RELATIONS OF JAPAN WITH THE AXIS POWERS AND WITH THE SOVIET UNION

761.94/1253: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

Moscow, January 6, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received 7:47 p.m.]

14. Although I can see no reason at this time to attach significance to the coincidence of a halt in the Soviet-Japanese, Soviet-German and Soviet-Rumanian negotiations at approximately the same time, certain general observations in relation thereto suggest themselves.

The halt in the Soviet-Japanese negotiations appears to have been occasioned by the unwillingness of the Japanese Government to pay the price demanded by the Soviets. The Soviet attitude appears to be a confident belief that as Japanese difficulties increase the Japanese Government will eventually decide to pay the price and that in consequence the Soviet Government has every reason to adopt a waiting attitude.


STEINHARDT

762.9411/206: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, January 10, 1941—noon.
[Received 12:06 p.m.]

91. My telegram 5129, December 21, 3 p.m., reporting the formation of the commissions provided for in the Three Power Pact. 5a Dienst aus Deutschland states that the Japanese military mission under the leadership of General Yamashita which has just arrived in Berlin will remain in Germany for an extended period and that there

2 Remainder of this telegram is printed in vol. I, section II under “Activities of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, and Soviet Relations With the Belligerent Powers.”
3 Not printed.
may be expected from its prolonged contacts with the various military agencies of the Reich a closer association in the military relationship of the two powers resting on the Berlin Three Power Pact.

MORRIS

762.9411/220: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, January 28, 1941—7 p. m.
[Received January 29—3:35 a. m.]

130. My British colleague on January 23 sent a telegram to London of which the following is the substance:

In course of conversation today I mentioned that in our interviews on the subject of tripartite pact, Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated that only in the event of article 3 of that treaty coming into operation would Japan be likely to be involved in war with us. I had noticed in every particular that in his speech of January 16 he had implied that in the event of the war’s going against Germany Japan might feel it necessary to intervene. Had I correctly understood His Excellency’s meaning?

Mr. Matsuoka disabused Japanese public of the idea that the conclusion of this treaty was a gamble on German victory. Should article 3 be invoked it would come into operation just as effectively whether or not at the particular time Germany was being successful. He had always objected strongly to the Japanese attitude during the last war when, despite Japan’s alliance with Great Britain, many Japanese had sided with Germany. This time, he said, there was to be no “sitting on the fence” and Japan must assist her allies wholeheartedly whether they were winning or losing. By “assistance”, however, he did not necessarily mean the use of armed force, the moment for which still remained governed by the terms of article 3 of the treaty.

GREW

761.9411/72: Telegram

The First Secretary of Embassy in China (Smyth) to the Secretary of State

Peiping, January 30, 1941—noon.
[Received January 30—10:15 a. m.]

Following from Mukden for Peiping.

“1, January 29, 6 p. m. An American in the Khanka Foreign Office divulged the following information concerning recent Soviet-Japanese negotiations, guaranteeing its authenticity:

No progress is being made because the Japanese want to sign the pact first and settle pending issues later whereas the Soviets want the

* Sir Robert L. Craigie, British Ambassador in Japan.
* Yosuke Matsuoka.
causes of conflict removed before signing, their condition for concluding a pact otherwise being the retrocession of Southern Sakhalien to Russia.

My informant added that inner circles in Hsinking consider the results of the Yoshizawa mission in the Dutch East Indies fateful, feeling certain that if they are unsatisfactory Japan will take military action against the Netherlands East Indies."

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Chungking and Tokyo.

Smyth

762.9411/221: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, February 7, 1941—6 p.m.
[Received February 8—1:14 a.m.]

175. Embassy’s 130, January 28, 7 p.m. The following is the substance of a telegram which my British colleague sent to London on February 5:

"Official of Ministry of Foreign Affairs has now sent me in strict confidence his translation of what Minister for Foreign Affairs actually said:

[...I cannot deny that eventuality might arise when any joint actions might be carried to such an extent and in such a way as to be interpreted as “attack” provided for in article 3 of the pact. Apart from the tripartite agreement, Anglo-American cooperation and its development in the Pacific South Seas and China provide even us alone with a serious problem and we must constantly watch situation from diplomatic and military points of view. Development of the situation might force us to make an important decision in spite of my earnest desire to the contrary.[...]]"

Sent to the Department via Shanghai.

Grew

761.94/1260: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, February 9, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received 7:50 p.m.]

238. My 205, February 1, 6 p.m. The Japanese Ambassador told me last night that the Japanese-Soviet trade negotiations have now been resumed in conjunction with the negotiations for a permanent fisheries convention. He added that political negotiations are

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*Kenkichi Yoshizawa, former Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs.
*Not printed.
*Gen. Yoshitsugu Tatekawa.
“deadlocked” as Matsuoka has thus far declined even to discuss the surrender of the Japanese concessions in the Sakhalin territory. With respect to the trade negotiations, Tatekawa stated that the Japanese Government desires to obtain most-favored-nation treatment and the Soviet Government diplomatic status for which he described as “innumerable so-called commercial representatives” in Japan—a concession which he said the Japanese Government is prepared to make. He also stated that his Government has offered silk and rayon to the Soviet Government but that the latter maintains that it has no need for any substantial amount of those commodities. The Soviet Government, he said, had requested the Japanese Government to build tankers for it but the lack of the essential material made it necessary to refuse this request. At the last conference the Soviets requested rubber and tin and upon being informed that Japan does not possess those commodities, it was suggested that Japan probably could acquire them and transfer them secretly to the Soviet Government. The only other subject apparently thus far discussed has been that of the freight rates of the Trans-Siberian Railway which the Japanese Government desires to have reduced. I have inferred from remarks recently made by the German Ambassador* that the German Government also is interested in the reduction of these rates.

STEINHARDC

761.94/1274: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

TOKYO, February 16, 1941—4 p. m.
[Received February 17—9:08 a. m.]

