following a conference between the British Prime Minister Eden and Halifax on August 23 the British Government will renew efforts to persuade the American Government to participate in a "joint declaration" on the situation in the Far East. There is extensive speculation over the character of such proposed declaration but it is generally anticipated that it is to be vigorous. On the basis of extensive experience in Japan on the part of several of my advisers and myself I venture respectfully to submit certain of our more fundamental views concerning the present Sino-Japanese conflict in hope that they may be found helpful in formulating future policy and action.

Two. Divergent opinions exist as to the question of premeditation and the immediate responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict but these points have probably

not

9732

PS 2-No. 321, August 27, 4 p.m. from Tokyo

not yet been established. In our opinion they are not now of great practical importance.

Three. The important consideration is that the seeds for the present conflict were sown long ago and regardless of dates or provocative acts the conflict was eventually inevitable. While it is believed that the Japanese at first hoped to settle the Marco Polo Bridge affair as a local episode it was soon found that regardless of the wishes of Nanking or Tokyo the situation had rapidly developed out of hand and that the settlement of Japan's anomalous position in North China had now become unavoidable by either side.

Four. The present hostilities are an inevitable corollary of the Manchurian conflict which left Japan with an eventual choice of two alternatives: either to establish complete control in North China or to be prepared for an eventual retreat from Manchuria. There could never have been any doubt whatever as to the choice of alternatives. Japan's effort during the past four years to obtain its objective gradually and by political maneuvers rather than by open force miscarried. Eventual conflict then became inevitable. There then remained only the question as to how far the conflict could be localized. There is every reason to believe that Japan would



FS 3-No. 321, August 27, 4 p.m. from Tokyo

would have welcomed localization but whether through Japan's own inept tactics (in Shanghai and elsewhere) or through uncontrollable circumstances any such hope was soon shattered. General warfare was unloosed and there can be no question but that the Japanese Government solidly supported by the public is determined to see it through.

Five. Predictions as to the final outcome are of course premature. Japanese confidence in overwhelming military victory within a few months appears to be complete. They believe that their mechanized army and air forces can attain their objectives. They seem incapable of pausing to consider that after repeated victories in battle and the possible virtual destruction of the Chinese armies as organized units the real war may only then begin. We doubt if they stop to think of the possible effects of almost endless guerilla warfare, of the wiping out of Japan's commercial and industrial stake in China and of the immense financial appropriations and other drains which may progressively deplete the Japanese Exchequer. We hold that they have no real conception of these risks and are unable to visualize or appraise the long range outlook as opposed to the more immediate prospective. Herein in our opinion lies the considerable risk

FS 4-No. 321, August 27, 4 p.m. from Tokyo

risk that Japan may conceivably emerge from such a campaign shorn of much of her prestige and power.

Six. We agree with Mr. Johnson's thesis (Nanking's 410, August 12, 6 p.m.) that China could not afford to refuse to meet Japan's challenge and we are in complete accord with his opposition to any American step which might be considered as urging China to purchase peace with the loss of sovereign rights. We are equally of the opinion that any attempt by the United States to thwart by manifestation of disapprobation on legal or moral grounds the development of Japan's China policy would have no beneficial effect and if persisted in would tend to obliterate the elements of friendship on the part of Japan towards the United States which have been and are daily being developed by our government's tactics, methods and manner of procedure in the present conflict.

Seven. We feel that the fundamental objectives of the United States in the present situation should be: (1) to avoid involvement; (2) to protect to the utmost the lives, property and rights of American citizens; and (3) while reserving complete neutrality to maintain our traditional friendship with both combatants. The last point will need the making of special endeavor toward solidifying our relations with Japan. In a day and age  
when

FS 5-No. 321, August 27, 4 p.m. from Tokyo

when national egotism is rampant we believe that the Japanese are capable of gratitude in large measure for manifestations of good will and that by encouraging confidence in our impartiality between and friendship toward both contestants we can accomplish more than by any other method. They still constantly remember and speak of our friendship at the time of the great earthquake in 1923. They likewise constantly remember the Exclusion Act and our methods at the time of the Manchurian affair. Today as a result of the policy and methods now being pursued by the present Administration in Washington they are already exhibiting marked signs of appreciation. Similar appreciation is not (repeat not) being manifested towards Great Britain. Looking at these considerations from a purely material point of view we believe that they constitute a practical asset to American interests and that the importance of this asset will increase in direct ratio to our continuance of the policy and methods which we are now following. We have before us an important opportunity which should not be missed. If and when the time comes for the United States to act toward terminating hostilities Japan will be more disposed to heed (w) from us if she has confidence in our good will and impartiality than if her attitude toward us be one of suspicion and resentment.

