

Exhibit 2918

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Memorandum by the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

[Tokyo] November 10, 1941

The Foreign Minister recalled the conversation which he had had with me on October 30, when he said that he was firmly of the opinion that the maintenance of friendly relations between the United States and Japan was a practicable proposition. He went on to say that he had given constant thought to this matter and that he had determined to put forward every effort to re-establish relations between the two countries on a friendly basis and to maintain peace in the Pacific. It was the purpose of the present Cabinet to continue with the project of establishing a "Greater East Asia" as a contribution toward world peace. Mr. Togo said that ever since he has assumed office he had been intensively studying the documents relating to the conversations which have thus far taken place. Fresh proposals had been formulated and had been sent to Admiral Nomura, who had been instructed to enter into negotiations with the President and the Secretary of State. I interrupted the Foreign Minister to say that our Government had been careful to emphasize that it was engaged in "preliminary and exploratory conversations" with the Japanese Government. Mr. Togo replied that he was well aware of that fact, but that he wondered whether the time had not come to enter into formal and official negotiations. However, he said that he did not wish to press the point.

Mr. Togo went on to say that only recently Mr. Kurusu had been despatched to Washington to assist Admiral Nomura in conducting the conversations. He recalled in this connection that he had asked me to facilitate Mr. Kurusu's journey to the United States, and that the American Government and I had responded in a manner which was most gratifying. He said that it was everywhere known in Japan that I had striven to promote friendly relations between our two countries and that my efforts in this regard were highly appreciated throughout the country. He intended on his part to spare no effort to cooperate with me with a view to opening up a way for the solution of the problems confronting the two countries which would be mutually acceptable.

What he most keenly felt, the Foreign Minister continued, from reviewing the documents recording conversations which have thus far taken place was that the knowledge and appreciation of the United States with regard to the realities of the situation in the Far East are unfortunately inadequate. Although Mr. Hull had admitted that Japan is a stabilizing force in the Far East, the position taken by the United States throughout the conversations had not been in harmony with that fact. Unless the American Government should take full cognizance of the fact that Japan has been engaged in hostilities with China for four and a half years, then the admission of Japan's being a stabilizing force in the Far East would have in actuality no meaning. Mr. Togo said that Mr. Hull, in a conversation with Mr. Wakasugi on October 16, recalled that he had told former Ambassador Saito that he recognized Japan as a stabilizing force and would be prepared to express such recognition in an official manner. The Minister went on to say that the population of this country is steadily and rapidly increasing; it was now about one hundred million; and it was necessary to assure raw materials necessary for their existence. It was his opinion that unless the American Government realizes this fact as

among the realities of the situation, successful conclusion to the conversations would be difficult. During the conversations carried on for a period of more than six months, the Japanese Government had repeatedly made proposals calculated to approach the American point of view, but the American Government for its part had taken no step toward meeting the Japanese position and had yielded nothing--it had perhaps taken a more advanced position. Those being the facts, "we in Japan are led to wonder what is the degree of sincerity of the American Government in continuing with the conversations." He said that national sentiment will not tolerate further protracted delay in arriving at some conclusion. Referring to the fact that the Diet is shortly to meet, he emphasized that the position is daily becoming more pressing. He expressed the hope that the American Government would take a statesmanlike position and view the problems to be resolved from the broadest possible viewpoint--that it would try to settle these problems "with one sweep". It was his opinion that otherwise the prospects of overcoming the present difficulties would be small.

The Foreign Minister went on to say that Japan had already made what were believed to have been the greatest possible concessions. However, the position had been examined by the new Cabinet and the new proposal now being made comprises the maximum possible concessions by Japan. The Minister at this point handed me two pieces of paper (attached hereto) which he described as the new Japanese proposals, and he said that he wished to make two observations as follows:

1. The new Japanese draft corresponds to the American draft of June 21. It contains the elements of the proposals put forward in the Japanese documents of September 6 and 25, with modifications to meet as far as possible the American position as set forth in the American memorandum of October 2.

2. The Japanese draft of September 25 was largely based on the American draft of June 21. In the Foreign Minister's opinion it contains many unsatisfactory features with regard to both text and substance. However, to expedite the conversations, the Minister had decided to make use of that draft as a basis for a fresh start. He reiterated that this new proposal includes the maximum concessions.