239. According to a Domei report of Friday’s session of the Budget Committee published in the Japan Times and Advertiser yesterday, the Foreign Minister in reply to a question stated that Japanese diplomacy was continuing its efforts begun at the conclusion of the tripartite alliance to bring about an adjustment of relations between Japan and the Soviet Union. Matsuoka, while warning of the difficulties and inevitable delays attending upon any negotiations with the Soviet Union, noted nevertheless with satisfaction the temporary settlement of the fishery issue, the appointment of commissions to consider the question of the north Sakhalin concessions and the conclusion of a permanent fishery agreement as well as the negotiations for the conclusion of a trade agreement between Japan and the Soviet Union. In discussing the general trend of Soviet-Japanese relations, Matsuoka stated that while it is impossible to forecast the future

* Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg.
trend of events, the apparent willingness of the Soviet Government to settle outstanding questions was gratifying and remarked in this connection certain measure of mutual understanding had been reached between the Japanese Ambassador and Molotov and that as a result it would appear that the Soviet authorities were beginning to understand and were less suspicious of "the real intentions of Japan." He concluded with the statement that the Japanese Government is determined to utilize to the full the opportunity that has at last been presented for adjusting relations with the Soviet Union. In reply to a further question concerning the bearing of Article 5 of the tripartite alliance on the question of relations with the Soviet Union, Matsuoka is quoted as stating that this article exempting from the operation of the pact the relations between the signatories and the Soviet Union was not without concern to the Japanese Government and that should Soviet-Japanese relations between [sic] take a turn for the worse the Japanese Government could be depended upon to take steps to have Article 5 adjusted before such a contingency arose.

On the subject of the Anti-Comintern Pact and its connection with Soviet-Japanese relations, Matsuoka stated that the Anti-Comintern Pact retained its validity as an instrument for combating communism but denied that it was demoralizing influence against the Soviet Union or had any direct bearing on the question of adjusting relations with that country.

Mr. Matsuoka’s remarks, closed with the general tenor of Japanese press comment concerning the relations with the Soviet Union, reveal the continuing desire and effort of the Japanese Government to bring about an agreement with the Soviet Union.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai, repeated to Moscow.

Grew

761.04/1275 : Telegram
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, February 16, 1941—5 p. m.
[Received February 17—9:07 a. m.]

240. Continuing Embassy’s 239, February 16, 4 p.m. In so far as I am aware, however, there is no reason to believe the political negotiations have made any progress since the refusal of the Japanese

—Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, President of the Soviet Council of Commissars (Premier).

Government even to consider the Soviet demand for the cession of southern Sakhalin and certain unspecified islands of the Kuril group consequent [in return?] for the conclusion of a nonaggression pact. However, the negotiations for the settlement of specific questions are continuing and the general trend of Japanese-Soviet relations would appear to be more favorable than otherwise.

Of indirect but possibly important bearing on the general development of Japanese-Soviet relations may be mentioned the growing differences between Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communists which have been greeted with unconcealed satisfaction by the Japanese press. If the reports appearing in the press here in regard to the demands presented to Chiang Kai-shek by the central organs of the Chinese Communist Party (inconceivable without prior approval from Moscow), publication of an article in Pravda on January 26 attacking Chiang Kai-shek for his attitude toward the Communists and the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers at Chungking are true, it would appear that the Soviet Government is giving full support to the Chinese Communists in their disputes with the Chiang Kai-shek Government. Since even the possibility of worsened relations between the Soviet Union and Chiang Kai-shek arising out of the latter's differences with the Communists might have a direct effect on the progress of the current Soviet-Japanese negotiations, I would appreciate receiving any information which the Department may have on this subject from Moscow or elsewhere.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai. Repeated to Moscow.

Grew

761.88/1709: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, February 18, 1941—1 p. m.

[Received 4:23 p. m.]

298. The “article in Pravda on January 26 attacking Chiang Kai Shek for his attitude toward the Communists and the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers at Chungking” referred to in Tokyo’s 240, February 16, 5 p. m., presumably is the Tass despatch from Chungking published in Pravda on January 27 and reported in my 175, January 27, 6 p. m.  

12 President of the Chinese Executive Yuan (Premier) and Generalissimo.
13 See vol. v, pp. 454 ff.
14 See telegram No. 298, February 18, 1 p. m., infra.
15 The Department in its telegram No. 133, February 27, 9 p. m., replied that it did not have any information which might helpfully be added to that contained in telegram No. 298, February 18, 1 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, infra.
16 Latter not printed.
A careful re-check of Pravda for 26 and 27 fails to disclose any attack on Chiang Kai Shek or any reference to the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers at Chungking. It is possible, therefore, that Domei or other agency based on the Tass despatch in question may have exaggerated when published in the Japanese press.

A review of the Embassy's newspaper files indicates that no article has been published recently in the Soviet press attacking Chiang Kai Shek or criticizing the disbandment of the 4th Army or disclosing the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers at Chungking.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1278: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, February 20, 1941—3 p.m.
[Received 8:56 p.m.]

318. The Japanese Ambassador told me last night that, although the attitude of Molotov and Mikoyan of late had been more friendly and that they are now showing a real interest in reaching an agreement, no progress has been made in the political negotiations as his government does not feel it can agree to the Soviet demands with respect to the concessions on Sakhalin or cede any territory. He added that an important section of Japanese public opinion would bitterly oppose such action and that there is also a strong anti-Communist feeling in other important Japanese circles which would severely attack the government. He said that the trade negotiations are moving slowly and that he personally is not convinced of the wisdom of his government's willingness to grant diplomatic status to Soviet "commercial" representatives. He doubted that the political negotiations could or would make any progress until the trade matters had first been disposed of. Tatekawa further said that in order to bring pressure to bear on the Japanese Government the Soviets had recently been deliberately interfering with the operation of the Sakhalin concessions so that at the present time some of them are at a standstill and that the Soviets are still insisting that Japan obtain rubber and tin for them. The Soviets at the same time are continuing to maintain the tariffs on the Trans-Siberian Railroad at an extravagantly high rate—as Japan does not enjoy most-favored-nation treatment—so that the movement of exports to Germany is being seriously interfered with.

In this connection he remarked that German imports over the Trans-Siberian had of late been averaging 1500 tons per day (in contrast with the British Commercial Attaché's estimate of 800 tons per

37 Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade.
day average for the last year), a good portion of these shipments consist of soy beans. The Ambassador remarked that the Germans are exerting every possible effort to obtain as much oil and fats of every kind as possible and that due to the curtailment of Norwegian and British whaling operations Japan now virtually enjoys a monopoly and is shipping large quantities of whale oil to Germany over the Trans-Siberian, the quantities being limited only by the shortage of whaling vessels of which he said "we could use four or five more big ones".

In connection with Soviet shipping in the Pacific the Ambassador said that Soviet ships are not available to relieve the Japanese shortage as they appear to be engaged in importing necessities for the Soviet Union and for the Germans at large profits in the latter case as the Germans are willing "to pay any price" for fats and oils.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 P.W./131a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1941—4 p. m.

