

3237

THE ADDRESS OF KOKI HIROTA, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
AT THE 65TH SESSION OF THE IMPERIAL DIET,
JANUARY 23RD, 1934.

I was in September last unexpectedly appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. I have the honor today to speak on the foreign relations of Japan.

The Japanese Government were obliged to serve notice of withdrawal from the League of Nations on the 27th of March last year, because the Manchurian Incident and the questions regarding the State of Manchoukuo showed that there was no agreement between Japan and the League, on the fundamental principles of preserving peace in East Asia. At the time when the decisive step was taken His Majesty the Emperor graciously issued a Rescript, pointing out clearly and precisely the path this nation should henceforth pursue. It reads: "Now that Manchoukuo has been founded, Our Empire deems it essential to respect the independence of the new state and to encourage its healthy development, in order that the sources of evil in the Far East may be eradicated and an enduring peace thereby established." Further it reads: "However, the advancement of international peace is what, as evermore, We desire, and Our attitude toward enterprises of peace shall sustain no change. By quitting the League and embarking on a course of its own, Our Empire does not mean that it will stand aloof in the Extreme Orient, nor that it will isolate itself thereby from the fraternity of nations. It is Our desire to promote

Def. Doc. #2017

mutual confidence between Our Empire and all the other Powers and to make known the justice of its cause throughout the world." I am convinced that if we all unite in our endeavours to act in accordance with the wishes of our August Sovereign the world will surely come to realize the fairness and justice of Japan's position, and bright will be the future of our Empire. Personally speaking, in obedience to the imperial message I am determined to use every ounce of my energy to "carry out our national policy by diplomatic means in the interest of world peace." Fortunately, today after our withdrawal from the League the commercial, as well as diplomatic, relations between Japan and the friendly Powers in general have become even closer and more cordial than before. I wish to avail myself of this occasion to dwell somewhat on the recent phases of our relations with those countries which are situated in our immediate neighbourhood.

Manchoukuo, thanks to the tireless labours of His Excellency the Regent, and of the government authorities, and also to the wholehearted assistance and collaboration extended to her by this country, true to the spirit of the Japan-Manchoukuo Protocol, has been making steady progress along all lines of her constructive work. In ordering the various governmental institutions, especially in the maintenance of law and order, in the development of industry and communication, in the consolidation of national finance, and in the advancement of education and culture signal success has been achieved. Moreover, a decision is about to be made on the establishment of a monarchical

Def. Doc. #2017

regime, which has been so eagerly awaited by all her people, and which will go far to solidify the foundations of Manchoukuo as a young independent nation. This is a matter of congratulation not for Manchoukuo alone but for the peace of the Orient and the peace of the world. I think it behooves our government and people, always mindful of the Imperial Rescript, to exert their efforts unremittingly in assisting the healthy growth of the new state.

The Japanese government have serious responsibilities for the maintenance of peace in East Asia, and have a firm resolve in that regard. But what is most essential in the matter is the stabilization of China herself. Our government sincerely hope for the political and economic rehabilitation of China. They hope that she will be enabled to unite with Japan in performing the obvious mission of both Japan and China to contribute through mutual aid and co-operation to the peaceful development of their part of the globe. Unfortunately the actual situation of the present day China belies all such hopes. It has been reported that of late the Chinese government, realizing the mistake of persisting in their anti-Japanese attitude, have decided to take steps looking toward the rectification of Sino-Japanese relations, but so far no concrete evidence has come to our notice to confirm the truth of the report. Should China appreciate our true motives and give tangible signs of sincerity on her part, Japan would be glad to reciprocate and meet her more than half way in a spirit of good will. It is gratifying to note that North China under the control of the Peiping Political Committee remains comparatively quiet. In view of the important rights and interests

Def. Doc. #2017

of Japan in that region and of its territorial contiguity with Manchoukuo and also from the standpoint of the Tangku Truce Agreement the question of the maintenance of peace and order in North China is of special concern to Japan. She expects China to see to it that nothing will happen that may bring chaos to that area. Meanwhile we are watching not without grave misgivings the activities of the Communist Party and the increasing rampancy of "Red Armies" in China.

Regarding Japan's relations with the Soviet Union it may be recalled that subsequently to the conclusion of the Peking Basis Treaty in 1925 normal contact was maintained between the two countries, and that even after the Manchurian Incident there was a thorough mutual understanding between the two Powers of their respective positions so that no difficult question was encountered. However, more recently the attitude of the Soviet Union toward Japan seems to have undergone a change of some sort. It is most surprising and regrettable that the Soviet Union should take to now broadcasting at home and abroad through the press and other channels unwarranted criticisms directed against Japan, and circulate exaggerated stories about aggravations of this or that situation evidently for the political and diplomatic purposes which such rumours are calculated to serve. Japan has consistently preserved her fair and equitable attitude toward the Soviet Union throughout these years past before and after the Manchurian Incident. Despite the fundamental differences in both theory and constitution of the state that divide the two countries, we have always endeavoured to

