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The Explanation of the Foreign Minister
at the Imperial Conference on 1 December 1941

Explanations will be made today chiefly on the development of the Japanese-American negotiations after the Imperial Conference of 5 November. To summarize the circumstances of the negotiations before that Conference, that is to say to about the end of October, the United States had insisted on the following four principles as the basis of international relations; namely:

- (1) Respect for the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of each and every nation;
- (2) Non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries;
- (3) Non-discriminatory treatment in trade;
- (4) Non-disturbance of the status quo in the Pacific except as the status quo may be altered by peaceful means;

The United States insisted on the application of these principles; expressed doubt as to the peaceful intention of Japan; raised objections to the stationing of Japanese troops in China; insisted that the principle of non-discrimination in international trade be applied unconditionally in China; and demanded that the Tripartite Pact be rendered in effect a dead letter. The negotiations, thus faced with difficulties, at last came to an impasse.

Such divergence of views between the two countries has resulted largely from the fact that the United States Government obstinately adhered to the doctrinarian principles to which it had traditionally submitted, and insisted on their unconditional application to China and other areas, regardless of the actual situation prevailing in East Asia. It was evident that, so long as the United States refused to alter such an attitude, the conclusion of the present negotiations was extremely difficult.

The present Cabinet considered it proper to bring about the adjustment of Japanese-American relations on an equitable basis, and decided to make all possible concessions and to concentrate its energies to avert a rupture between Japan and the United States. From this viewpoint, our previous proposal of 25 September was moderated with respect to the following three questions which had so far been the main points at issue in the Japanese-American negotiations; namely, (1) the interpretation of the right of self-defense in connection with the Tripartite Pact, (2) the principle of non-discrimination in international trade, and (3) the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China and French Indo-China.

- 1) With respect to the problem of the right of self-defense in connection with the Tripartite Pact, we proposed that the United States should declare that she would not make any unwarranted extension of the interpretation of the right of self-defense, and that, at the same time, Japan also should make a similar declaration.
- 2) With respect to the principle of non-discrimination, Japan should recognize it to be applied to China on the understanding that the principle was to be applied uniformly to the rest of the world.
- 3) With regard to the withdrawal of Japanese troops, it was provided that the Japanese troops dispatched to China in connection with the China Affair would be withdrawn within two years following the restoration of peace between Japan and China in accordance with the agreement to be entered into between Japan and China, except those in specified areas in North China and Meng-liang, as well as Hainan Island, which would be stationed for such a period as may be necessary. In regard to French Indo-China, it was revised to stipulate that Japan respects the territorial in-

tegrity of French Indo-China, and that the Japanese troops dispatched thereto will be withdrawn immediately upon either the settlement of the China Affair or the establishment of peace in East Asia on an equitable basis. The Imperial Conference of 5 November decided upon the above.