Eight.



FS 6-No. 321, August 27, 4 p.m. from Tokyo

Eight. It is far from our intention to advocate the development of friendship with Japan at the expense of friendship with China. We merely wish to emphasize the importance of having constantly in mind the considerations brought about in this telegram in connection with every action taken by our Government. We feel that much may be accomplished by appealing either alone or in concert with other powers for restraining or circumscribing warfare in specific localities where foreigners and foreign property are in danger but we also feel that until there has occurred a stalemate or until military victory by one of the contestants has been achieved moral intervention by the powers which could be interpreted as partial to either contestant would have no (repeat no) good effect.

Nine. The Military and Naval Attaches and my entire staff concur in the foregoing.

KLP

GREW



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
1937 OCT 18 PM 2 22

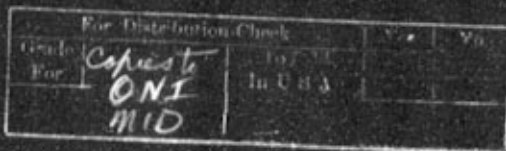
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Confidential.

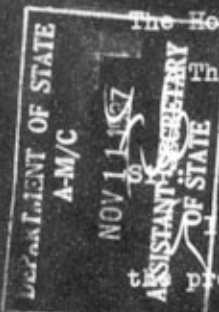
No. 2616

DIVISION OF AMERICAN EMBASSY  
COMMUNICATIONS Tokyo, October 1, 1937  
AND RECORDS

SUBJECT: SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS



COPIES SENT TO  
O.N.I. AND M.I.D.



The Honorable

The Secretary of State  
Washington

I have the honor to observe that since the outbreak of the present Sino-Japanese hostilities in July the question of relations with Soviet Russia has become increasingly delicate although relatively quiet on the surface. The new Soviet Ambassador, Mr. Michael Slavutsky, arrived here on August 23 to succeed Mr. Constantin Yureneff who left in May for his new post at Berlin. A few days after the new Ambassador's arrival, on August 29, the Sino-Soviet non-aggression pact was formally announced. This had somewhat less effect here than the announcement last November of the German-Japanese anti-Comintern pact had in Moscow. While the latter agreement burst like a bombshell upon Moscow the Sino-Soviet pact was less unexpected, due to the several approaches made in that direction in recent years, and

consequently

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consequently its effect had already been somewhat discounted. Nevertheless the conclusion of this agreement, with its supposed secret arrangement for the supplying of war material and other assistance to the Chinese, has had a serious effect upon relations between Tokyo and Moscow.

On the surface there have been perhaps fewer of the ordinary run of irritating incidents between the two countries than has been the case in less troublous times. For instance, the border skirmishes and frontier violations along the Manchurian-Siberian frontier have practically ceased since the outbreak of hostilities with China, and it is argued by some observers that this fact tends to indicate that the previous border incidents were largely instigated by the Japanese, although this by no means necessarily follows. It is nevertheless probable that the Kwantung Army would not be interested at the present time in forcing a clash with the Soviets on the Siberian border.

There have been incidents of other kinds, such as the arrest and detention by the Soviets of some 28 Japanese fishing vessels off the Russian coast in the Japan Sea on the charge that the Japanese vessels were violating Soviet territorial waters. This brought sharp protests and counter-protests but there appears to have been no disposition on either side to allow the matter to become very serious. The Japanese have also complained that their nationals in Soviet territory have been subjected to unnecessarily harsh treatment, especially in North Saghalien where Japanese merchants and businessmen have been severely treated because of alleged minor commercial offenses. Japan has also been forced by Moscow to close its Consulates in Odessa and in Novosibirsk on the grounds that the agreement entered into in August 1925 provided that each country should have an equal number of consular offices in the territory of the other.



