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Telegram (Secret Cipher Process)

Tokyo, 6 May 1939
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No. 187 of 6 May

MOST URGENT
VERY SECRET!

Top Secret -- For State Secretary

Annex to telegram of Fourth, No. 184.

Declarations of various General Staff officers, among them that of my former confidant who is working in direct accordance with instructions from the War Minister, as well as a talk of the War Vice Minister with the Italian Military Attache, reveal the following viewpoint of the army, which I consider official.

The Prime Minister has obtained a compromise, which the army indicates as the highest possible offer under present conditions, in the conflict of the five-minister conference (War Minister and Finance Minister against the Foreign Minister and Navy Minister).

Concerning the main points of the declaration, the army explained:

1). Regarding obligatory aid, the army had further proposed to lay down more clearly the "change in circumstances" which would later make effective aid possible, and to declare in short that the neutrality of Japan would not in any way enter into the question. The army attributed the present wording to the Foreign Minister. The War Vice Minister declared that the treaty bound Japan definitely to the Axis Powers. We must, however, understand that Japan was isolated in the Far East and was in a considerably worse position than the Axis bloc in Europe which could cooperate directly. In case of war, however, independent of the outbreak and extent of Japanese acts of war, just the plain fact of the treaty would exert effective pressure on the enemy.

2). Re the "Explanation," the army emphasizes that the present proposal was more elastic, contained no specific formulation, and left open negotiations for which there were supposed to be favorable prospects, according to OSHIMA's telegram received yesterday.

3). Explanations concerning "Sincerity of my Country" were indicated as a particularly important personal word of honor of the Prime Minister, after I had referred to the wording which could be easily misunderstood.

The whole statement had been delivered to the Emperor by the Foreign Minister, which fact also follows from the indications made in the

press. In case an agreement is not reached, the army expects a resignation of the cabinet, which would be quite undesirable at the present time for foreign and domestic reasons.

Declarations from navy circles not yet obtainable. Main opposition of the navy comes evidently from Navy Vice Minister YAMAMOTO.

From the Foreign Ministry a senior official, who stands especially close to Ambassador SHIMAZU, let me know personally that in the entire government a deep cleft between friends and enemies of the alliance had formed. The situation was very serious and complicated. By his personal initiative, the Prime Minister had achieved a declaration of compromise which accepts the principle of an unlimited alliance, limiting this, however, by two significant reservations. This attitude of Japan must, it is true, astonish the Axis Powers, who are accustomed to unequivocal decisions, but it arises necessarily from the lack of unified leadership. Should negotiations collapse, cabinet crisis is threatening with serious consequences.

General impression is that most active preliminaries of the treaty idea stress extraordinary difficulties and (one word apparently lacking) urgently hopes that HIRANUMA's declaration would offer the opportunity for the final conclusion of the treaty.

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AFFIDAVIT

I, W. P. Cumming, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and say:

1. That I am an Attache of the United States Department of State on the Staff of the United States Political Adviser on German Affairs, and as such I am a representative of the Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.). That in my capacity as above set forth, I have in my possession, custody, and control at the Berlin Documents Center, Berlin, Germany, the original captured German Foreign Office files and archives.

2. That said original Foreign Office files and archives were captured and obtained by military forces under the command of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces, and upon their seizure and capture were first assembled by said military forces at a Military Document Center at Marburg, Germany, and were later moved by authorized personnel of said Allied forces to said central documents center, above referred to, and known as the Berlin Documents Center.

3. That I was assigned to said document center at Marburg, Germany, on August 15, 1945; and said captured German Foreign Office files and archives first came into my possession and control while I was stationed at Marburg, Germany, and that thereafter the same have continued in my possession and custody and under my control.

4. That the document to which this affidavit is attached is a true and correct photostatic copy of an original German Foreign Office document which was captured from said Germany Foreign Office files and archives, and which came into my possession and custody and under my control in the manner above set forth.

5. That said original document, of which the attached is a photostatic copy, is being held and retained by me in order that it may be examined and inspected by various interested agencies, and a photostatic copy of said original is hereby furnished and certified to because of the unavailability of said original for the reasons above set forth.

s/ W. P. Cumming
W. P. CUMMING

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23rd day of April 1946.

s/ G. H. Garde
G. H. GARDE
Lt. Colonel, AGD
Acting Adjutant General

OFFICE OF MILITARY
GOVERNMENT FOR GERMANY (U.S.)