

Exhibit 2900

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Memorandum by the Counselor of Embassy in Japan (Dooman)

[Tokyo.] September 18, 1941

Mr. Ushiba called me on the telephone yesterday afternoon at my house, asking whether he could call on me immediately.

. . . .

We then discussed the question of the attitude of the United States and Japan respectively toward the European war. Mr. Ushiba said that it was impossible for Japan to give to the United States a prior undertaking that it would interpret as a defensive act any action on the part of the United States against Germany which might lead to war between the United States and Germany. He thought that the formula which had been communicated by Admiral Toyoda to Mr. Grew was about as far as the Japanese Government could go prior to the proposed meeting. He added, however, that an understanding had been reached among the various influential elements in Japan which would enable Prince Konoye to give orally and directly to the President an assurance with regard to the attitude of Japan which, he felt sure, would be entirely satisfactory to the President. Another matter which troubled him very much in this connection was precisely in what terms the Japanese Government would explain to Germany any understanding which might be reached with the United States on this point. I remarked that the United States, which was committed to supporting the principle of the sanctity of treaties, could not well request Japan to betray its treaty commitments. It seemed to me, however, that there was a very definite difference between the Treaty of Alliance, with its rights and obligations, and the formulation of policies by the concerned allies. It followed as a matter of course that allies pursued policies which served their common end, but there was no obligation arising out of the Three Power Alliance which required Japan to follow policies which would serve exclusively the ends of Germany. Could not, therefore, Japan inform Germany that Japan had undertaken to pursue policies conformable to those of the United States, although Japan was prepared to fulfill its obligations under Article III of the treaty? Technically the Alliance is a defensive alliance; and it is clear from the rescript issued by the Emperor at the time of the signing of the Alliance that it was then considered by the Japanese Government as an instrument for peace.

E[ugene] H. D[ooman]