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INQUIRY - Annex A - Records and
Extracts of Interviews on Military
and Related Subjects

Cathay Hotel
Shanghai
March 18, 1932

RECORD OF INTERVIEW with VICE ADMIRAL NOMURA
and REAR ADMIRAL SHIOZAWA, JAPANESE NAVY

Admiral Nomura said that although the incident of January 28th took place by chance, the causes of it were deep rooted in the history of China in the last 30 years. The Chinese have been trying to drive the foreigners out, and at the moment are trying to set America against Japan. The Japanese Navy makes no attack on the integrity of China but only acted to make safe their national the International Settlement and the international waterway.

Lord Lytton asked whether there had not been an unduly short time between the notice to the Chinese that the Landing Party was going to take up its defence positions, and the landing of the marines?

Admiral Shiozawa replied that Mr. Murai, the Japanese Consul-General, had been giving warnings to the Chinese several times since the 25th in order to minimize the chance of undesirable incidents to withdraw their troops. The Mayor of Greater Shanghai agreed to the Japanese demands at 3:15 p.m. and the Japanese Admiral was informed of the Chinese acceptance at 4 p.m. The moves of the Landing Party were not in connection with the demands but were caused by the declaration of a state of emergency by the Municipal Council. (The term "Landing Party" is misleading as the greater part of the marines of this unit were already quartered near Hongkew Park) At 3:30 p.m. Admiral Shiozawa sent notice to the Chinese that he was going to take up his defense position and demanded Chinese troops to withdraw.

Lord Lytton said that it seemed the Mayor had received this message apparently between 11 and midnight, and asked whether the move to the defense line could have been delayed until the following day to give the Chinese time to withdraw.

Admiral Nomura said that during the day, the Chinese had demonstrated against the Settlement, and the Japanese sector had become noisy and unquiet.

In spite of the Mayor's acceptance of the Japanese demands, disorder continued. Soon after the proclamation of the State of Emergency, British and American Forces took up position in their respective sectors.

Admiral Shiozawa said that in the evening Japanese residents in Chapei reported to Admiral Shiozawa that the Chinese Police were evacuating Chapei and that they were unprotected. There was therefore no time to lose. The marines were landed at 9 p.m. but did not move to take up their positions until midnight. The Chinese troops had therefore three hours in which to withdraw.

When the Mayor's answer reached the Japanese Consulate General at 3:15 p.m., Mr. Harai repeated the demand for withdrawal of the Chinese troops. The situation was threatening as there were about 7,000 men of the 19th Route Army round about the railway line.

The American and British Consuls-General arranged a truce the following afternoon, the 29th, and Admiral Shiozawa gave order for the Landing Party to observe the truce as from 8 p.m. of the 29th.

Captain Baron Sanajima, who commanded the Landing Party, said that on the 30th, the truce was broken by Chinese soldiers firing from behind sandbags and by snipers from windows.

On the first day the first Japanese marines to be fired on were those coming from the headquarters at Kungkow. They were fired at by Chinese, who were between the North Szechuan Road and the Railway.

Admiral Shiozawa, in answer to a question, said that the Japanese had never asked the Municipal Police and Fire Brigade to evacuate the Japanese sector. The Municipal Police had left of their own accord.

Lord Lytton asked why Japanese marines had tried to go through the gate in the sector guarded by the Shanghai Volunteer Corps into the Honan Road into Chinese territory, beyond the boundary of the Defense Scheme?

Admiral Shiozawa replied that the marines were new to the sector, that the route inside the defense area was through a narrow street, and that the marines wanted to go up the large road (Honan Road) to avoid missing their way.

In answer to a question, he added that although firing had broken

out in other parts of the sector, there had been no firing in the region where this incident took place.

Lord Lytton asked whether the Admiral had given this evidence to the League Committee?

Admiral Shiozawa replied that he had never been invited to state his case before the Committee, and had not even met the Chairman. He had of his own accord distributed a written account.

Lord Lytton asked how the Committee had secured evidence if it had not questioned the persons involved, and was answered by the Hon. Astor that the Committee had used the report of the Municipal Police.

Lord Lytton added in conclusion that this Commission was not an investigating body for this incident, and the conversation was a private one to aid his appreciation of the general situation.

Admiral Tomura said regarding the negotiations for peace, that the Navy was taking part in an advisory capacity.

Admiral Shiozawa said that the Landing Party had never attacked beyond the defense line, and when excursion had been made beyond it to drive away Chinese troops, the Japanese landing party had afterwards returned to their line of defense under the Defense Scheme.