

Exhibit 2819

4

Memorandum of a Conversation

[Washington,] May 28, 1941

The Japanese Ambassador called at the Secretary's apartment at 8:30 by appointment made at the Ambassador's request.

. . . .

The Ambassador replied that he had known Mr. Matsuoka for many years, that Matsuoka was given to talking a great deal for domestic consumption in Japan, but that the Ambassador was convinced that Matsuoka desired only friendly relations with the United States. The Ambassador said that in his personal opinion there would be no war between Japan and the United States, as he felt that once the proposed agreement was concluded it would have a profound effect upon Japanese psychology which would cause a weakening in the influence of the jingoes. He added that the Japanese people were heartily sick of the idea of an economic bloc and desired to return to the spirit of the Meiji restoration in which their horizon had been broadened to intercourse and trade with the whole world. He said that the American embargoes had made the Japanese feel that there was no alternative at present to seeking an economic bloc, but they were feeling the pinch of a restricted economy and would welcome a resumption of normal trade.

The Secretary said he felt sure that the Ambassador and many of his associates were sincere in their desire to have friendly relations, but he suggested that it would be helpful if the Japanese Government could offer something by way of clarification on the points which the Secretary had raised.

The Ambassador replied that he doubted very much whether the Japanese Government would be willing to add anything to what it already proposed saying, as the Japanese Government would be placed in a very difficult position vis-à-vis Germany and Italy and there would also be domestic difficulties from the pro-Axis group in Japan. The Ambassador added, however, that the Japanese Government would make its own independent decision and would not be dictated to by Germany and Italy in the matter of interpreting Japan's obligations under the Alliance.