

No. 3264

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On January 11, 1938 an Imperial Conference was held with the purpose of deciding our national policy toward China.

Last autumn, when the China problem gradually became serious, there appeared in all quarters arguments insisting on the necessity of establishing a firm national policy through holding an Imperial Conference. But, under the ever varying situations, and that at the time, when the Chinese intention was not clear, it was a self-evident reason, that it was difficult to decide our policy as simply as they say. Consequently the Government did not realize it until today. However, on the one hand, there has been previously the German movement for mediation, while on the other, the CHIANG Kai-shek Regime would not collapse easily and yet it seemed not to reject mediation by Germany. Considering these two cases, and supposing possible situations that is, in case peace is made suddenlike, and in case CHIANG's Regime is annihilated or denied, etc., the government recognized the necessity of deciding the principles of the counter-measures for them. Thus it has come to pass that the government petitioned the Emperor today for an Imperial Conference and for the definite plan, held Liaison and Cabinet Conferences extending to the 9th (Sunday) and 10th. Prior to this, His Imperial Highness Prince Chief of the Naval General Staff made an offer that it was desirable that His Majesty also ask a few questions or the like, because, according to his experience hitherto at the Imperial Conferences, there was no one who dared to speak and no word by His Majesty, so that the Conference was extremely difficult to conduct. However, as Prince SAIONJI was long since so prudent about His Majesty's speech, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal told Baron HARADA the above purport yesterday, the 10th, and asked him to hear the opinion of the elder statesman once, and added that he /T.M. Lord Keeper/ was of the opinion that His Majesty's speech might be admissible, unless it would include a final decision. Therefore, Baron HARADA left for Okitsu by train at 3 P.M. of the same day, asked the elder statesman of his opinion and answered by telephone on the night of the same day, that the elder statesman was also of the same opinion as Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, that is, he meant that he didn't want to fix responsibility upon His Majesty and that he regarded other questions admissible.

Premier KONOYE entered into the Imperial Palace at 4:20 P.M. of the 10th day, was given an audience by His Majesty and petitioned His Majesty on the matter of holding an Imperial Conference on the following day, the 11th. On that occasion he met with the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and told the latter to the effect that, in proceeding with the Imperial Conference, there would be no need of His Majesty's speech, since he was going to bring a plan, whose most part was already decided, only it would be formally decided before the Throne.

On the other hand, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal also considered the proceedings of the Conference and on the same day, the 10th, he was given an audience by the Emperor after withdrawal of the Premier. He told the Emperor that he thought it proper for the Premier to manage the procedure of the Conference from the standpoint of responsibility and position, since the coming Imperial Conference was for the purpose of deciding our national policy. And it was decided that His Majesty would grant permission to this effect at the Conference the following day, therefore the 11th.

Next day, the 11th, at 2 P.M. the Emperor was present in the East Room No. 1 in the Imperial Palace where the council in the Imperial presence was held in the seats shown as per Annex (1). The President of the Privy Council, HIRANUMA, participated by a special order. Because of the Privy Council's connection with diplomacy, treaties, etc., the Premier privately requested and received Imperial sanction to have the President take part in the council. It seems that the Emperor made a special inquiry as to the reason. In the council, the Premier stated that with the Emperor's permission, he would manage the council, and he had the Foreign Minister explain the

original draft as per Annex (2). (Originally the Premier was expected to do it himself, but it was changed later).

H.I.H. the Chief of the General Staff stated that exclusive of the concept of victor versus vanquished nations, he approved the original draft from the standpoint of permanent peace in the Orient, and hoped that it would be executed. Then H.I.H. the Chief of the Naval General Staff expressed his approval. Next, HIRANUMA, the President of the Privy Council, expressed his approval and stated furthermore, that if some agreement were reached with the CHIANG Regime, consideration must be given to offering full protection to those hitherto in the pro-Japanese administration in North China and elsewhere, so as not to act contrary to their moral precepts. He requested the Home Minister to give special thought to domestic public order. Thus, the original draft was adopted and the Premier informed /the Emperor/ that the council was adjourned. The Emperor retired to the inner palace. It was then 2:55 P.M.

The Emperor made not a single remark.