Incidents such as these are rather the result of the truculent attitude which has governed relations between the two countries in recent years and in themselves are not so charged with potential danger as were the border incidents which involved the clash of armed troops and loss of lives.

It is fairly clear that at the present time neither country wishes to force the other into a position where a break may occur or which would lead to hostilities. Probably when the time comes it will scarcely be found necessary to trump up an excuse in the form of an incident; hostilities will be launched without previous warning. There is a school of thought in this country, rather widely held, that when Japan was forced to fight either China or Russia she would be forced to fight the other; consequently the present Chinese campaign is being waged in the full realization that Russia may become an active enemy at any time. However, it appears to be the intention of the military to get the China situation in hand as rapidly as possible in order that China will be rendered ineffective if and when the Soviets are to be confronted. Some observers believe, in fact, that the best of the Japanese troops are not being employed against the Chinese, but only the younger and the older troops, while the best of the younger and physically fit reserves are being held for later possible use against the Russians. This is difficult to confirm but it is fairly certain that the army in "Manchoukuo" and Korea is being kept at full strength and at peak efficiency to meet all possible eventualities.

The effective military assistance in the form of war materials which the Soviets will be able to furnish to China against the Japanese is not regarded here as constituting any great menace, although strenuous efforts are being made to cut the routes between Siberia and China through Outer Mongolia. Travel in Outer Mongolia is largely restricted to

caravan

caravan routes over which the transport of any considerable quantities of heavy war material would be out of the question. Airplanes, however, are another matter as they can be flown from some point along the Transsiberian Railroad where they would be assembled, and light arms, such as machine-guns, and ammunition could be flown and delivered, along with the airplanes themselves, into Chinese territory. Most of the assistance which could be rendered by the Soviets would necessarily be through supplying military and other advisers, and by giving moral support. For these reasons, then, the feeling against the Sino-Soviet pact is not so strong as it might be. However, the press does not hesitate to state that the attitude of the Soviets toward Japan has become more menacing since the conclusion of the pact.

In the light of what has transpired it must be admitted that whoever may have fired the first shot at Marco Polo bridge on July 7, the Japanese military sensed that this was a most opportune moment to undertake hostilities with China without incurring the risk of immediate intervention on the part of Soviet Russia. Not only is the European situation thoroughly engaging the attention of the Soviets but the internal situation is believed seriously to have impaired the efficiency of the Soviet army. It will be recalled that Major General Homma, a Japanese general staff officer, on his return from England last June after visiting Moscow shortly after the recent executions of Soviet military leaders, told the press on several occasions that the "Soviet Army is greatly weakened by the recent developments within the Red Army and is facing destruction." He also went on to say that the Japanese have consistently overrated the Soviet Army, implying that he and other Japanese officers have shared the belief of the Japanese public that the Soviet Army is stronger than is actually the case.\* Such a statement coming from a high-ranking Japanese officer

\*Military Attaché's report to War Department, No. 8882, July 9, 1937.

officer is especially significant in view of the fact that his opinion was expressed not more than three weeks prior to the outbreak of the present hostilities.

\* If General Homma's views prevail it will support that portion of the army, especially the younger element, which may wish to settle the Russian question once and for all in the near future.

As there are generally conflicting opinions on every question, however, the Department will no doubt have in mind the view expressed not long ago by the British Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, concurred in by Mr. Eden, that the Soviet Union had not been weakened by the recent purge but on the contrary had been strengthened by the removal of elements hostile to Stalin, and that the future policy of the Union would follow lines of "intensive defense."\*

There now comes a report\*\* to the effect that the USSR is about to supply 300 airplanes to China and that preparations to receive and condition these planes are being made at Lanchow. In this connection the following memorandum has been submitted by the Military Attaché:

"A recent confidential cable report from the American Embassy, Nanking, stated authoritatively that 300 Soviet planes would be sent to China and concentrated at Lanchow (Kansu Province) where accommodations are already under construction. If this report is true, the planes will undoubtedly be flown via Tacheng, Tihwa, Hami (all in Sinkiang Province), and Suchow (Kansu Province) where airfields are located. Intermediate hops along this route are only about three hundred

miles

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\* Embassy's telegram No. 195, July 13, 8 p.m.