In accordance with the decision, the Government instructed Ambassador Nomura to convey to the United States that Japanese-American relations, which were on the verge of collapse, could be saved in the pressing circumstances only through the consummation of the negotiations on the basis of the present proposal, and that it was earnestly desired that the United States should, in view of the greatest possible concessions which the Japanese Government had made in spite of every difficulty, sincerely reconsider the situation and cooperate with Japan for the sake of the peace of the Pacific. The negotiations were continued in Washington thereafter; but meanwhile I had frequent conversations in Tokyo with the American and British Ambassadors with a view to urging the negotiations. Ambassador Nomura, beginning with the interview with Secretary of State Hull on the 7th, met President Roosevelt on the 10th, and Secretary Hull on the 12th and the 15th, earnestly endeavoring to promote the negotiations. Meanwhile, in consideration of the serious situation, the Japanese Government on the 5th dispatched Ambassador Kurusu to the United States with a view to exhausting every possible diplomatic effort. He arrived at Washington on the 15th, and, assisting Ambassador Nomura, participated in the negotiations after the 17th. The negotiations were then already in full swing. From the 7th onward, the United States was putting questions about various points as if to sound the true intention of Japan. The United States, who had insisted on the overthrow of Hitlerism, demanded that Japan should give up the policy of force. She seemed to be still apprehensive of the policy of Japan in connection with the Tripartite Pact, and requested that Japan should reaffirm her peaceful intentions, as stated in the aforementioned statement of the Japanese Government on 28 August. Moreover, she repeatedly urged that there would be no need for Japan to maintain the Tripartite Pact after the consummation of a Japanese-American agreement, and expressed her desire that that treaty should cease to exist or become a dead letter. As regards the principle of non-discrimination in international trade, the United States desired to drop the condition which we proposed, that the principle be applied uniformly to the whole world, urging that she had striven for the restoration of freedom of trade. At the same time, the United States proposed separately "the Joint Declaration on Economic Policy", and suggested that the countries should cooperate in restoring free trade in the whole world; that the normal commercial relations between the two countries be restored through conclusion of a Japanese-American commercial agreement; that, as to China, complete control over her economic, financial and monetary affairs should be restored to her; and that a comprehensive program of economic development should be inaugurated in China under international cooperation. With regard to the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China, the United States made no special argument, but only showed disapproval of the permanent or indefinite stationing of them. It proposed, however, to employ good offices for direct negotiations between Japan and China, provided Japan would adopt a peaceful policy.

The Japanese Government replied that our proposal of 25 September comprehended all the points which the United States desired Japan to confirm in connection with its statement of peaceful intentions of 28 August, and that the present Cabinet naturally had no objection to confirming them. With respect to the qualification of the principle of non-discrimination, an answer was made that Japan desired its application throughout the world, and that it would recognize the application of the principle to China de-

pending upon the realization of that desire. And with respect to the American proposal for the joint international development of China, the Japanese Government replied that it was unacceptable to Japan as it disregarded the actual state of affairs in China and would open the way for the joint international control of that country. It was also replied that Japan had no objection to the American good offices for peace between Japan and China. It was at this stage that Ambassador Kurusu joined in the negotiations. Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu met President Roosevelt on the 17th, and had interviews with Secretary Hull on the 18th, the 20th, the 21st, the 22d and the 26th. In the interviews of the 17th and the 18th, however, the President stated that he desired peace between Japan and the United States, and that he had no intention either to intervent or to mediate between Japan and China, but wanted only to be an "introducer" between them. On the other hand, the Secretary of State emphasized that the Japanese-American negotiations would prove difficult as long as Japan cooperated with Germany, and dwelt upon the necessity of removing that fundamental difficulty. After exhaustive discussions it became clear that the difficulty lay as before in the questions of the Tripartite Pact, the principle of non-discrimination, and China. Thereupon, the Japanese Government presented on the 20th a new proposal which simplified the previous proposal full of propagandistic tone, on the basis of which the negotiations had so far been conducted; eliminated the question of the principle of non-discrimination, upon which an agreement was not readily to be attained, and also that the Tripartite Pact, which was left to a future proposal to be made by the United States; and requested the United States simply to refrain from disturbing the peace between Japan and China with a view to leaving the China problem to direct negotiation between Japan and China. The contents of the proposal are as follows:

1. Both the Governments of Japan and the United States undertake not to make any armed advancement into any of the regions, excepting French Indo-China, in the South Eastern Asia and the Southern Pacific area.
2. The Governments of Japan and the United States shall cooperate with a view to securing the acquisition of those goods and commodities which the two countries need in the Netherlands East Indies.
3. The Governments of Japan and the United States mutually undertake to restore their commercial relations to those prevailing prior to the freezing of the assets. The Government of the United States shall supply Japan a required quantity of oil.
4. The Government of the United States undertakes not to indulge in measures and actions prejudicial to the endeavors for the restoration of general peace between Japan and China.
5. The Japanese Government undertakes to withdraw troops now stationed in French Indo-China upon either the restoration of peace between Japan and China or the establishment of an equitable peace in the Pacific area.

