

No 2877

Excerpts from PEARL HARBOR ATTACK
(United States Government Printing Office-Washington: 1946)
Exhibit No. 173
Memoirs of Prince Konoye

Vol. 20

Page 4003

While the complicated and prolonged diplomatic negotiations were being conducted between Tokyo and Washington, in Tokyo itself a question of special significance was being deliberated upon by the cabinet. The question was whether to continue negotiations indefinitely with America, or whether to break them off abruptly. And more important still, they were considering whether war with America would follow upon the heels of the breaking off of negotiations.

The diplomatic negotiations for establishing a better American-Japanese understanding were being participated in by only the highest leaders of the Government, Army, Navy and the Supreme Command. They were progressing to the absolute exclusion of lesser officials. With the sole exception of Foreign Minister Matsuoka, all the leading participants were hoping for the success of the negotiations, and for this very reason they were conducting it in absolute secrecy lest it encounter opposition.

Nevertheless, news began to leak out, particularly as a result of Foreign Minister Matsuoka's secret reports to the German and Italian Ambassadors. As they began to perceive the general outline of the negotiations, the lesser officials began to give evidence of their disapproval. The Army in particular stiffened in its opposition. Just at this moment, the German-Soviet war suddenly broke out. Though the governmental leaders were able to set aside the insistent demands for an immediate war against the Soviets, they were obliged to decide upon the armed occupation of French Indo-China as a sort of consolation prize. At the same time, in order to be prepared for any emergency, they proceeded with full-scale preparations for a possible war against England and America. Though it was no easy task, the division between preparation for war and the war itself had to be firmly borne in mind. As preparations for war progressed, opposition to American-Japanese negotiations became more vociferous.

Meanwhile, the effect of Japan's armed occupation of French Indo-China was immediate and powerful. America immediately effected a breaking off of economic relations painful to Japan and without hesitation made clear that her own country's traditional policy alone was the policy conducive to peace. This strong American retaliation created a proportionate reaction in the anti-American camp in Japan. Opposition to American-Japanese negotiations came out into the open, and the course of action of the Cabinet, which had been created expressly for this purpose, became fraught with difficulties. Developments finally induced me to request a personal interview with the American President. However, the fact of the existence of the so-called "Konoye Message" had leaked out as a consequence of the conversations between Nomura and the President, and, while the actual contents were not known, various vague conjectures began to circulate, making even more difficult the problems confronting negotiations. It would seem that from about August 1941, the Army General Staff, even including the highest quarters, began advocating an immediate breaking off of negotiations and an opening of American Japanese hostilities. Seeking in every possible way to contravene

Def. Doc. No. 1500-W-5

these policies, from the latter half of August I repeatedly held consultations with the Army and Navy Ministers and called together countless joint conferences. To a certain degree, the "National Policy" calling for breaking off of negotiations and the immediate opening of hostilities against England and America was brought under discussion.

Thus it came about that on September 6th, at a conference held in the Imperial presence, the "Outline for the Execution of the National Policy of the Imperial Government" was decided upon. . . .