122. It is suggested that you may wish in your discretion, in conversations with influential Japanese, to state that reports of the presence of large numbers of Germans in Japan and continually arriving there, together with the nature of the increasing collaboration between Japan and Germany, have led to a widely expressed view in the United States that Japan appears to have surrendered to Germany, to a considerable degree, her freedom of action. In this connection it is being pointed out that German pressures exerted upon Italy have obviously contributed to bringing about Italian action that has patently not been in Italy's best interests. The query is raised as to why, in the light of this recent and tragic example of Germany's disposition to use her associates for her own ends and without regard to their interests, the Japanese are not more wary of the many kinds of advice which they are apparently receiving from German sources.

HULL

761.94/1279 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow [undated.]

[Received February 21—11:40 p. m.]

339. Following telegram has been sent to Tokyo.

February 21, 7 p. m. For the Ambassador. During the past 2 or 3 weeks the British Ambassador 18 has informed me of numer-

18 Sir Stafford Cripps.
ous telegrams received by him from Craigie tending to indicate the imminence of an important Soviet-Japanese political agreement. Last night he said that he had just received a telegram from Craigie to the effect that Matsuoka will soon leave for Moscow for the purpose of signing a nonaggression pact. As my information has been and still is to the effect that the political negotiations between the Soviet Union and Japan have made relatively little progress during the past few weeks and that they will not be seriously resumed unless and until the present trade discussions are satisfactorily concluded, I should appreciate your views as to whether such an agreement is actually imminent so that I may gauge the extent to which I should rely on statements [which] were recently made to me by the Japanese Ambassador. I understand that when the new Japanese Ambassador to Berlin \(^{20}\) passed through here a few days ago he brought special instructions from Matsuoka which may explain the apparent discrepancy between my information and Craigie's telegrams.

Repeated to the Department.

STEINHARDT

862.00/3990 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

Bucharest, February 26, 1941—5 p. m.
[Received February 27—11:59 a. m.]

191. The following is from a highly reliable contact who in giving me this interesting information has expressed the hope that it will reach the competent authorities in London:

1. Differences have arisen between Goering \(^{20}\) and Ribbentrop \(^{21}\) due to the fact that the former does not agree with the latter's Russian policy. Goering, it would appear, is of the opinion that more pressure should be exercised on Russia inasmuch as Germany is getting no return for the enormous concessions granted that country. Ribbentrop is now working on a nonaggression agreement between Russia and Japan and at the same time is trying to persuade the former country to stop deliveries to Chiang Kai Shek (both Germany and Japan it seems are bitterly disappointed that Chiang Kai Shek still refuses to enter into peace negotiations with the latter notwithstanding what they consider an attractive offer already made him); he is

\(^{20}\) Gen. Hiroshi Oshima.

\(^{21}\) Reich Marshal Hermann Wilhelm Göring, successor-designate to the German Chief of State, chairman of the German War Cabinet, etc.

\(^{22}\) Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.
consequently against pressing Russia at the moment and in this has Hitler’s backing.

3. Germany has given Japan a free hand in the Dutch East Indies on the understanding that later on German economic concerns will secure concessions there.

GUNTHER

761.94/1283: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, February 27, 1941—1 p. m.
[Received February 27—7:55 a. m.]

321. An official of the Japanese Foreign Office, formerly stationed in the Japanese Embassy in Moscow, in private conversation with a member of my staff expressed the opinion that barring a sudden change in the attitude of the Soviet Government there was very little probability of the conclusion of a Soviet-Japanese nonaggression pact in the near future. He said that following the deadlock reached last December as a result of the impossibly high price asked by the Soviet Government, the political negotiations by mutual consent had been shelved pending the solution of certain outstanding questions between the two countries. At the present time, aside from routine discussions concerning the North Saghalien coal and oil concessions and the work of the commission for the demarcation of the Mongolia-Manchurian border, the only active negotiations in progress between the Japanese and Soviet Governments were those taking place in Moscow relating to a permanent fisheries convention and the conclusion of a commercial agreement. The official added as his personal opinion, based on his experience in Moscow, that Soviet policy in regard to Japan at the present time was primarily motivated by a desire to promote a Japanese-American war from which the Soviet Union would be the sole beneficiary and that, therefore, the possibility could not be excluded that the Soviet Union was deliberately delaying the conclusion of a political agreement with Japan until such a time as would best serve that purpose.

With reference to the current rumors of an impending visit of the Japanese Foreign Minister to Europe, the official stated that in view of the present status of Soviet-Japanese relations, should such a visit take place it would not have as its immediate purpose the conclusion of a pact of nonaggression with the Soviet Union but would probably be merely a visit of courtesy and consultation to Germany and Italy.

Adolf Hitler, German Chief of State, Führer and Chancellor.
Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow. Moscow please repeat to Berlin.

Grew

761.94/1284 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, February 28, 1941—2 p. m.
[Received 3:14 p. m.]

389. Following has been sent to Tokyo:
"I very much appreciate your 321, of February 27, 1 p. m., as I am now convinced that my Japanese colleague has been entirely [accurate?] and sincere during the past 2 or 3 months in his statements to me concerning the status from time to time of the Soviet-Japanese negotiations and that I may in consequence place reliance on any further information that I may obtain from him."

Steinhardt

762.94/4674 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 11, 1941—9 p. m.
[Received 11:45 p. m.]

484. The Japanese Ambassador told me last night that Matsuoka is now expected to arrive in Moscow on March 23 and to leave for Berlin on March 24. He said that an invitation to stay at the “Guest House” had been extended to Matsuoka by the Soviet authorities which he expected him to accept. Tatekawa is giving a dinner on March 12 for Molotov, the latter having suddenly accepted an invitation extended to him many weeks ago. The Ambassador told me that whereas no progress has been made of late in connection with the fisheries convention the commercial discussions have advanced considerably but are now being delayed by the “lack of understanding” and “pettiness” of officials in the Japanese Foreign Office charged with passing on certain minor points. He said that the subject of transit rights is still the principal subject of discussion.

