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Ex 2727

Excerpt from "Peace and War"

Exhibit No. 2727

pp 480-482

Memorandum by the Secretary of State Regarding a Conversation with the
Japanese Ambassador (Horinouchi)

(Washington) August 26, 1939.

The Ambassador of Japan called at his own request. He proceeded to refer to the reports, already published in the American press, to the effect that American officials were incorrectly attributing anti-American movements and demonstrations in China to Japanese officials or to their influence in thus instigating the Chinese. The Ambassador handed me the attached paper which I proceeded to read. I thanked him for the attention his Government had given to this matter and the spirit seemingly prompting his Government to seek to clear it up.

I then said that, having seen in the American press the purpose and nature of his contemplated call on me, I had requested the Far Eastern Division to jot down a list of instances of transgressions by Japanese or due to Japanese influence in China to the detriment and injury of Americans and of American interests. I added that this list of incidents had not been elaborated but that I would proceed to read them. I then read the memorandum prepared by the Far Eastern Division attached hereto and marked "A". The Ambassador appeared somewhat surprised and at a loss for further comment with regard to this paper. He said he would be pleased to have a copy of it. I replied that I would be glad to request the Far Eastern Division to put it in more elaborate form if possible and to send a copy to him at the Japanese Embassy.

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The Ambassador then said that, speaking personally, he might say his Government yesterday had decided to abandon any further negotiations with Germany and Italy relative to closer relations under the anti-Comintern Pact to which they have been parties for some time. He added that the change in affairs in Europe made this course manifest, and, furthermore, it was plain that his Government would find it important to adopt new foreign policy in more or less respects. I might say that he prefaced this general reference to his country by reiterating his personal desire to clear up any misunderstandings or differences between our two countries and to restore the friendly relations heretofore existing. The Ambassador remarked that he hoped there might come about an adjustment of the Japanese-Chinese situation. He just made this general observation and then he passed on to inquire what I knew or thought about the European situation.

I replied that it was very kaleidoscopic; that just now no one could, with any satisfaction, predict about developments from day to day; that at this time today the British Cabinet was considering the conversation between Mr. Hitler and the British Ambassador at Berlin yesterday; that no one knows what their decision may be.

I then referred to his comment about Japan and her purpose to adopt a new foreign policy, and I made observations substantially as follows:

The principles and practices of American policy in regard to the world in general and the Far East in particular are well known to all governments everywhere.

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During recent years Japanese authorities and or agencies have been pursuing courses which come into direct conflict with those principles and policies and which involve disregard of principles of international law and of treaties between the United States and Japan and also multilateral treaties to which the United States and Japan are parties.

The United States had made representations over and over and over again in objection to or protest against overt acts of these types. The Japanese Government has given assurances over and over again that it has regard for the principles and the rules and the provisions involved and that it will show its regard for them,--and over and over Japanese authorities have immediately committed other acts in disregard thereof.

We have clear evidence of inspiration by Japanese authorities or of action by agencies thereof hostile not only to occidental nationals and interests in general but to American nationals and interests in particular. These courses of action by Japanese have resulted in arousing against Japan feelings of suspicion and attitudes of opposition on the part of almost all of the other powers which have interests in the Far East, especially in China, including the United States.

It should be evident to Japan that there is some things wrong with policies and practices on the part of one nation which arouse antagonism on the part of almost all other nations in contact with that nation.

The United States wishes to have amicable relations with every other country in the world. We have in the past had very friendly relations with every country in the Far East, including Japan. Our policy is a policy

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of "Live and let live". We seek nowhere any special position; but we seek everywhere equality of opportunity under conditions of fair treatment and security.

The world is being given today now object lessons with regard to the futility of policies wherein nations plan to take advantage of other nations by use of armed force in disregard of moral principles and legal principles and generally accepted axioms of friendly and profitable general international intercourse.

The future of American-Japanese relations lies largely in the hands of Japan. American policy is a policy of friendliness and fair dealing toward all nations. It will not change.

The Ambassador seemed appreciative and this ended the conversation.

C(ordell) H(ull)