The Government of Japan declares that it is prepared to remove the Japanese troops now stationed in the southern part of French Indo-China to the northern part of the said territory upon the conclusion of the present agreement.

Regarding the above proposal, the United States contended that it was impossible to cease aiding the Chiang Kai-shok régime unless Japan clarified her relations with the Tripartite Pact and

gave assurance regarding her adoption of a peaceful policy, and that the President's offer of being an "introducer" presupposed Japan's adoption of a peaceful policy. Thereupon, we requested reconsideration of the United States, pointing out that it was self-contradictory that the United States should, after the commencement of the Japanese-Chinese direct negotiations through the introduction of the President as proposed by the United States, continue aid to the Chiang Kai-shek régime, thereby interfering with the peace between the two countries, the United States being an intermediary of peace. Nevertheless, the United States failed to show any sign of concession, refusing to give up aid to the Chiang Kai-shek régime and repeating her assertions concerning the Tripartite Pact, although she stated that she had no objection to Japan's and the United States' holding leadership in East Asia and in the Western Hemisphere respectively, and that she desired the amicable conclusion of the Pacific agreement.

Meanwhile, the United States Government consulted with the representatives of Britain, Australia, the Netherlands and Chungking, and Secretary Hull stated on the 22d that the above Powers, though they considered it possible to restore the normal relations of international trade if Japan's adoption of a peaceful policy was ascertained, seemed to intend to realize it gradually, and that the withdrawal of troops from southern French Indo-China alone would not be enough, according to their opinions, to ease the tense situation in the Southern Pacific. He further revealed that he considered the time not yet ripe for the President's acting as "go-between" of peace between Japan and China.

The United States Government continued consultations with the representatives of the Powers above referred to, and Secretary Hull told our two Ambassadors on the 26th that, although the United States had carefully studied the Japanese proposal of the 20th and had consulted with the countries concerned, she could not unfortunately agree to our proposal, and presented the following new proposals as being a compromise plan between the American June proposal and our September proposal. The first proposal was a request for confirmation of the so-called Four Principles (item 4 hereof was altered to the principle of reliance upon international cooperation and conciliation for the prevention of controversies). It was proposed secondly as the basis for future negotiations that the two governments should undertake the following:

1. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will endeavor to conclude a multilateral non-aggression pact among the British Empire, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand and the United States.
2. Both Governments will endeavor to conclude among the American, British, Chinese, Japanese, the Netherlands and ~~Thai~~ Governments an agreement whereunder each of the Governments would pledge itself to respect the territorial integrity of French Indo-China and, in the event that there should develop a threat to the territorial integrity of Indo-China, to enter into immediate consultation with a view to taking such measures as may be deemed necessary and advisable to meet the threat in question.

Such agreement would provide also that each of the Governments party to the agreement would not seek or accept preferential treatment in its trade or economic relations with Indo-China and would use its influence to obtain for each of the signatories equality of treatment in trade and commerce with French Indo-China.

3. The Government of Japan will withdraw all military, naval, air and police forces from China and from Indo-China.
4. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will not support--militarily, politically, economically--any Government or régime in China other than the National Government of the Republic of China with capital temporarily at Chungking.
5. Both Governments will give up all extraterritorial rights in China, including rights and interests in and with regard to international settlements and concessions, and rights under the Boxer Protocol of 1901.

Both Governments will endeavor to obtain the agreement of the British and other Governments to give up extraterritorial rights in China, including rights in international settlements and concessions and under the Boxer Protocol of 1901.

6. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will enter into negotiations for the conclusion between the United States and Japan of a trade agreement, based upon reciprocal most favored-nation treatment and reduction of trade barriers by both countries, including an undertaking by the United States to bind raw silk on the free list.
7. The Government of the United States and the Government of Japan will, respectively, remove the freezing restriction on Japanese funds in the United States and on American funds in Japan.
8. Both Governments will agree upon a plan for the stabilization of the dollar-yen rate, with the allocation of funds adequate for this purpose, half to be supplied by Japan and half by the United States.
9. Both Governments will agree that no agreement which either has concluded with any third powers shall be interpreted by it in such a way as to conflict with the fundamental purpose of this agreement, the establishment and preservation of peace throughout the Pacific area.
10. Both Governments will use their influence to cause other Governments to adhere to and to give practical application to the basic political and economic principles set forth in this agreement.