Tatekawa told me in the strictest confidence that Matsuoka’s visit to Berlin is “camouflage” as his real purpose is a desire to talk to Molotov in an endeavor to persuade him to enter into a political agreement with Japan. He said that Matsuoka had “nothing he wanted
to discuss” with Hitler or Mussolini and that his visit to Hitler is being made at German insistence and is primarily a courtesy to which he had agreed at the time of the signing of the Tripartite Pact. He expressed considerable doubt as to Matsuoka’s ability to “talk Molotov into an agreement” and seemed to derive some amusement from the fact that whereas Hitler had invited Matsuoka to Berlin for the purpose of endeavoring to “talk him into some kind of action” Matsuoka had accepted Hitler’s invitation in order to be afforded the opportunity of “talking Molotov into a political agreement”. The Ambassador expressed the opinion that Hitler would not endeavor to push Japan into war with the United States as he did not believe that Germany wished to go to war with the United States. He also said that he did not believe that his Government had any intention of “going further south than Indochina” and repeated his previous statement to me (see my 427, March 3, 7 p. m.) that only interference by the United States with Japanese oil supplies could precipitate Japanese action.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

762.04/472\(\text{a}\) : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, March 12, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received March 12—1 p. m.]

398. 1. We have received information from a reliable source that the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday told a close friend of his that he did not exclude the possibility of visiting England during the course of his travels in Europe.

2. One of my colleagues who saw Mr. Matsuoka yesterday tells me that Mr. Matsuoka affected to be annoyed over the exaggerated importance being placed on his forthcoming visit to Berlin. According to my informant Mr. Matsuoka said in effect, “I am told that Ribbentrop is a terrible liar but I want to see for myself whether he is or not. I would also like to visit France if possible as I would only be too happy to contribute toward saving France from further hardship; but I shall not make up my mind until I have arrived in Moscow.”

3. If the foregoing information is used by the Department it is important to avoid creating an assumption as to its source or that it emanates from this Embassy.

GREW

\(22\) Benito Mussolini, Italian Head of Government and Prime Minister.

\(24\) Not printed.
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, March 12, 1941—10 p. m.  
[Received March 12—2:23 p. m.]

400. Aside from the obviously inadequate official announcement that Matsuoka’s visit to Berlin and Rome is one of courtesy, no even reasonably authoritative information is available in Tokyo concerning the real purpose or hoped for results of his visits. Press comment has so far largely avoided any mention of an intention to stop over in Moscow either going or coming, and it is perhaps significant that the Hochi this morning had a paragraph relating to a possible stay in Moscow deleted by the censor.

Accordingly, the following views as to the significance and possible or probable aims of the visit are of necessity speculative in nature and are deduced solely from the present position of Japan both internal and external.

It is generally conceded, and indeed recently a prominent Japanese has frankly stated in private conversation with members of my staff, that one of the main purposes of the Tripartite Pact from the Japanese point of view was the expectation that it would result in the conclusion of a political agreement with the Soviet Union, which in turn would greatly facilitate the satisfactory termination of the conflict with China. These expectations have failed thus far to materialize and from the Japanese point of view the Tripartite Pact has produced no concrete benefits but has on the contrary seriously impaired Japanese relations with the United States and Great Britain.

In view of the fact that only in regard to Soviet Russia could Japan’s Axis partners conceivably exert any direct influence, it would appear logical that in so far as Matsuoka’s visit to Berlin has any specific or concrete purposes apart from general consultation and fact-finding it centers around the problem of Soviet-Japanese relations. On the basis of our information here as well as that repeated from the Embassy at Moscow there is little justification for the view that the immediate purpose of the Matsuoka visit is to conclude a prearranged agreement with Soviet Russia. It appears much more likely that Matsuoka is proceeding to Berlin to explain in person to Hitler the difficulty of Japan’s present position and Japan’s concern over the failure of the Russians to conclude an agreement with Japan on any reasonable terms, and to attempt to enlist Germany’s support in inducing the Soviet Government to modify its conditions to a point acceptable to Japan. It is of course not possible from here even to attempt to estimate what chances of success Matsuoka has of inducing Germany to undertake to bring pressure upon the Soviet Union, nor what chances
of success such pressure might have upon the policies of the Soviet Union. The effect on Japan’s policy in general and on its association with the Axis powers in particular of a refusal on the part of Hitler to exert pressure on the Soviet Union or the failure of his efforts if exerted, especially in view of the internal difficulties outlined in Embassy’s No. 340 [390], March 11, 8 p.m., is a matter of great potential importance.

Certain foreign circles in Tokyo incline to the view that the visit has been in large measure induced by Matsuoka’s well-known predilection for personal aggrandizement. The suggestions which he has thrown out that he might possibly visit England and France would indicate that he has not wholly thrust aside the tempting thought of assuming the role of mediator in the European conflict. I do not however believe that the personal factor was in itself a controlling element in his decision to undertake such an unprecedented visit but it is nevertheless true that Matsuoka is to some extent gambling his present and future position upon the success or failure of his present mission since if he returned empty-handed not only his position but that of the Konoye* Cabinet and the policies it represents would be dangerously compromised.

In the light of the foregoing it would appear that the real result of Matsuoka’s visit to Berlin (his visit to Rome is clearly one of courtesy designed to soothe the Italian amour propre) will probably not be revealed until his stop over in Moscow on his way home, and while as indicated above there is no real ground for believing that the signature of an agreement with Russia is the pre-arranged and immediate purpose of his visit, some such agreement would appear to be the hoped-for result.

Sent to the Department; repeated to Moscow. Moscow please repeat to Berlin and Rome.

GREW

762.94/481: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, March 18, 1941—2 p. m.

[Received 9:16 p.m.]

998–994. The German Government hopes that the result of Matsuoka’s visit will be to bind Japan thoroughly to the Axis. An impressive showing will be staged to convince him of the irresistible force of the German military machine and the certainty of its victory over England. In such efforts the German Government will have the

* Ante, p. 69.
** Prince Fumimaro Konoye, Japanese Prime Minister.
valuable aid of Ambassador Oshima who in his previous service here as Military Attaché and Ambassador has been a persistent partisan of Japan’s military alliance with the Axis. Further it seems altogether possible that Germany may be able to present Matsuoka with a spectacle of a new German political or military success in Greece or Yugoslavia.

A prominent German indicated recently in private conversation that while the Reich desired to clinch Japan’s adherence to the Axis it was worried lest Japan take advantage of the alliance to essay some extremist coup in the Pacific with England, bring the United States into the war, an occurrence, he said, which Hitler has been determined to prevent despite exasperation over American aid to Britain. According to this information the role assigned by the Axis to Japan is one of menace which would prevent all-out American naval and other aid to Britain but would stop just short of any action which might involve America in the war.

If this information is correct then the German line would seem to be to persuade Matsuoka that in a short time Germany will have decisively defeated or disabled Great Britain at which time it will really extend effective political and, if necessary, military support to Japanese claims. It may be assumed that Matsuoka will discuss Russia’s attitude toward Japan but so far I have personally heard no rumor or speculation here that Germany will be asked or is prepared to exert effective pressure to induce Russia to modify or abandon its anti-Japanese policies.