\*\* Nanking's telegram to the Department No. 733, September 29, 8 a.m.



*Imperial?*  
miles or less and Tacheng is only 30 miles from Semiopol on the Turkish Railroad. This is the only route from Russia along which landing fields have been established and it has the additional advantage of being beyond the radius of probable action of Japanese aviation and so immune to interruption--advantages not enjoyed by routes farther to the east."

Among the welter of rumors invariably flying about in time of war, there comes to me today a story from one of my colleagues that plans are already being developed for a Japanese attack on Vladivostok. Considering the various circumstances set forth in this despatch I regard this rumor as made out of whole cloth. The Military Attaché concurs.

Respectfully yours,

*Joseph C. Grew*

Joseph C. Grew

3 Carbon Copies

Received

*one copy attached*

710. To note  
ESC:mg

Copy to Embassy, Peiping  
" " " Nanking  
" " " Moscow



EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 2633.

Tokyo, October 18, 1937

SUBJECT: SINO-JAPANESE CONFLICT.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Copy for Aundelgal  
Bureau  
Copy in FIC



The Honorable  
The Secretary of State  
Washington

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 2619, dated  
October 8, 1937, reporting my conversation with Mr.  
Kojiro Matsukata regarding the latter's forthcoming visit  
to the United States, I have the honor to transmit here-  
with a memorandum of a conversation between Mr. Matsukata  
and Mr. Dooman, Counselor of Embassy, on the same subject,  
on October 12, 1937.

Respectfully yours,

*Joseph C. Grew*  
Joseph C. Grew

Enclosure:  
1/ As stated above.

710  
EHD:mg

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11025

Confidential.

Conversation.

October 12, 1937.

Mr. Kojiro Matsukata

Mr. Dooman.

Mr. Matsukata said that he had come to the Consulate General to obtain a visa and that he had dropped in to say good-bye to me.

I said that I was glad to have a final opportunity to advise against his speaking in public on the Far Eastern conflict. Mr. Matsukata said that he saw no likelihood of his visit to the United States accomplishing any good result, and that - as he had just said to a group of his friends - he proposed to make of his trip a "good long nap".

I asked Mr. Matsukata whether he cared, notwithstanding the altered situation, to explain a little more fully what was in the minds of his military and naval friends who had favored American action to end the conflict. Mr. Matsukata remarked that that was now ancient history: that the feeling among naval leaders, who had been accused by the military group of being too "moderate", had completely changed, and as a result of the President's Chicago speech and the Department's announcement of October 6, there is intense adverse feeling toward the United States. They had believed that the attitude of the United States was so fair that a final solution of  
the



the "Pacific Problem" was at hand, and the people in control were prepared, as a token of their appreciation, to throw the "Open Door in China wide open to the United States" and to any other country taking a similar impartial position. "But that is all finished", said Mr. Matsukata, "and the same people are saying that, if the United States continues along the policy which was recently announced, Japan will have to get ready".

E.H.D.

EG  
This telegram must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (B)

Tokyo.

Dated November 1, 1937

Rec'd 1:55 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

508, November 1, 7 p. m.

WE feel that background material as presented here-  
under may be helpful to the Department at this time es-  
pecially in connection with the subject of the Department's  
277, October 31, 2 p. m., to which we are replying in a  
separate telegram.

