

STATEMENT OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT CONCERNING
THE SHANGHAI INCIDENT AND THE DESPATCH OF
MILITARY FORCES, FEBRUARY 7, 1932.*Ex 2417*

1. It is the immutable policy of the Japanese Government to ensure by all means in their power the tranquillity of the Far East and to contribute to the peaceful progress of the world. Unfortunately of late years the internal discord and unsettled political conditions prevailing in China, coupled with rampant anti-foreign agitation, have given cause for serious concern to all the other Powers - especially to Japan, which because of her geographical proximity and the vast interests of hers which are involved, has been made to suffer in a far greater degree than any other. While the Japanese Government, in their solicitude for neighborly amity, and international good understanding, have exerted every effort to maintain a conciliatory attitude, China, taking advantage of our moderation, has resorted to frequent infringements of our rights and interests, to various acts of violence towards Japanese residents and to an intensification of the vicious anti-Japanese movement, which is without a parallel elsewhere, as it is under the direct or indirect guidance of the Nationalist Party, which is identified with the Nationalist Government itself.

2. It is in these circumstances that the Shanghai Incident has broken out. It is similar to the numerous outrages and insults that had previously been perpetrated at Tsingtao, Foochow, Canton, Amoy and elsewhere, in that they are all characterized by Chinese contempt for Japan and the Japanese and by acts of physical violence. The Shanghai Incident only happens to be the most flagrant case. On the 9th of January last a vernacular

journal, the "Minkuo Daily News", published an article, insulting the honor of our Imperial House. Shortly afterwards, on the 18th, a party of Japanese priests and their companions, five persons in all, were the subjects of an unprovoked attack by Chinese desperadoes. As a result, three of the victims were severely wounded and one was killed. The shock of these events was sufficient to explode the long pent-up indignation felt by the Japanese residents in Shanghai, who had suffered for many years past from, and had exercised the utmost restraint in the face of, increasing Chinese atrocities and affronts.

3. Noting the extreme gravity of the situation, the Japanese Consul General, under the instructions of the government, and in order to do all that was possible to prevent, by a local solution of the question, any aggravation of the case, presented to the Mayor of Shanghai on January 21st a set of four demands including one for the dissolution of anti-Japanese societies. At three o'clock in the afternoon of January 28th, the Mayor's reply acceding to the above demands was received. The Japanese authorities, hoping that the tension might then relax, decided to wait and watch the performance of their promise on the part of the Chinese. However, soldiers belonging to the 19th Army, then concentrated in the vicinity of Shanghai, began, for reasons connected with internal politics, to display signs of recalcitrance towards the Nanking authorities, and appeared to be making hostile preparations in spite of the Mayor's acceptance of our terms, thus creating a new source of danger. In the meantime Chinese soldiers in civilian costume and various lawless elements had stolen into the International Settlement, creating a source of danger to the

quarter in the vicinity of the Municipal Offices. Many alarming rumors were in circulation and the residents were plunged into an agony of terror, the police of the Chapoi district having taken flight. Thereupon, on the 28th, at 4 o'clock, the authorities of the Settlement proclaimed a state of siege, and the armed forces of the Powers were ordered out to duty in accordance with a plan that had been previously agreed upon. It was when the Japanese Marines were proceeding to their assigned sector in Chapoi that the Chinese opened fire upon them, precipitating a conflict between Chinese and Japanese armed forces, of which the present situation is the outcome.

4. As is clear from what has been said, the incident of the Chinese assault upon Japanese priests and the Incident of the armed Sino-Japanese conflict were entirely separate affairs. With regard to the armed collision, as it was entirely contrary to every intention of ours, and as the British and American Consuls General offered a tender of their good offices, the Japanese authorities sought to effect a cessation of hostilities, and, in fact, succeeded on the 29th in arriving at an agreement for a truce. But on the following day the Chinese, in contravention of their pledge, opened fire once more. At a conference summoned on the 31st, it was agreed that the opposing forces should cease from all hostile action during the progress of negotiations for the establishment of a neutral zone. However, the Chinese, resuming the offensive, are continuing the concentration of troops in the neighborhood of Shanghai. So far, the Japanese navy, desiring, in view of the international character of Shanghai, not to aggravate the situation, has refrained from taking any drastic action,

while the Chinese, spreading news of Japanese defeats, are manifesting even greater vehemence in their actions.

5. In the existing state of affairs in China, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, and in view of historical precedents in such cases, we can have no assurance as to the possible behavior of the vast armies congregated in the Shanghai area, should unscrupulous politicians care to incite them. Our marines, opposed to Chinese forces outnumbering them by more than ten to one, are being wearied to exhaustion, while the predicament of the Japanese residents, facing imminent danger as they do, is beyond description. In order to meet the absolute necessity of at once despatching adequate military reinforcements, (as there are obvious limitations to the naval units which can be landed), so as to put an end to the menace of the Chinese armies, to restore Shanghai to normal conditions and to relieve the inhabitants of all nationalities from the strain of fear and disquiet, the decision was taken to order the necessary military forces to Shanghai.

6. It should be stated that this despatch of military forces carries no more significance than the despatch of marines in accordance with the practice on several previous occasions, and that the Japanese Government are prompted by no other motive than that of discharging their international duty and of safeguarding the large number of Japanese nationals, and the Japanese property worth many hundreds of millions, involved in the affair.

The expeditionary force has been therefore limited to the strength absolutely required for the above purposes, and its action will be guided solely by the policy of protecting the common interests of all the Powers. Unless the Chinese, by

continuing hostilities or by obstructing our army in attaining the above ends, compels it to take necessary action, there is of course no intention whatever that it should enter upon an aggressive campaign. The Japanese Government have already declared that they cherish no political ambitions in the region of Shanghai, nor any thought of encroaching there upon the rights and interests of any other Powers. What they desire is to promote the safety and prosperity of that region by cooperation with other Powers and mutual assistance, and so to contribute to the peace and well-being of the Far East.

CERTIFICATE

Statement of Source and Authenticity

I, ODO, Nagaharu, Assistant Chief of the Archives Section, Japanese Foreign Office, hereby certify that the document in English entitled "STATEMENT OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE SHANGHAI INCIDENT AND THE DESPATCH OF MILITARY FORCES, FEBRUARY 7, 1932." is an exact and true copy of an official translation of the Japanese Foreign Office.

Certified at Tokyo 4 October 1946.

(signed) Nagaharu, ODO
Signature of Official

Witness : (signed) T. SATO