The view has been expressed here that Germany was disappointed at the tardiness of Matsuoka’s visit. The Foreign Office had hoped to have him arrive here while the Lease-Lend Bill hearings were still in progress and to stage a declaration which it was thought might have an effect on the measures taken under the bill. Apprehension is probably felt here lest continued statements be made or new measures occur in England or America before the time of the visit which might deter the Japanese Government and Matsuoka from entering into closer engagements with the Axis.

It is generally felt that Matsuoka’s absence from Japan is a tacit assurance that Japan will not undertake any provocative action during his absence. It is also not lost sight of that Matsuoka may have the hidden purpose of finding a formula to disengage his country from the folly of its adherence to the Three Power Pact in view of the determined attitude of the United States against totalitarian aggression which culminated in the Lease-Lend Bill, the passage of which may have prompted Matsuoka to accept suddenly a long-standing in-

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Approved March 11; 55 Stat. 31.
vitation to visit Germany and Italy. His visit to Italy undoubtedly is to form a first-hand impression of Italian public morale and military strength rather than a mere courtesy visit.

Repeated to Tokyo via Moscow and Rome.

Morris

701.94/1309

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] March 20, 1941.

After the conclusion of the general conference with the Soviet Ambassador this afternoon, I asked the Ambassador to remain in order that I might talk with him alone for a few minutes. I said to the Ambassador that in the same friendly, personal and confidential way in which I had spoken to him a few weeks ago, I desired him to know that this Government believed that the chief interest which Foreign Minister Matsuoka had in his present trip through Russia to Berlin and to Rome was to endeavor to find some basis of agreement with the Soviet Government of a political character which would result in tying up the Soviet Union in such a manner as to give Japan a free hand in the western part of the Pacific. I said that this Government believed that the policy which it itself had pursued in its relations with Japan during recent years, namely, leaving Japan in a state of complete uncertainty as to the action which this Government might take in the event that Japan pursued a policy which would be regarded here as directed against the interests of the United States, had been beneficial in its results. I said, as I had earlier said to the Ambassador in previous conversations, that I believed both the Soviet Union and the United States were equally interested in the maintenance of peace in the Pacific, as well as in the preservation of territorial integrity and independence of China, and I added that it was for that reason, as well as because of the friendly relations existing between the Soviet Union and the United States, that I had felt warranted in making these observations to the Ambassador.

The Ambassador expressed great appreciation of what I had said and said that he individually shared my opinion. I gathered, however, that he very definitely was of the opinion, from information which he had recently received (although he did not state this specifically), that Matsuoka was not going to make any effort to negotiate a political agreement in Moscow and was interested solely in getting to Berlin. The impression I received was that the Ambassador believed that it was more likely that Germany and Japan might reach an agreement directed against Russia than that Germany would attempt to bring

25 Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky; no record of general conference found in Department files.
pressure to bear upon Russia to reach a political agreement with Japan.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

762.04/484: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 24, 1941—3 p.m.
[Received March 25—7:30 a.m.]

581. For the President, Secretary and Under Secretary. On the invitation of the Japanese Ambassador I was afforded an opportunity of talking with Matsuoka for an hour this morning. Unfortunately he had not yet seen Molotov with whom he has an appointment late this afternoon only a few hours before his departure for Berlin. It is quite possible that he will see Stalin 29 at the same time. Matsuoka emphasized that his visit to Berlin is primarily for the purpose of making the personal acquaintance of Hitler and Ribbentrop whom he has not met and in order "to size them up." He said that it seemed absurd to him as the Foreign Minister of one of the signatories to the Tripartite Pact not to have made the personal acquaintance of Hitler and Ribbentrop after the lapse of six months and that he desires to hear from them personally exactly what they have in mind and what their plans are. He said it is his intention to ask Hitler point blank whether he intends to attack the Soviet Union as it is of vital importance to Japan to know Germany's future intentions toward the Soviets. I judge that any decisions Matsuoka will make on his return to Moscow will be predicated on the information given him in Berlin as to whether or not Germany contemplates an attack on the Soviet Union.

When I asked Matsuoka whether it was his intention to visit Vichy he said he hoped to do so and that he also had in mind "if he could arrange it within the limited time at his disposal" to visit the capitals of several of the occupied countries.

In so far as concerns the progress of the war, Matsuoka expressed the opinion that the Germans have a great advantage in their ability by submarines and aircraft to seriously impede British imports but he did not give me the impression that he regards the British position as hopeless. He said he has "some ideas" on the subject of the new order both in Europe and the Far East and also on the general subject of world peace which he intends [apparent omission] in his reaction.

In so far as concerns the Far East he was emphatic in his statements that Japan would under no circumstances attack Singapore or any of

29 Josif Vissarionovich Stalin, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
the Dutch, British, or American possessions and insisted that Japan has no territorial ambitions. He said that Japan was prepared at any time to join the United States in guaranteeing the territorial integrity or independence of the Philippines. He referred to the outcome of his mediation of the Thailand-French Indochina dispute as evidence of Japan's lack of territorial ambitions. Matsuoka said that Japan would not go to war with the United States. He added that his reading of American history indicated that it was the United States which went to war with other countries and that should a conflict take place it would be only as the result of affirmative action by the United States.

Matsuoka expressed his ardent desire to liquidate the war in China as soon as possible. He said that Chiang Kai-shek was relying upon American help and that the President was in a position to bring the Japanese-Chinese conflict to an end at any time on terms satisfactory to all concerned if he would use his influence in this direction with Chiang Kai-shek. When I asked him whether he had in mind terms which he was convinced would be entirely acceptable to Chiang Kai-shek and of which the President would approve, he said that he had recently sent instructions to Nomura to take up the subject with the President and to discuss with him the terms upon which the Japanese-Chinese war could be brought to an end. He said that the present was the time "for statesmen to take decisive action" and that "what matters are the big things and not the little ones" and expressed the view that the President has a splendid opportunity "to clear up the entire situation in the Far East" by discussing with Nomura the terms on which the war with China could be terminated. He then made the following comment:

"I wish Roosevelt and Hull would trust me. I do not blame them for not having confidence on the record of the last few years but if they will trust me I will prove to them that we have no territorial or economic ambition and if an understanding should be reached which we all regard as reasonable and elements in Japan should oppose it I would fight them to put it through."