One. The Department has probably noticed a press  
despatch from Hedges on a resolution adopted on Saturday  
by a group of members of Parliament denouncing Great  
Britain for attempting to form a common front against  
Japan and advocating that diplomatic relations with Great  
Britain be broken off. The previous night a "delegation"  
visited the British Embassy to protest against the  
supplying of British arms to China. The press is again  
referring in heated terms to the "unfriendly attitude"  
of the British forces at Shanghai charging inter alia  
that British troops supplied food to Chinese troops be-  
leaguered in Chapei and facilitated their escape into  
the International Settlement, that British warships have  
been

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-2- 508, November 1, 7 p.m.

been giving range and direction signals to Chinese artillery units and that without making investigation the British accused the Japanese of firing the shell which killed or wounded four British soldiers. The incidents above cited, in our opinion, are not intrinsically important but they are symptomatic and not reflective of the intense dislike and suspicion of the British which prevail among all classes as expressed in the resolution above mentioned.

Two. Although there is in our opinion no (repeat no) evidence that the Japanese Government contemplates translating that feeling into any action directed against Great Britain alone, the British Ambassador in conversations with me last Saturday seemed concerned, if not alarmed, over the hostility of the Japanese navy toward Great Britain. (He believed that the army's attitude is relatively moderate.) He referred to the recent action by France in stopping the sending of arms and munitions to China through Indo-China and he said that as Hong Kong is now the principal place of entry into China for war supplies the animus of the Japanese is now concentrated on the British. He thought that the formation of a new Japanese naval unit designated as the fourth fleet which is operating in south China waters



-3- No. 508, November 1, 7 p. m., from Tokyo.

waters along with other recent developments pointed to plans to "cut off Hong Kong".

Three. We do not share Craigie's fears with regard to this last point but we believe that plans are on foot for the taking of further drastic measures by Japan *pari passu* with future political and military developments.

(A) Political: Frequent references are made in the press and in private conversations to possible withdrawal by Japan from the Nine Power Treaty. The principal reason for Japan's not already having withdrawn at any one of various times during the past six years is probably that it would vitiate the Japanese argument that the military actions of Japan do not come within the purview of that treaty. But if the Brussels Conference should find that Japan has transgressed the treaty there would probably be agitation for withdrawal.

(B) Military: It seems unlikely that Japan would blockade Hong Kong which would inevitably lead to war with Great Britain before resorting to the device of declaring war on China and thus acquiring a legal right to search vessels bound for Hong Kong. The possibility of stopping ingress into China through Hong Kong of war supplies is as the Department might well suppose being given serious attention

-4- No. 503, November 1, 7 p. m., from Tokyo.

attention by the Japanese. In this connection a retired Admiral who still enjoys strong influence in navy circles informed a member of my staff that Japan might have to inaugurate in the South China Sea a second "Kirkwall". This statement and other pieces of evidence, such as the release of the naval landing force from further operations at Shanghai, suggest that far-reaching plans might be put into effect if the military situation is not well in hand in the near future, say by the end of the year. One possibility which seems likely is that war would be declared against China, a formal and effective blockade instituted and a naval landing party sent to occupy Hainan or some other point which could be conveniently used as a place to inspect neutral shipping.

Four. The attitude of the United States is again presented by press despatches from the United States as one of moderation. Those published today include an extensive summarization of an article by Lippmann carried by the "NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE" on October 30 and others which stress that the United States will endeavor to avoid being faced by a choice between "drastic alternatives".

Reported to be ending.

ONE

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B)

Tokyo

FROM *W. H. P.* Dated November 2, 1937

Rec'd 9:15 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

510, November 2, 3 p.m.

The following report to me from the Acting Military Attache Major Creswell is in my opinion most timely and would be of interest to our Delegation at the Brussels Conference.

"One. Information has been obtained in the course of the past few days which tends to corroborate reports which have been current for some two weeks to the effect that the strength of the Kwantung army has undergone a considerable increase. The size of the army including the troops under its control now operating in Suiyuan Province is estimated by this office as in the vicinity of 230,000 men.

Two. This force has been built up gradually and has reached its present size as a result of precautionary rather than preparatory considerations the elements entering into such precautionary measures being the fact that there is suspicion regarding Sino-Soviet understandings, that trouble is feared from the Outer Mongolian tribes as a result of Chinese and Russian instigation, that the disaffections

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*Reported to  
Ambassador,  
Nov. 2.*

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JR -2- #510, November 2, 3 p.m., from Tokyo.

in the Manchukuo army are greater than appear on the surface and finally the perennial apprehension that Russia may enter the struggle while the Japanese are embroiled with China.