APPENDIX

The various circumstances were explained on the day before, the 16th, to the President of the Privy Council, HIRANUMA, by the Chief Secretary and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. The President of the Privy Council seemed to be somewhat dissatisfied that such measures were taken for the first time that day, but it was explained that even among Cabinet members and Councillors things are decided suddenly, and his consent was gained. However, on the day of the council, the President of the Privy Council said that he had a few questions to ask. Therefore, Cabinet members met with him at 1:30 P.M. in the Imperial Palace, prior to the council and replied to his questions; there were no questions asked at the meeting of the council.

The Government issued a statement at noon on the 16th. However, in order to draw up that statement, a Liaison Conference and a Cabinet Meeting were convened from 9:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. of the 14th, and from the morning to the afternoon of the 15th. The matter had not been settled, principally because of the General Staff Headquarters' insistence upon efforts for reconciliation. At last, the Government Plan was accepted, but the individual members/ of the General Staff Headquarters/, it appears, added that they still believed the reconciliation doctrine (the view of responding to the proposal of the Chinese Central Government which wished to know concrete details) was satisfactory.

A historically important statement to explain at home and abroad the Empire's firm policy toward China was announced by the Cabinet at noon on the 16th.

"Statement of the Government"

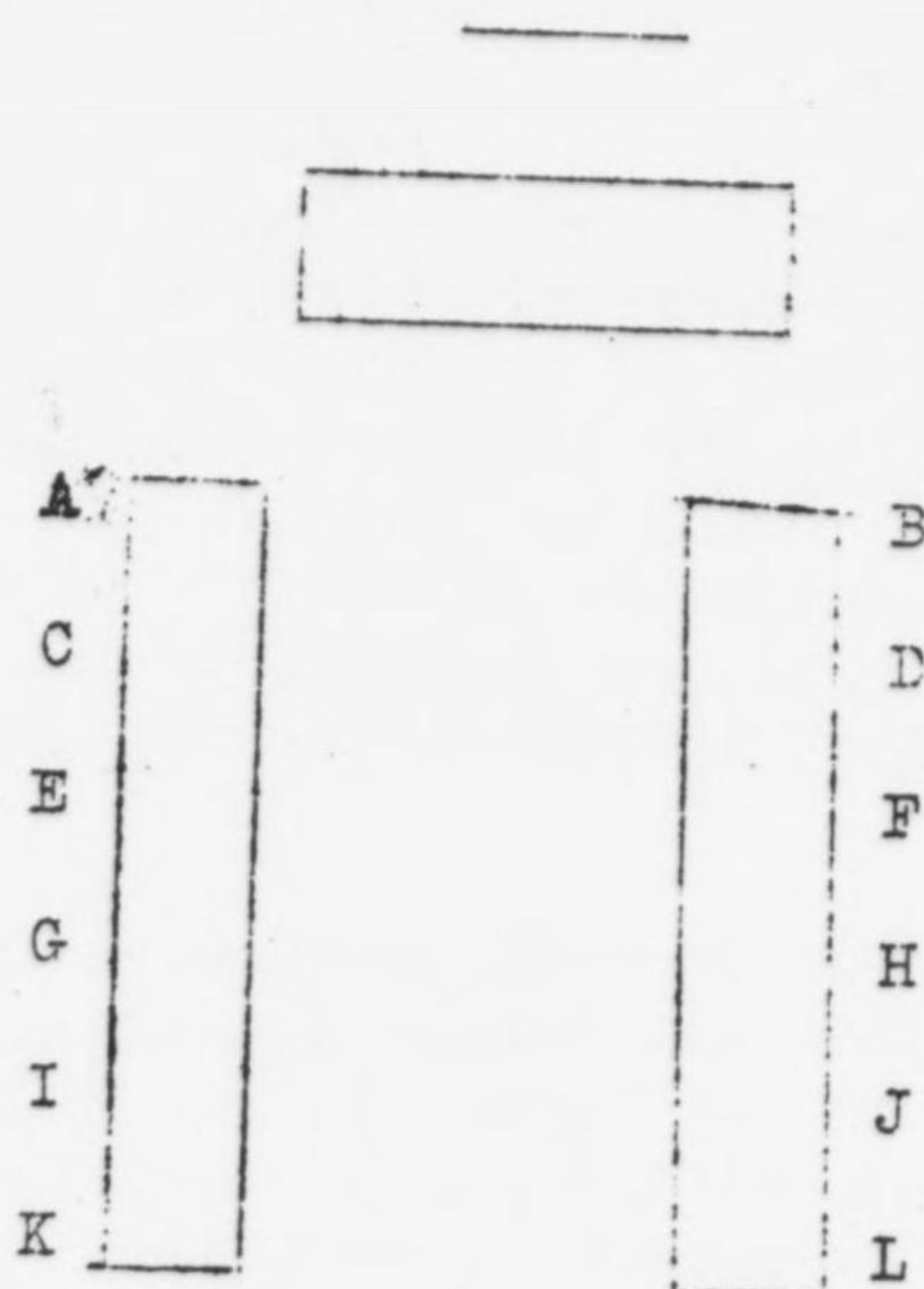
The Imperial Government has been patient enough; after the occupation of Nanking, to give the last opportunity to the Chinese National Government for reconsidering the situation. But they do not understand our real intention, attempt foolishly to counter-attack, disregard the greatest distress of the people at home and do not mind the peace of the entire East Asia. Thereupon, the Imperial Government will not care for the National Government hereafter, and expect the establishment and development of a new Government of China that will really be worthy coalition with our Empire. We desire to strive, rising under cooperation with such new Government, to arrange the relation between the two countries and to construct a new revived China. Of course, there will be not even a slight change in our policy that respects the territoriality and sovereignty of China and the rights