In reply to this statement I merely suggested to him that he give Nomura the most explicit instructions as to exactly what he had in mind as the basis for terminating the war with China and that he leave nothing to chance or misunderstanding. At this point he was again emphatic in his insistence that the terms he had in mind "would be acceptable."

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30 See also vol. v, pp. 1 ff.
31 Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, Japanese Ambassador in the United States.
32 With regard to the Japanese Ambassador's visit to President Roosevelt, see memorandum by the Secretary of State, March 14, p. 77; see also subsequent correspondence.
Matsuoka said that any fears expressed in the United States, that supplies of tin and rubber might be interfered with, were "ridiculous" as obviously these commodities were for consumption in the only market large enough to absorb them—the United States—and that it would be folly to interfere with their export to the United States.

As to Japanese-Soviet relations, he was vehement in his denunciation of communism and said that under no circumstances would the Japanese people ever accept communism. He added that any clash between Japan and the United States could only benefit the Soviet Union and would unquestionably result in the "communication" of China and probably all of the continental Far East. He admitted frankly that it is his intention to endeavor to reach a political agreement with the Soviet Government but intimated that he is not disposed to pay an excessive price and that he has little confidence the Soviet Government would keep any such agreement longer than suited its purpose. He expressed the view that it is in the interest of the Soviet Union to encourage war between the United States and Japan and that he was well aware of the harm that would result to Japan from any such conflict. He added that if the United States defeated Japan the whole Asiatic mainland would be "communized" but that "Japan would arise 30 years later stronger than before."

Matsuoka asked me if I had any reason to believe that an understanding exists between Germany and the Soviet Union with respect to Finland to which I replied that I had heard of none. He expressed the opinion that the failure of the Soviet Union to take action in the Balkans to check Germany was the result of fear.

Upon leaving Matsuoka, I expressed the hope that he would lunch or dine with Mrs. Steinhart and myself upon his return to Moscow, to which he replied that he would be glad to do so "provided I stay over at all". When I expressed my surprise, saying that I understood he intended to stay at least 2 or 3 days in Moscow, he said, "That is by no means certain, but will depend upon the outcome of my talks."

Please repeat all or part of the foregoing to Tokyo only.

Steinhart

762.94/485: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhart) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 24, 1941—midnight.
[Received March 25—9:02 a.m.]

586. The Rumanian Minister told me this afternoon that Matsuoka received the Chiefs of Mission of the Axis and associated powers this morning and addressed the following remarks to them:

1. Japan was "one hundred percent with the Axis."
2. His visit to Berlin and Rome was for the purpose of conferring with Japan's "allies" as under existing conditions no nation acted alone but only as part of a "bloc" and that the "character of his visit" in Moscow on his return trip would depend entirely upon the result of his conversations in Berlin and Rome. He then made the categoric statement that he would not go "beyond Berlin and Rome and had no intention of going elsewhere". It is interesting to contrast this statement with his remark to me that he desired and intended if possible to visit Vichy and several occupied capitals (see my 581, March 24, 3 p. m.).

3. Japan wants peace and had not entered the Tripartite Pact to make war but to maintain peace and specifically to "prevent the United States from entering the war." He was convinced that the United States would not enter the war but if it did Japan would do likewise and fight with its allies.

4. According to his information, the United States could not "increase its production substantially before June" and could not give "decisive help" to England before the end of 1941. By then England would be beaten although, of course, an empire as big as the British could not collapse "in a day or two."

5. After the collapse of the British Isles, the United States would "not continue the struggle" but would withdraw and "think of its own interests and affairs." He said that the continuance of the war by the United States aided by the British fleet and dominions was a "chimera". The possibility that England could continue the war by transferring its capital to Canada or elsewhere was "to his personal knowledge" an illusion.

At the close of Matsuoka's remarks, the Bulgarian Minister asked him his ideas concerning the Balkan situation to which he replied that he believed Germany and Italy would succeed in persuading Greece to conclude peace "now that Yugoslavia is entering the Tripartite" and that he could not imagine that Greece would continue a hopeless fight against two great powers. Matsuoka added that as soon as Greece made peace Turkey would not be able to do anything and "peace would be assured in the Balkans." He said he did not believe Greece could expect effective help from Britain sufficient to enable it to continue resistance and expressed the opinion that as the Greeks were "intelligent" they would consider their own best interests.

At this point the Rumanian Minister remarked that it seemed to him that everything depended on how the Greeks "played their cards" and on the conditions Germany might offer as a basis for peace, to which Matsuoka replied that he knew and could state definitely that Germany had no desire to force the issue and would do its best to convince Greece by diplomatic means that it was in its interest to make peace.
The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 25, 1941—3 p. m.
[Received March 25—12:41 p. m.]

587. The Moscow press today publishes an official announcement stating that yesterday Matsuoka accompanied by Tatekawa was received by Molotov and that Stalin was present at the meeting which lasted more than an hour.

The press also reports the departure of Matsuoka for Berlin last evening.

STEINHARDT

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, March 29, 1941—10 a. m.
[Received March 29—3 a. m.]

480. The following background information concerning Matsuoka's trip was received from a member of the immediate family of former Ambassador to Moscow, Togo.

1. Last October a political agreement between the Soviet Union and Japan was virtually ready for signature. (This confirms reports current in Moscow at that time.) But Matsuoka desired that “his personal friend Tatekawa” should have the honor of signing it and therefore sent him to Moscow to replace Togo who had conducted the entire negotiations. However, following Tatekawa's arrival the Soviet position stiffened and impossibly high conditions were asked for an agreement. In January Matsuoka asked Togo's advice as to the advisability of making a trip to Moscow in an endeavor to straighten matters out. Togo strongly recommended such a trip as the only means of obtaining any agreement with the Soviet Union.

2. “Every informed Japanese” is aware that one of the immediate objects of Matsuoka's visit is to complete an agreement with Russia and in as much as his personal prestige is therefore so deeply involved, it is expected in Foreign Office circles that he will make every effort to return with some form of agreement with the Soviet Union.

The foregoing information of course, relates exclusively to the Soviet aspect of Matsuoka's trip.

Sent to the Department, repeated to Moscow.

GREW
Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] March 31, 1941.

The British Ambassador called to see me at his request.

With regard to the inquiry contained in the attached aide-mémoire relative to Mr. Matsuoka’s trip to Europe, I subsequently told Lord Halifax that I had discussed the question with Secretary Hull that the reaction of this Government would be that if Mr. Matsuoka officially asked for the opportunity of making a visit to Washington, this Government would reply that the United States would be glad to welcome him, as it would any other distinguished official of a country with which we are on friendly terms. I said, however, that this Government would take no initiative in the matter.