Three. It is felt that the Kwantung army has been built up by troops formed in Japan in the course of the mobilization activities which have been taking place for the past few weeks as well as by a certain number of additions from the North China forces, although the extent to which the forces in North China have been increased in order to add to the Kwantung army is difficult to say. Such a decision to weaken the North China force in favor of the Kwantung army could mean only that the sum of the conditions mentioned in paragraph two are of sufficient import to warrant the diminishing of the momentum acquired by the operations in North China in proportion as the strength of that garrison is reduced.

Four. At present, however, the North China and Shanghai operations cannot be viewed as unrelated activities. The YOMIURI SHIMBUN of this morning carries an article covering a statement by General Matsui commanding at Shanghai to the effect that the objective of his force is Nanking. This opinion as to the direction of future operation in that sector was also voiced in other quarters and within the last week this office has secured identifications which indicate that some troops which have heretofore been engaged in North China operations are now operating at Shanghai. Identifications have also been made

-3- #510, November 2, 3 p.m., from Tokyo.

which indicate the presence of a certain amount of cavalry at Shanghai which points to expectation of a more open form of action than has characterized the operations in that sector prior to the recent advances.

Five. Viewed in their relation to the operations in North China the sum of the statements evidenced by indications mentioned in the preceding paragraph may well mean that with what the Japanese consider as a threat from the northwest and the fact that the operations in North China have thus far failed to pin down and definitely destroy the Chinese forces in that area a decision may have been made to temporarily suspend or limit the southward movement in North China and instead to deliver the decisive blow via Nanking. However, the Japanese army has a reserve of some 3,000,000 men and with the present army being variously estimated as between 900,000 and 1,250,000 men it is evident that if the decision be to draw further upon the man power of the nation there are ample resources in that respect for continuing operations on a large scale on all fronts.

Six. All classes of the people feel that the security and future existence of the nation are involved in the present situation and that there can be no turning back no matter what pressure be brought by other powers. Japanese opinion

-4- #510, November 2, 3 p.m., from Tokyo.

opinion is firmly behind the armed services in this respect and they are spiritually prepared for any eventuality even though the entrance of Russia into the present struggle precipitates a world war through the spread of hostilities to the west. Reports have it that a survey of capital and bank deposits is being carried out with a view to the mobilization of capital in connection with preparations for such an eventuality as a war of three years duration.

Seven. Regarding the political situation it is felt that while the people in general are warmly inclined toward the Kono Cabinet there is a growing feeling that there is a lack of decision in that body which results in a loss of time and the introduction of an uncertain element into the conduct of national affairs in this crisis. This feeling in addition to the possibility that the health of the Premier may not be equal to the occasion has given rise to the thought that should the present cabinet be replaced the next Government should be headed by such a man as General Araki or Admiral Suetsugu who would be depended upon to form governments of the type which would result in all the elements of the government, army, navy and civil components functioning harmoniously toward a common goal".

GREW

KLI:CSB





THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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AMERICAN EMBASSY

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The mass meetings have been held under the auspices of a newly formed society known as the "Taisho Hoshu-Kai" (Allied Comrades on Policy towards England), warmly assisted by various chauvinistic groups such as the Black Dragon Society and the Shiunso. An example of the activities of the Shiunso will be found in a half-page advertisement which appeared in the leading Japanese vernacular newspapers and in the English edition of the TOKYO NICHU NICHU on November 18, a copy of which is enclosed herewith. This advertisement is titled: "Another Statement to the British People", and is signed by the Shiunso. The statement opens with a tabulation of the square miles of territory alleged to have been seized by England during the past 150 years and points out that England, with little more than half of Japan's population, controls nearly one-fourth of the earth's surface. There follow examples of Britain's alleged cruelties and avarice, accompanied by the flat statement that British policy towards Japan is a scheme for oppressing her. The remainder of the statement is devoted to a series of charges designed to prove that England is essentially responsible for the present unhappy conditions in the Far East due to her encouragement of China to resist Japan; and it closes with a plea that the British people abandon their "tyranny and fraud" and henceforth direct their efforts towards world peace and prosperity.

