

No 2869

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Page 402

Memorandum by the Secretary of State

[Washington,] April 14, 1941

The Ambassador of Japan called at my apartment at the Wardman Park Hotel at my request.

Page 405

Near the close of the conversation I suggested that, having cleared up these preliminary phases for which I sent for him, we could, if desired on his part, proceed at any time with certain preliminary discussions with a view to ascertaining whether there is a basis for negotiations; that for the purpose of this preliminary discussion there would really be no occasion for either side to present officially any completed documents. The Ambassador raised some question as to why such documents might not be presented in the next conversation, and I replied that there were certain points that my Government would desire to raise prior to negotiations, such as questions pertaining to the sovereignty and sovereignty of China, to the principle of equality of opportunity in China, et cetera; that he could then communicate with his Government and ascertain whether it agrees that there is a basis for negotiations. The Ambassador readily agreed to this view. He emphasized that he had not yet presented this document to his Government or consulted it concerning concrete terms of settlement, but stated that, in his opinion, his Government would be favorably disposed along such lines as might be made the basis of an agreement.

I said, in conclusion, that I would communicate with the Ambassador later today with a view of agreeing on a time and place for the next conference, adding that it could be at my office or at the White House or in my apartment, although the President was planning on leaving for Warm Springs within a day or two. The Ambassador referred to the interruptions of the press and suggested that he come to my apartment, which he would be ready to do any day from this day on, and he again emphasized the urgency of the situation, saying that events were moving rapidly and that my country is likewise moving rapidly with the result that clashes would become more easily possible from week to week.

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