Lord Halifax replied that this was exactly his own point of view as to the attitude which his Government should take.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

762.04/503 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 1, 1941—2 p. m.
[Received 8:25 p. m.]

1215. In diplomatic and journalistic circles in Berlin, opinion seems to be about equally divided as to whether Matsuoka’s visit has resulted in Japanese agreement to undertake some important military action in concert with the Axis Powers.

As far as is known none of the diplomatic missions of neutral countries here pretends to have any authentic information as to what was said in the discussions with Matsuoka. It is known, however, that Matsuoka said in private conversation to a personal friend here that he was urging on German officials and would urge at Rome that the Axis should take no step which would involve any extension of the war. He is also quoted as having said that he desired to pay a visit to Pétain and that the Germans were willing to have him do so but the Italian Government had registered strenuous objection.

His friends inquired whether he had any thought of continuing his trip to London and Washington and Matsuoka said that he would like nothing better but that such a trip would obviously be unwelcome to Berlin and that there were also against it the difficulties of travel and

* Not printed.
the necessity of not being too long absent from Japan. In the conversation reference was made to the views of a former foreign Ambassador in Japan to the effect that Japan’s policy must aim toward the preservation of good relations with England. Matsuoka while avoiding direct comment on this policy stated that he had the greatest respect for its author and his views. The other party to the conversation professes to be unable to judge whether Matsuoka was sincere in his expressions and intimations that Japan was against involvement in the war, whether he was indulging in mystification or was merely being polite toward an individual who, he felt rather sure, was not in sympathy with Germany’s present policy. It is known that Matsuoka deliberately sought to bring about this conversation.

Repeated to Tokyo via Moscow.

MORRIS

740.0011 European War 1939/9559 : Telegram
The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 2, 1941—10 p. m.
[Received April 2—9:45 p. m.]

1288. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. When I was at Chequers with the Prime Minister ⁴⁴ at the last weekend, he allowed me to read the draft of a personal note he planned to send Mr. Matsuoka, Japanese Foreign Minister. He told me the Japanese Ambassador ⁴⁵ had asked the Foreign Office to facilitate his air passage to Lisbon to meet his Foreign Minister. It was the Prime Minister’s intention to request the Ambassador to deliver this note to Mr. Matsuoka in person.

The Japanese Ambassador for some reason, however, decided not to make the trip. The Foreign Office at my request has kindly made a copy of the note available and Sir Alexander Cadogan ⁴⁶ informed Johnson ⁴⁷ that it was cabled to Sir Stafford Cripps for delivery to Mr. Matsuoka on his arrival at Moscow, with the explanation that it was originally intended to send the note by the hand of the Japanese Ambassador.

Saturday, in returning my call, the Japanese Ambassador, after customary polite exchanges, told me that he and Mr. Kennedy ⁴⁸ had been friendly. The Ambassador then told me that he felt it was

⁴⁴ Winston Churchill.
⁴⁵ Mamoru Shigemitsu.
⁴⁶ British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
⁴⁷ Herschel V. Johnson, Minister Counselor of Embassy in the United Kingdom.
⁴⁸ Joseph P. Kennedy, former Ambassador in the United Kingdom.
necessary that the three great naval powers when peace returned
should work together. To this I made no comment. He made no
mention of the contemplated trip to the continent nor of the note
to Mr. Matsuoka referred to above. The Ambassador was most
courteous and we had a pleasant interview.

The text of the Prime Minister’s note to Mr. Matsuoka follows:

“I take advantage of the facilities with which we have provided
your Ambassador to send you a friendly message of sincerity and
good will.

I venture to suggest a few questions, which it seems to me deserve the
attention of the Imperial Japanese Government and people:

1. Will Germany, without the command of the sea or the command
of the British daylight air, be able to invade and conquer Great Brit-
ain in the spring, summer, or autumn of 1941? Will Germany try to
do so? Would it not be in the interests of Japan to wait until these
questions have answered themselves?

2. Will the German attack on British shipping be strong enough to
prevent American aid from reaching British shores with Great Brit-
ain and the United States transforming their whole industry to war
purposes?

3. Did Japan’s accession to the triple pact make it more likely or
less likely that the United States would come into the present war?

4. If the United States entered the war at the side of Great Britain,
and Japan ranged herself with the Axis Powers, would not the naval
superiority of the two English speaking nations enable them to dispose
of the Axis Powers in Europe before turning their united strength
upon Japan?

5. Is Italy a strength or a burden to Germany? Is the Italian fleet
as good at sea as on paper? Is it as good on paper as it used to be?

6. Will the British air force be stronger than the German air force
before the end of 1941, and far stronger before the end of 1942?

7. Will the many countries which are being held down by the Ger-
man army and Gestapo learn to like the Germans more or will they
like them less as the years pass by?

8. Is it true that the production of steel in the United States during
1941 will be 75,000,000 tons, and in Great Britain about 12½, making
a total of nearly 90,000,000 tons? If Germany should happen to be
defeated, as she was last time, would not the 7,000,000 tons steel pro-
duction of Japan be inadequate for a single handed war?

From the answers to these questions may spring the avoidance by
Japan of a serious catastrophe, and a marked improvement in the rela-
tions between Japan and the two great sea powers of the West.” 50

WINANT

50 In telegram No. 534, April 10, 10 p. m., the Ambassador in Japan reported
that in the text of the note given him by the British Ambassador in Japan, who
was under instruction to present it to the Japanese Prime Minister, the last
sentence ended as follows: “between Japan and Great Britain, the great sea
power of the West.” (740.0011 European War 1939/3834)
761.94/1301: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 3, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received April 4—3:45 a.m.]

666. For the President, Secretary, and Under Secretary. The Japanese Ambassador last night gave me the following account of the meeting between Matsuoka, Stalin, Molotov and himself with Miyakawa, Secretary of the Japanese Embassy as interpreter:

"Molotov greeted us and a few moments later Stalin walked into the room. The meeting lasted exactly one hour. Matsuoka at once started to talk about Japanese ideology and became more and more enthusiastic as he proceeded. His lecture continued for 58 minutes. He began with the status of the Emperor, continued through the structure of Japanese political and economic life and concluded by stating that the Japanese were not Communists politically or economically but that there was a close parallel between communism and Japanese family life. When Matsuoka had finished Stalin remarked that in spite of the difference between Soviet and Japanese ideology he could see no reason why 'we cannot be friends' and turning to Molotov asked him whether he shared that opinion. Molotov agreed. That was the end of the interview."