keep on good neighborly terms with Soviet Russia and sought the solution of all questions by pacific means. Especially since the establishment of Manchoukuo, the Japanese Government have been acting solely upon their conviction that the proper adjustment of the tripartite relationship between Japan, Manchoukuo and the Soviet Union was of paramount importance for the tranquillity of East Asia. Japan is setting up certainly no new military establishments along the Manchoukuo-Soviet frontiers, Moscow propaganda notwithstanding. Indeed, it is only as part of the above-mentioned friendly

policy that Japan has undertaken since last June to act as intermediary between Manchoukuo and the Soviet Union in their negotiations on the proposed transfer of the North Manchuria Railway. Such being the case, I am sure that before long the Soviet Union must come to appreciate fully the true intentions of Japan. It is earnestly hoped that the North Manchuria Railway negotiations, which have unfortunately been at a standstill for some time past will soon be resumed.

It may be definitely stated that between Japan and the United States of America there exists no question that is intrinsically difficult of solution. Far from having any thought of picking a quarrel with America, Japan fervently desires American friendship. At the same time, I am confident that the United States will not fail to appraise correctly Japan's position in East Asia. Only for a time following the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident public opinion in America was aroused against Japan, bringing about something like temporary estrangement of the two peoples. It is hardly necessary to reiterate

Dof. Doc. #2017

that Japan is actuated by no ulterior motive other than her desire to establish an enduring peace in East Asia. Therefore, if only America will clearly perceive the actual condition of the Orient and realize Japan's role as a stabilizing force in East Asia, whatever emotional tension may yet linger between the two peoples is bound to disappear. I sincerely hope that the two great nations across the Pacific will, in view of their important relations, commercial and otherwise, continue to join forces in cultivating their historical friendship and good understanding so as to keep the ocean forever true to its name.

Japan's traditional amity with the British Empire remains unshaken even to these times. I believe the two sea Powers, occupying geographically similar key positions, one in the East and the other in the West, can effectually serve the cause of universal peace, through sympathetic appreciation of their respective stands and whole-hearted collaboration in all quarters of the world. It is in this sense that our government are seeking to readjust whatever conflict of interests relating to questions of trade there may be, and to strengthen further the ties of friendship that bind our empires. That our negotiations with India, an important member of the British Empire, over knotty problems of commerce have now been substantially concluded is a source of gratification on both sides.

Now a survey of the world as a whole reveals a sorry situation in which economic disorder, political unrest and confusion and conflict of ideas threaten to destroy international equilibrium at any moment, while mutual

confidence of the nations in one another appears to have wilted not a little. I consider that no insuperable difficulties need be anticipated in settling any question if the nations manifest their sincerity and, with a true comprehension of one another's position, meet in a genuine and generous spirit of universal brotherhood. What is wanted is the abandonment of rootless jealousy and antagonism and the re-inforcement of the sense of unity and mutual interdependence. However, international trade barriers, instead of decreasing, are fast multiplying. The World Economic Conference was forced to adjourn without having achieved the desired results. Of late our industries have taken marked strides with a corresponding expansion in our overseas trade, while, owing to the prevailing economic nationalism, one country after another has begun to set up fresh obstacles against the advance of our export industries. Our government are making earnest efforts to deal effectively with the situation. Since mutual understanding of one another's unique national culture is of no small value in fostering good will between nations, our government are planning to take suitable measures in concert with private institutions for facilitating the cultural intercourse of our nation with the outside world.

In the light of what I have already stated it is impossible for me to deny that our foreign relations are now, and will be in the future, beset with many serious problems. However, the path of a rising nation is always strewn with problems. As long as our people are united and well prepared to face courageously whatever difficulties may arise, and as long as we retain

Def. Doc. #2017

our composure and sobriety, and "stray not from the path of rectitude, and in action always embrace the golden mean", I am confident that Japan has nothing to fear, and her future will be full of hope. We should not forget for a moment that Japan, serving as the only cornerstone for the edifice of the peace of East Asia, bears the entire burden of responsibilities. It is this important position and these vast responsibilities in which Japan's diplomacy and national defense are rooted. Our national defense is organized in its very nature for defensive and self-protective purposes. At the same time our diplomacy has no claims to put forth save what is legitimate and rational and consonant with our national mission. That eventually this position, in which Japan naturally and actually finds herself, will be rightly understood by other Powers is, I believe, a foregone conclusion.

Def. Doc. #2017

C E R T I F I C A T E

Statement of Source and Authenticity

I, HAYASHI, Kaoru, Chief of the Archives Section, Japanese Foreign Office, hereby certify that the document hereto attached in English consisting of 8 pages and entitled "The Address of KOKI HIROTA, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the 65th Session of the Imperial Diet, January 23rd, 1934." is an exact and true copy of an official translation of the Japanese Foreign Office.

Certified at Tokyo,
on this 12th day of December, 1946.

(signed) K. HAYASHI
Signature of Official

Witness: (signed) T. SATO