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AMEMBASSY SECSTATE

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KANKOW

WASHINGTON

PEIPING

SHANGHAI

49 February 6, 5, p.m.

Yesterday afternoon Major General Amaya, the new garrison commander, gave a welcoming tea at the Japanese Embassy for the foreign diplomatic representatives in Nanking during the course of which he made a long statement outlining his opinion on the local situation and in which he criticized the attitude of the foreigners who had been sending abroad reports of Japanese atrocities and encouraging the Chinese in their anti-Japanese feeling. The gist of the statement is given below. Because of the importance and length of the statement an opportunity was taken of checking this morning with my British and German colleagues for possible errors or omissions and it is therefore believed that the following summary is substantially accurate.

The general regretted the prominence which had been given abroad to reports of atrocities committed in Nanking by Japanese troops and in extenuation pointed out the long and strenuous fighting and the unexpectedly strong resistance of the Chinese. The rapid advance had caused a failure of food supplies and the exhaustion of the troops had led to a lack of discipline and hence looting and violence. However, he added that the Japanese troops were the best disciplined in the world and that in the RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR and in the Manchurian Incident, which had been comparatively mild there had been no atrocities. He hoped Europeans and Americans would refrain from criticism and remain on-lookers and thus respect the great Japanese nation. Endeavors were now being made to restore discipline. The Japanese soldiers were not hostile to Chinese citizens but they were angry at the existence of snipers and spies among the latter resulting from the anti-Japanese spirit which Chiang Kai-shek had instilled among the people as well as among the Chinese soldiers.

It was stated to be the desire of the Japanese military to restore order and normal conditions in Nanking as soon as possible. In Yangchow, from which place the general has just come, relations between Chinese and Japanese were good but in Nanking interference by foreigners which encouraged continuance of anti-Japanese feeling amongst the local Chinese population, had hindered a return to normal and large numbers of Chinese continued to live in the so-called "Safety Zone." He referred particularly to reports and activities of nationals of a "certain country" which were damaging relations between Japan and that country. (This obviously refers to the United States.) The general expressed dislike of the attitude of a judge in a law court taken by the foreigners and warned them that their criticisms and interference between Chinese and Japanese would anger the Japanese troops and might lead to some unpleasant incident. He asked to be trusted and gave assurances that he would do his best to restore order and normal life in the city and that foreign lives and property would be protected. He requested foreign representatives to discuss their difficulties with him as far as they concerned protection of foreign property but to refrain from interference with matters which concerned the Chinese.

After the conclusion of the statement he asked for criticism and comments from the foreigners present but none of them spoke. When asked if it would be possible to have a copy of the remarks Counselor Hidaka of the Japanese Embassy stated that it was not an official statement.

The statement was obviously directed mainly against the International Relief Committee, composed mostly of Americans but with a German chairman. This Committee has been feeding 50,000 Chinese refugees daily and has been extremely active in attempting to prevent and in reporting Japanese atrocities. In view of this strong opposition on the part of the local

military authorities to the International Committee instructions are requested as to how far this office should go in assisting the Committee in its humanitarian activities.

Sent to Embassy Hankow. Repeated to the Department, Peiping and Shanghai. Shanghai please repeat to Tokyo.

Allison

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