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July 8, 1939

CONFIDENTIAL -- FOR STAFF USE ONLY

No. 1767

Eugene H. Doonan, Esquire,
American Charge d'Affairs ad interim,
Tokyo.

Sir:

Reference is made to the Embassy's telegram no. 234, May 18, 5 p.m., in which there is given the text of a message from the Prime Minister which was handed to Ambassador Grew by the Minister for Foreign Affairs with the request that Mr. Grew deliver the message personally to me. There is enclosed a reply to this message.

The Department desires to be consulted by telegraph with regard to the question of the time when the reply should be delivered. Therefore, before arranging to call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the purpose of handing the reply to him for transmission to the Prime Minister, please telegraph your opinion whether an opportune time for presentation of the reply has arrived, offering also such comments or suggestions as may occur to you with regard to the text of the proposed reply.

When you deliver the reply, the Department desires that you inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that it

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is requested that the reply be regarded as strictly confidential and not for publication.

Very truly yours,

Enclosure:
Reply to Prime
Minister.

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On his return to Washington Ambassador Grew delivered to me personally the message which Your Excellency was so good as to place in his hands through the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs. I have read with unusual interest the expressions of Your Excellency's concern at the existence among the nations of Europe of antagonism which may lead to open conflict, and of Your Excellency's concern as to what the consequences might be to millions of people and to civilization should such antagonism lead to an outbreak of war. In this situation Your Excellency sees it as the duty of the Governments of our two countries, owing to their situation "outside the scope of European conflict" to exert efforts to prevent the occurrence of the casualty envisaged.

I have carefully noted also the statement pertaining to the causes of strained relations in the

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European situation, the interest of my Government in the preservation of peace, and finally the "ardent wish of Japan" that the relations of nations might be so arranged that true world peace would be established and maintained.

Your Excellency will have no doubt, in the light of the published utterances of the President and myself and of the principles we have advocated and supported, that the Government of the United States wholeheartedly desires to see established and maintained upon the basis of fair dealing and fair play between and among nations a condition of true world peace. With especial reference to the situation in Europe, Your Excellency will be apprised of the recent earnest efforts of this Government: the President's identic messages sent on September 26, 1938, to the heads of several European governments which had reached an alarming crisis in their relations; identic messages addressed on April 14, 1939, by the President and myself respectively to the Chancellor of the German Reich and to the Premier of Italy with regard to the possible removal of the pervading treat or fear of a European war.

It would be most gratifying to me, and I may also speak for the President, if there could be found ways for the use of your Government's influence toward discouraging among European governments, especially those

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governments with which your Government may have special relations, the taking of any action, or the pursuance of any policy, that might endanger the general peace. I am confident that any such contribution as this would constitute a high service to those great sections of humanity which live in fear of the devastation of war.

In further reference to Your Excellency's expressed desire to see a true world peace established and maintained, I venture to observe, in a spirit of frankness which I trust will not be misunderstood, that this objective is made the more remote by the existence and the continuance of armed conflict and consequent political disturbances in the Far East today. Just as the unfolding of events in the European sphere have their repercussions in the Far East, so, it appears, the prolongation of abnormal conditions in the Far East contribute to causes of unrest in Europe. American opinion is therefore perturbed by the trend of events in the Far East, especially with regard to the methods of Japan in relations with China.

If, therefore, it should prove impracticable or inexpedient to make effective contribution at once to the settlement of problems arising in the European area, there nevertheless would be urgent need for the exertion of efforts in connection with disturbed conditions in

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other geographical areas, especially by those nations which may unhappily now be engaged in armed conflict. It is my view that each peaceful settlement, in whatever geographical sphere, constitutes a stabilizing element and an important step toward improvement in the general world situation.

Your Excellency may be assured of the genuine desire of the President and myself to do all within our power to convert into practical results those principles and hopes to which we have frequently given expression in connection with the foreign relations of the Government of the United States. While this Government does not perceive any practicable steps which it might usefully take at this time in addition to those already taken, this Government is sincerely interested in the suggestion contained in Your Excellency's message, and in giving further consideration to that suggestion would be pleased to have such further information as Your Excellency may find it agreeable to offer by way of amplifying and making more definitive Your Excellency's concept as to the steps which might usefully be taken toward moderating the situation in Europe.

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