

No. 2757

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EX. 2757

Excerpt from

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The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the
Secretary of State (Substance)

Moscow, April 11, 1941-5 p.m.

(Received 9:50 p.m.)

738. This afternoon I called on Matsuoka and, with reference to the conversation I had with him on April 8, I read to him the following set of excerpts from the report I had drawn up of what he said in the conversation:

- (1) Mr. Matsuoka had made no commitments either to Berlin or to Rome.
- (2) Japan's reason for entering the tripartite pact was preservation of the peace.
- (3) Japan was not under an obligation to go to war with the United States, but the situation might not be the same if the United States declare war on Germany.
- (4) The Japanese Minister does not expect a declaration of war on the United States by Germany, but if that action does take place, the Minister hopes that the United States will not make any more in the Pacific until Japan shall have made her position clear.

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- (5) Japan's obligation under the tripartite pact will be adhered to by the Government.
- (6) Both Ribbentrop and Hitler had expressed to the Minister their desire that the sphere of war be limited, and had stated to him that involvement in a war with the United States was not their desire.
- (7) The suggestion had been made to the Minister by Ribbentrop and Hitler that steps be taken by him leading to the discouragement of anti-American agitation in Japan.
- (8) All three men had expressed desire for peace.
- (9) Hitler's personal impression on the Minister had been favourable.
- (10) Admiration for the way the British were fighting was expressed by Ribbentrop.
- (11) Hitler would not attempt an invasion of Britain unless it became necessary, as his expectation was that he would win the war by aerial and submarine activities against that country.
- (12) Mr. Matsuoka was unable to see any possibility that Britain would drive a wedge between Italy and Germany, Italy being in large measure already under German control.
- (13) Russian demands had been so excessive that Mr. Matsuoka had not made any real progress in his talks with the Russians.
- (14) It was possible for the United States to be indifferent to the U.S.S.R., but Japan's alternatives were either to reach an agreement or to become embroiled.

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(15) The Minister desired that the war in China be terminated, and he had suggested that President Roosevelt could bring this about if he indicated to General Chiang Kai-Shek that farther assistance would not be forthcoming from the United States should the latter refuse a just and honorable peace.

(16) The Minister had expressed his desire for trust in him by President Roosevelt and the Secretary of State.

Matsuoka categorically indicated his approval as I read each Statement. The only times he commented was when I read items (3), (8), (10), and (15), of which he gave the following amplifications.

(a) Under item (3) Mr. Matsuoka said that in his view Japan is obliged under the tripartite pact to go to war with the United States if the latter should declare war on Germany, but that Japan would first confer with Germany.

(b) Under item (8) the Minister said that while they had expressed their desire for peace, Ribbentrop and Hitler had left him in no doubt that at the present time there was no possibility for peace and that several times Hitler had said to him emphatically that unless Britain capitulated there would be no peace.

(c) Under item (10) he added that in Ribbentrop's opinion, as expressed to him, Britain at the present moment was in a stronger position defensively than she had been when the war started.

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(d) Under item (15) he expanded what he had previously said by stating that peace between China and Japan could come only as the result of direct negotiation between them; an intermedia-
would not be accepted by the Japanese Public.

Steinhardt