

No 2871

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From Nomura to Konoe  
18 April 1941  
No. 239

In reference to the latter part of No. 235.

The following is the explanation of the Draft Understanding section by section.

(1) The concepts of the United States and of Japan respecting international relations, and the character of nations.

As the Americans fear the totalitarianization of Japan, and consider it impossible to carry on talks between Japan and the United States if Japan is totalitarianized, this section is designed to clarify that the Japanese idea is not totalitarianism nor Communism nor democracy, but is based upon the traditional concept of the nation held for three thousand years, and is not to be dominated by foreign ideas contrary to that tradition. This section is inserted by reason of the strong request at the desire of the highest American authority that it be done. Secretary Hull also has emphasized this point to me. Considering it a good opportunity to proclaim our national character, I have agreed to retaining this section after making some revisions.

(2) The attitude of both Governments toward the European war.

This section is one to which we have paid the utmost care, in connection with the Tripartite Pact. The purposes of this section are:

(a) to make it clear that our obligations under the Tripartite Pact shall be in no way affected by the present understanding;

(b) to restrain the United States to the utmost from entering into the European war, and to make full use of the spirit of Article 3 of the Tripartite Pact; and at the same time

(c) to avoid a rupture of relations between Japan and the United States and to achieve the objectives of the Tripartite Pact.

(3) The attitudes of both Governments toward the China Affair.

The United States at first was considering the settlement of the China Affair through the arbitration, or mediation, of the American President, and seemed on the other hand to disapprove entirely of the Wang Government. I have had it explained fully to them that such a proposal would have no chance of acceptance by Japan, and have got them to agree--with a view to preventing the United States from intervening in the settlement of the China Affair--that the United States will only offer its good offices for peace between Japan and China, that the negotiations will be conducted directly between Japan and China, and that the other party to the negotiations will not be Chungking. Hence the present proposal.

As to the essential conditions of the peace, I have got them to recognize the so-called Three Konoe Principles--namely, neighborly friendship, joint defence against Communistic activities, and economic cooperation. With respect to the withdrawal of troops, it is made clear that the withdrawal will be carried out in accordance with an agreement to be concluded between Japan and China, so that there will be no conflict with the Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and China and the documents attached

(7) The policies of both nations affecting political stabilization in the Pacific.

European powers will be restricted by this clause, but Japan will not be. As to immigration to the United States, Secretary Hull told me that this question involved problems concerning the states, causing domestic difficulties. Not much, therefore, can be expected.

As to the stipulations concerning the Japanese-American conference, the United States maintained that it was necessary as a domestic gesture, and we consider that there is no special objection to it. This is nothing more than statement of the principle of the conference; there may be defects in the procedure, but they may properly be cured in the talks to be held hereafter.

I had opinions exchanged on the questions of the New Order in East Asia, the recognition of Japan's leadership in the Greater East Asia-Co-prosperity Sphere, etc., in addition to the points included in the understanding mentioned above; but as it was felt that they would complicate the negotiations, I dropped these problems, making it our primary objective to obtain practical results.

thereto. In connection with the Open Door, the interpretation and application of the Open-Door Principle have been left to future consultation, and no stipulation is inserted--though it had at first been intended to insert one--concerning our special position in North China and Mongolia, in view of the delicate question of Hainan Island. The clause concerning immigration is inserted at the American desire, and from the consideration that practically it will do no harm to us. It is clear that Manchoukuo is not included within the territory of China, from the fact that recognition of Manchoukuo is made one of the conditions.

It is our opinion that the foregoing conditions proposed by and guaranteed to the United States are not in conflict with the Three Kono Principles, the Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and China, nor the Japan-China-Manchoukuo Joint Declaration promulgated last year.

It is said that although the United States has the intention of ceasing aid to the Chiang régime in case it does not accept the recommendation of the President of the United States, there are objections to putting it in writing at this stage.

(4) Naval, aerial and mercantile marine relations in the Pacific.

(a) At first, the United States appeared to have the intention of agreeing to mutual assistance by the Japanese and American navies for the maintenance of peace in the Pacific; but this was altered to the present formula from the consideration that such an agreement of mutual assistance would make Germany and Italy our hypothetical enemies, and would also give birth to the misunderstanding that it was a military alliance between Japan and America.

(b) As to the merchant-marine question, the clause is inserted from the consideration that it is quite natural, in view of her present shortage of bottoms, that America should make such a request, and that it is advisable for Japan to comply with it with a view to the future development of our marine activities. As, however, we ourselves are suffering from a shortage of shipping, the time is specified to be after the settlement of the China Affair has been put under way. It is sought thereby to expedite the American recommendation for peace between Japan and China.

(5) Commerce between both nations and their financial cooperation.

The gold credit provided by this section is intended to utilize the excess of gold stored by the United States for payment for goods necessary for Japan in the development of the homeland and East Asia.

(6) Economic activity of both nations in the Southwest Pacific area.

There being danger that the advance of Japan by force to the South would lead to war between Japan and the United States, Japan guarantees that her development toward the South will be made not by armed force but by peaceful means, and the United States in response makes it clear that she will support the economic advance of Japan in that area. That the advance of Japan toward the South will not be carried on by force is not limited to this section, but is the foundation of the whole of the present understanding.

Def. Doc. No. 1401-B-1

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