and interests of other powers in China. Our responsibility for the peace of East Asia is now increasing heavier and heavier. It is the most earnest desire of the Government that our people devote themselves to perform this important mission.

ANNEX (1)

The Council in the Imperial Presence

January 11, 1938



- A H.I.H. the Chief of the General Staff
- B H.I.H. the Chief of the Naval General Staff
- C The Prime Minister
- D The President of the Privy Council
- E The Minister of Foreign Affairs
- F The Minister of the Navy
- G The Minister of War
- H The Minister of Finance
- I The Minister of Home Affairs
- J The Vice-Chief of the General Staff
- K The Vice-Chief of the Naval General Staff

ANNEX (2)

The Fundamental Policy for Disposition
of the China Incident

(The subject of discussion in the
Council in the Imperial Presence)

The inflexible policy of our Empire is to form an axis for peace of the Orient in cooperation with Manchukuo and China, and with this as the core, contribute to world peace.

In order to settle the China Incident in accordance with this national policy, Japan and China will sweep clean all the frictions of the past, reorganize the mutual relationship upon a broad-minded foundation, respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and make it their ultimate aim to bring about perfect harmony between them. Therefore we make the following stipulations between the two nations, as well as establish the necessary guarantee to prevent recurrence of such an incident.

- (1) Japan, Manchukuo and China shall abolish all such policies, education, trade and all other means liable to ruin their mutual friendship, and they shall also exterminate acts which may bring about such an evil result as mentioned above.

(2) Japan, Manchukuo and China shall be united to realize their cultural coalition and anti-Communism policy.

(3) In accordance with the principle of balancing merits and faults of each other, Japan, Manchukuo and China shall pledge cooperation and mutual favoring with regards to industries, economics, etc.

Based upon the above policy, the Empire should be determined to carry out properly the following measures by applying the closely unified political and military tactics.

(1) If the present Chinese Central Government shall reconsider at this juncture and sincerely ask for reconciliation, we will negotiate with them in accordance with the conditions of the Negotiations for Peace Between Japan and China as indicated on the attached sheet. (A) If the Empire recognizes in the future that China has carried out the conditions of peace, she shall not only rescind the provisions of guarantee indicated on the attached sheet (B), which are included in the above conditions, but also shall cooperate sincerely with China for her reconstruction and development.

(2) If the present Chinese Central Government does not ask for reconciliation, the Empire will not wholly depend upon the settlement of the Incident by taking them as her opponent, but will assist the formation of the new Chinese Government, with which to negotiate on adjusting the mutual relationship, and to cooperate to establish the regenerated New China. As for the present Chinese Central Government, the Empire shall be determined to annihilate them, or take measures to absorb them under the new central government.

