

No. 1480



Ex L. 1480

DOCUMENT 10-N

PLAIN

June 21, 1944

AMLEGATION,

BERN.

2115, twenty-first

AMERICAN INTERESTS - JAPAN

Request the Swiss Government to express to Gorge the thanks of the United States Government for having pointed out to the Japanese Government that Japan's adversaries naturally conclude from its persistent refusal to permit Swiss representatives to visit camps in Japanese-occupied territory that conditions prevailing in the unvisited camps are not as they should be.

The Government of the United States has noted with interest Shigemitsu's statement that he is endeavoring to bring about an improvement in the conditions under which American nationals are held in Japan and Japanese-occupied territories, and that the question of permitting visits to camps in occupied territories is being given consideration. Note has also been taken of Shigemitsu's characterization of the release of reports of the neglect and cruel treatment of Americans in Japanese custody as an atrocity campaign intended to discredit Japan.

The Government of the United States emphasizes, and desires Gorge so to inform the Japanese Government, that the published reports to which Shigemitsu objects are accounts of the sufferings of American nationals in camps in Japanese-occupied territories that came into the hands of American Government agencies from reliable sources. To end the publication of such accounts Japan has only to remove the conditions giving rise to such accounts and permit Swiss representatives so to inform the United States Government.

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2- 2115, twenty-first, to Bern.

The Government of the United States is obliged to inform its citizens of the condition of its nationals in enemy custody. The continued refusals of the Japanese Government to permit visits by representatives of the Protecting Power to camps in Japanese-occupied territories leads naturally to the conclusion that conditions in these areas continue to remain unsatisfactory and such as to make Japan ashamed to have them observed by neutrals.

In giving reality to its numerous professions of its intent to apply humanitarian considerations in its treatment of prisoners of war and civilian internees and in making the improvements promised by Shigemitsu, the Japanese Government has at its command the most effective method of removing the causes of unfavorable reports and thereby preventing the future publication of such reports. When the Japanese Government accords to American nationals the humanitarian treatment it has promised and when it permits representatives of the Swiss Government to visit all places where American nationals are held and to verify and confirm that their treatment is in accordance with the promises of the Japanese Government, the United States Government will be in a position to reassure the relatives and friends of American nationals held by Japan with regard to their condition and treatment.

The United States Government continues to hope that the Japanese Government will be persuaded without further delay to enable the Swiss representatives to visit all detained nationals of the United States wherever detained. There would seem to be no reason why the Japanese Government should not permit such visits without prejudice to the juridical position taken by Japan on the question of representation of enemy interests. See Department's 2050, June 14.

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