Regarding the above proposal, our Ambassadors pointed out its unreasonableness, and strongly contended against it, but Secretary Hull did not show any sign of concession, it was reported. On the 27th, the President, in an interview with our two Ambassadors, told them that, although he still hoped for an amicable conclusion of the Japanese-American negotiations, he considered, on the basis of the latest information, that there was danger that cold water would be dashed upon the United States for the second time, just as had been done in last July by the advance of Japanese troops into the southern part of French Indo-China, and that it would be futile to try to surmount the crisis by a modus vivendi if the fundamental policies of the two countries were not in accord.

It is true that the American proposal contained some acceptable items, such as those concerning international trade (Items VI, VII, VIII) and the abolition of extraterritorial rights in China (Item V) but the items concerning China and French Indo-China (Items II, III) the non-recognition of the Nationalist Government of China (Item IV) the disapproval of the Tripartite Pact (Item IX) and the conclusion of a multilateral non-regression pact (Item I) are all unacceptable for Japan. In fine, this proposal is unreasonable, constituting a marked retrogression from the previous proposals of the United States and entirely disregarding the course of negotiations for over half a year.

In short, the United States Government has persistently adhered to traditional ideas and principles, disregarded the actual situation in East Asia and tried to force Japan to act on those principles which the United States herself would not observe. Throughout the present negotiations, lasting for the past seven months, the United States has made no concessions from her original stand, in spite of the various concessions made frequently by Japan.

It has been a consistent policy of the United States to obstruct Japan's efforts toward the establishment of the new order in East Asia, which constitutes our immutable national policy. If we accepted the present proposal of the United States, Japan would be in an international position inferior even to that which it had held before the outbreak of the Manchurian incident, and its very existence would also be endangered.

1. China under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek would become even more disposed to depend upon Britain and the United States, and Japan would have to break its faith with the National Government of China. The friendly relations between Japan and China would be ruined for years to come. Japan would be compelled to retreat completely from the continent; the status of Manchoukuo would accordingly be exposed to all dangers; and we would lose all means to carry through the China Affair.

2. Britain and the United States would reign over these areas as leaders. Japan would entirely lose its authority as well as its position as the stabilizing power of East Asia, and the work of establishing the new order in East Asia would collapse midway.

3. The Tripartite Pact would become a mere scrap of paper, and Japan would have to forfeit its national good faith.

4. The design to restrain Japan by the organization of a collective machinery of Powers, with the Soviet Union as a new member, would increase the menace on our northern frontier.

5. As to such principles as that of non-discrimination in trade, they are not necessarily to be excluded. However, it is only to carry through their selfish policy that Britain and the United States intend to apply these principles exclusively to the Pacific area, and Japan would have to face great difficulties in obtaining essential goods and materials which she requires.

All things considered, the above proposal is utterly unacceptable for Japan, and we cannot help recognizing that, unless the United States wholly withdraws it, it is almost impossible to realize fully our claims by continuing the negotiation further upon the basis of the present proposal.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Hayashi Kaoru, Chief of the Archives Section of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, hereby certify that the document hereto attached in Japanese, consisting of 14 pages and entitled "The Explanation of the Foreign Minister at the Imperial Conference on 1 December 1941", is an exact and true copy of an official document of the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Certified at Tokyo,
on this 7 July 1947.

Hayashi Kaoru

Witness: Urabe Katsuma

Translation Certificate

I, Nishi Haruhiko, of the Defense, hereby certify that I am conversant with the English and Japanese languages, and that the foregoing is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation of the original document.

Nishi Haruhiko

Tokyo
7 July 1947