By way of commentary he said:

- (a) With regard to the attitudes of the American and Japanese Governments towards the European war, it is the understanding of the Japanese Government that there has been an agreement of views based on the Japanese draft of September 25;

- (b) With regard to the question of non-discrimination in economic matters, it is the belief of the Japanese Government that its new proposal adequately covers the desires of the American Government;

- (c) With regard to the stationing in and withdrawal of troops from China, which have been the greatest obstacle in bringing the conversations to a successful end, the Japanese Government has, notwithstanding grave domestic difficulties, made a further and what must be regarded as the maximum possible concession. The Japanese Government believes that the American Government will appreciate this further manifestation of Japan's desire to come to an amicable settlement with the United States:

(d) Mr. Hull has intimated that he has already consulted the British Government with regard to the conversations and that he proposes to continue such consultation. British interests in the Far East are admittedly large and would be deeply affected by matters now under discussions between the United States and Japan. The Foreign Minister regards it as necessary that in the event of the sought-for agreement being reached between the United States and Japan there should simultaneously be concluded a similar instrument between Japan and Great Britain. The Foreign Minister expressed the hope that the American Government will persuade the British Government to agree to such simultaneous signature.

The Minister concluded his observations by repeating that he solicited my cooperation to bring about a speedy and satisfactory end to the negotiations. He referred to the question of conversations being carried on in Tokyo paralleling those taking place in Washington, which was touched on at our last meeting. The Minister said that he had no intention of merely duplicating here what would be said in Washington. He believed that there would be no objection on the part of the American Government to holding parallel conversations in Tokyo, but in his view such parallel conversations should be designed to supplement exchanges in Washington of information and of opinion with a view to expediting the progress of the conversations.

At the end of the Minister's presentation I said that I had no authority to debate the questions approached by the Minister which would be discussed in Washington but that I wished to raise three points as pertinent to those discussions, as follows:

(1) In connection with the Minister's observation that my Government does not understand the realities of the situation in the Far East I ventured to disagree on the ground that the American Government had been given a perfectly clear conception of the situation and its various factors by this Embassy and, I assumed, by the Japanese Ambassador in Washington;

(2) The term "stabilizing force in East Asia" as applied by the Minister to Japan is open to very wide interpretation;

(3) The Minister's observation that Japan must have access to necessary supplies penetrates to the center of the whole problem since one of the fundamental purposes of the current conversations is to open a way for Japan to obtain such necessary supplies, together with a free flow of trade and commerce and markets for her industries, but by peaceful means as opposed to the use of force, and that Mr. Hull's program visualizes precisely these desiderata which are aimed to ensure Japan's future welfare, prosperity and contentment.

The Foreign Minister remarked that he was quite prepared to admit that the Embassy is endeavoring to report accurately on the situation in the Far East, but that, in view of the position which is being taken by the American Government, he wondered whether the American Government has in fact a correct appreciation of the realities. To illustrate his point, he wished to cite the question of the stationing of Soviet troops in Outer Mongolia, which was universally recognized to be a part of China. So far as he knew no one had objected to the presence of Soviet troops in Outer Mongolia. With regard to my comment on the phrase "stabilizing force in East Asia," the Foreign Minister said that there should be a satisfactory interpretation of that phrase from a common-sense point of view. With regard to my observations on the question of assuring to Japan sources of raw materials the Foreign Minister said that this was a question which had been debated over a period of years at Geneva and elsewhere. He did not wish to go into the

fundamentals of the question, but he thought that he could advert briefly to the importance of commercial and economic relations between the United States and Japan. The freezing by the United States of Japanese assets had stopped supplies of many important raw materials to Japan. Economic pressure of this character is capable of menacing national existence to a greater degree than the direct use of force. He hoped that the American Government would take into consideration circumstances of this character and realize the possibility that the Japanese people, if exposed to continued economic pressure, might eventually feel obliged resolutely to resort to measures of self-defense.

The Minister went on to say that Japan had been engaged in extensive hostilities for a period of more than four years, and that if Japan were called upon to sacrifice the fruits of such protracted hostilities she must inevitably collapse. If the American Government realizes this fact a speedy conclusion to the conversations will be easy.

I pointed out the apparent inconsistency between the Minister's emphasis on the insistence of Japan that she retain the fruits of hostilities and Japan's acceptance of the principle of refraining from aggression and the use of force.

The Foreign Minister replied that Japan is not conducting a war of aggression and that therefore no question arises of her retaining the fruits of aggression. It is his impression that the American Government is now resorting, under the plea of self-defense, to measures over and beyond those that are generally recognized by international law. He expressed the opinion that it might not be out of place for Japan to ask the United States not to put too liberal a construction on the principle of self-defense. In any event, it was his opinion that theoretical discussions would not promote the conversations, which he thought should be pursued along realistic lines.

The conversation then turned to another matter which is covered by a separate memorandum.

J[oseph] C. G[rew]