(3) In order to thoroughly carry out the above policy to dispose of this incident, with anticipation of some changes to take place in the international situation, we should promote the rapid cultivation and complete arrangements of total national strength, especially the national defense power, and maintain and improve the friendly relations with the third powers.

(4) We shall respect the rights and interests of the third powers, and try to obtain the predominant position in the economic developments in China only through free competition.

(5) We shall guide the public opinion with a view to make the people realize the fundamental policy for settling the China Incident. The same should apply to foreign peoples.

Attached Sheet (A)

Details of the Conditions of the Negotiations for Peace Between Japan and China.

- (1) China shall grant formal recognition to Manchukuo.
- (2) China shall renounce anti-Japanism and anti-Manchukuo policy.
- (3) Establish non-armed zones in North China and Inner Mongolia.
- (4) North China shall establish an organization under the sovereignty of China suitable to realize the co-prosperity of Japan, Manchuria and China, give this organization comprehensive authorities and make special efforts to bring about the economic cooperation of Japan, Manchuria and China.
- (5) Establish an anti-Communist self-government in Inner Mongolia. Its international position shall be similar to that of the present Outer Mongolian Government.
- (6) China shall establish an anti-Communist policy and cooperate with Japan and Manchukuo in carrying out this policy.

- (7) Establish non-armed zones in the occupied areas in Central China, and as for the Greater Shanghai District, Japan and China shall cooperate to maintain its public order and to develop its economic activities.
- (8) Japan, Manchukuo and China shall conclude a necessary agreement regarding the exploitation of natural resources, customs, trade, aviation, transportation, communication, and so forth.
- (9) China shall make due reparations to the Empire.

Addition:

- (1) Station Japanese troops in certain districts of North China, Inner Mongolia and Central China for the purpose of security, for the period of time it is deemed necessary.
- (2) The talk on the armistice pact shall commence after an agreement has been reached regarding the above provisions between Japan and China.

When the Chinese Government has carried out each of the foregoing provisions sincerely and truly cooperates with us to realize our ideals of the cooperation and mutual help between Japan and China, the Empire shall not only rescind the provisions of guarantee, but also offer to cooperate sincerely with China for her recovery, national development and the realization of the desires of her people.

Attached Sheet (B)

I The provisions of guarantee mentioned in the Attached Sheet (A) are as follows:

- (1) Non-armed zones mentioned in Item (3).
- (2) Special rights and interests to be established for the purpose of security at the negotiation mentioned in Item (4), and necessary facilities to be established in this connection.
- (3) Non-armed zones mentioned in Clause (7).
- (4) Rights and interests concerning the control and expansion of important communications, addition (1) and the accompanying military establishments.

II The pacts and agreements to be abolished when peace is made.

- (1) The UMEZU-Ho-Ying-Chin Pact, the Tangku Truce Pact, The ~~OSI~~HARA-Chin Te-chum Pact, The Shanghai Truce Pact.
- (2) At the same time with the abolition of the provisions of guarantee, the renunciation of the special rights and interests in China (such as extraterritoriality, settlements and the right to station troops) which Japan has held up to now shall be considered.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I.P.S. No. 3090A

Statement of Source and Authenticity

I, Ryoichi Takao, hereby certify that I am officially connected with the Japanese Government in the following capacity: Chief of Inner Court Documents Section, Board of Chamberlains and that as such official I have custody of the document hereto attached consisting of 20 pages, dated Jan. 11th, 1938, and described as follows: Record of the Imperial Conference of Jan. 11th, 1938. I further certify that the attached record and document is an official document of the Japanese Government, and that it is part of the official archives and files of the following named ministry or department (specifying also the file number or citation, if any, or any other official designation of the regular location of the document in the archives or files): Ministry of the Imperial Household

Signed at Tokio on this

22nd day of Sept., 1947.

Witness/s/ Mr. (illegible)

/s/ Ryoichi Takao
Signature of Official
Chief of Inner Court
Document Section SEAL
Official Capacity

Statement of Official Procurement

I, Richard H. Larsh, hereby certify that I am associated with the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, and that the above certification was obtained by me from the above signed official of the Japanese Government in the conduct of my official business.

Signed at Tokyo on this

22nd day of Sept. 1947

Witness; /s/ Henry Shimojima

/s/ Richard H. Larsh
NAME
Investigator, IPS
Official Capacity