Naturally such a statement will not bear even the most casual analysis; there is no doubt, however, that this expression of resentment against Great Britain is genuine and is not limited to the nationalist group behind it. There is one remark in the foregoing at least which is of real significance in revealing one of the chief underlying causes for Japan's present hostilities in China; this may be found in the following: "The British and American Ambassadors, through

Japan and China's overestimate of her own military strength caused China to become conceited and to entertain contempt for Japan, which resulted in the violation of Japan's rights and interests in Manchuria, the murder of Captain Mukamura, and finally the Manchurian incident". (The underscoring is ours).

Apart from political, military, tactical, and other considerations, it is this feeling on the part of the Japanese that the Chinese dare to hold them, the Japanese, in contempt which has aroused Japan to their present anger toward the Chinese Government and which has implanted the determination to punish the Chinese and to break their flinching spirit, if possible. The foregoing is a digression from the anti-British theme forming the subject of the present despatch but its significance is, in our opinion, worthy of comment.

The anti-British mass meetings held under the auspices of the Jishi Goshikai took place on November 22 at Nishi Yuzio Hall and on November 23 in China Barr. The press estimates that about one thousand persons attended each meeting, the first of which was presided over by Lieutenant-General Baron Takeda Kikuchi, member of the House of Peers, and the second of which was presided over by Dr. Mitsuru Toyama, well-known head of the notorious Black Dragon Society and an ardent chauvinist. The speakers' platform was in both cases hung with banners bearing various anti-British inscriptions, among which were: "Scrap our friendly policy toward Great Britain" and "Cut our relations with Great Britain". Manifestos were issued and resolutions were adopted which denounced the British for betraying China and for pursuing a policy of obstructionism toward Japan. Clippings from the Jishi Goshikai of November 23 and 24, 1937, in which are given accounts of the two mass meetings, are enclosed herewith.



In addition to the foregoing manifestations of the anti-British feeling here, there have been a number of signed articles and editorials in the vernacular and English language press, all of which have been of a nature to arouse the people against Great Britain. Those which have recently appeared in the English language press will be found on pages 49-50 inclusive of the Summary of Clippings from this Embassy dated November 20, 1937, going forward in the much leaving today. One article, particularly, is of interest in revealing the depth of the feeling entertained against Great Britain by some Japanese: the JINTOKU SHIMBUN of November 13 refers to an article in the JINTOKU SHIMBUN of November 12, signed Tamazaki, a well-known writer on economic subjects, the gist, in part: "The Japanese people have come to realize that the enemy of Japan in the present hostilities is not necessarily China itself.... I need point out that the nation is Britain."

The British Embassy is being frequently approached by groups and delegations of various sorts, each bringing some form of resolution or manifesto expressing strong disapproval of the present British attitude.

All of these things, coupled with the recent warship incident of the Fourth Fleet, which operated in the vicinity of Hong Kong, and the series of injury and death of British nationals in Japan, with the wounding of the British Ambassador in China, not to mention the damage to British property in China, interference with British shipping, difficulties with regard to the Chinese customs, and many other widespread British interests in China, add up to a staggering total of anti-British activities on the part of Japan, and Britain's toleration and silence would be a source of amazement were it not for the fact that it is recognized that, due to her lagging behind in armament and to her present precarious situation, no other attitude would be cooperative with the realities of the situation.

Respectfully yours,

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 793.94/12675 FOR Tel 180, 4pm

FROM Japan (Crew) DATED March 18, 1938  
TO NAME 1-112

REGARDING: Sino-Japanese conflict:-U.S.S.R.

Question of whether Japan is preparing to move, in near future, against the Soviet Union: opinion among foreign observers here divided; no evidences of such action. Sets forth Embassy's own estimate of situation.

PRG.

761.94/1028

E/HC





10-20-45, 11:00, March 12, from Tokyo

Yoshi. He is in a position to be able to do in the  
Japanese Army which he was at of maintaining a conflict  
involving a strong element of uncertainty into any es-  
timate.

He will be referred to tomorrow's report.