The Ambassador said that no "business" of any kind was discussed. He does not expect Matsuoka to see Stalin again on his return visit although he said the possibility could not be excluded. He expects Matsuoka to "talk business" with Molotov. I asked the Ambassador's opinion as to the prospects for a political agreement. He replied that he did not think the prospects were any too promising but that "Matsuoka will have to do something."

The Ambassador expects Matsuoka to arrive in Moscow on April 7 although that date is not yet certain and to depart either on the 10th or 13th. He said that Matsuoka had been anxious to visit Vichy, Paris and at least one or two of the occupied capitals but that the Germans "apparently did not want him to" and doubted that Matsuoka would press the point.

Repeated to Tokyo. ____________________________

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/0559: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant)

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1941—8 p.m.

1130. Your 1288, April 2, 10 p.m. This Government believes that the question asked in paragraph numbered 4 of section 2 of your
telegram under reference might as it stands give rise to undesirable inferences. We are confident that the British Government would not wish to cause or to encourage an assumption on the part of any other nation that the British Empire might temporarily abandon the defense of its interests in some particular region. As for this Government, we do not wish that any other government make any assumption that the United States will not expect or will not be able to give adequate and appropriate protection to its interests in any area.

Please bring these observations orally and in strict confidence to the attention of an appropriate official of the British Government.

Hull

761.9411/73: Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, April 5, 1941—9 [a.m.?]
[Received April 5—6:50 a.m.]

127. The Foreign Minister informed me yesterday that he had received a “reliable but unconfirmed” report from Moscow to the effect that when Matsuoka was recently received by Stalin and Molotov he approached the latter and suggested the continuation of negotiations said to have been initiated during the incumbency of Litvinov as Soviet Foreign Minister for the conclusion of a nonaggression pact between Japan and the Soviet Union; and that Matsuoka was informed in reply that while it is the policy of the Soviet Union to negotiate nonaggression pacts with its neighbors in the case of Japan it would be necessary to bring about a restoration of the status quo ante of the Portsmouth Treaty before the Soviet Union would consider the conclusion of such a pact with Japan. The Foreign Minister, who seemed to think that the report had some basis in fact, expressed the view that the Russian counterproposal was tantamount to a "polite refusal" of Matsuoka’s proposal.

Sent to the Department, repeated to Peking.

Johnson

765.94/152: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

Rome, April 5, 1941—6 p.m.
[Received 7:40 p.m.]

[469.] Embassy’s 456 and 457, April 4. I have learned on the best authority that during his conversations with the Pope and the

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40 Wang Chung-hui.
43 Neither printed.
Cardinal Secretary of State Matsuoka stressed the following points:
(1) In China, Japan was conducting a campaign against communism, not a war against the Chinese people, (2) an extension and prolongation of the European war could only favor the cause of communism, (3) Japan had no desire to be drawn into this war.

Repeated to Berlin.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War 1939/9565 : Telegram
The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, April 5, 1941—9 p.m.

218. There is repeated below for your information the substance of a telegram dated April 2 from the American Chargé d’Affaires at Berlin:

The Chargé has been informed that Hitler in a recent interview with leading industrialists in the Rhineland indicated to his listeners, inter alia, that Germany in the near future would compel the Soviet Government to sign an agreement with Japan, leaving Japan free on its front to engage the British in hostilities. He is said to have added that in the event Russia failed to comply, occupation by Germany of a part of the Soviet Union, including the district of Baku, would ensue. By that means the oil supply of the Soviet Union would be cut off.

The Chargé states that, although the rumor of a possible invasion by Germany of the Soviet Union has had unusual circulation, the foregoing report is the only one with any stamp of authenticity which has come to him.

HULL

762.94/514 : Telegram
The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 6, 1941—2 p.m.
[Received April 7—6:30 a.m.]

1298. While Matsuoka was received by Ribbentrop and lunched with Hitler in his 2-day stop in Berlin en route back from Rome it was quite apparent that his visit was treated as one of a personal character since he stopped at the Japanese Embassy and there were no public demonstrations or ceremonies in connection with his arrival and departure. In fact there was a marked lack of public attention in contrast to the fanfare and pomp of his arrival. This lack of outward manifestations of importance on the occasion of Matsuoka’s second visit strengthens the impression that no concrete results had been
gained by Berlin during the course of the official visit. It is largely felt that otherwise the German authorities would have made a point of showing greater honors to the departing guest.

Morris

762.04/516: Telegram

_The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State_

Moscow, April 8, 1941—8 p. m.  
[Received April 9—5:55 p. m.]

709. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. Matsuoka and members of his staff and the Japanese Ambassador and his staff were my guests at lunch today. The following is a summary of the remarks made to me by Matsuoka in the course of an extended and frank conversation after the luncheon:

1. Matsuoka said that neither Ribbentrop nor Hitler had asked for any commitments of any kind and he requested me to advise the President that he has not made or given any commitments whatsoever to Ribbentrop, Hitler or Mussolini. Matsuoka said he had made it clear to Ribbentrop and Hitler that as Japan had entered the Tripartite Pact to “preserve peace” Japan would not consider itself obligated to declare war on the United States were Germany to do so but that if the United States were to declare war on Germany the situation might be different. He said that should Germany declare war on the United States, which he does not anticipate, he hoped the United States would make no move in the Pacific until Japan had had an opportunity to make her position clear. Later in the conversation he said that it must be understood that Japan would adhere to her obligations under the Tripartite Pact but emphasized that Japan was not obligated to follow Germany in an attack upon the United States.

He said that both Hitler and Ribbentrop had told him that they desired to limit the sphere of the war and that they had no desire to become involved in a war with the United States. They even suggested that he should take steps to discourage anti-American propaganda or agitation in Japan.

He said that he had expressed both to Ribbentrop and Hitler his desire for peace and that they had replied that they were equally anxious to bring this about and hoped to do so this year.

Matsuoka asserted that he had been impressed by Hitler whom he characterized as a genius and said that in none of his talks with him had Hitler exhibited any of the excitable characteristics generally ascribed to him but that he had been calm and reasonable.
He said that Ribbentrop had expressed admiration for the way in which the British were fighting, voiced the opinion that the British Empire should not be "destroyed". He said that Hitler firmly believed he could reduce Britain by submarine and aerial warfare this spring and summer and that an invasion would not be necessary but that all preparations had been made for it and that it would be attempted should it become necessary.

He told me that the Germans were fully prepared to invade the Soviet Union but had no intention of doing so unless the Soviets substantially reduced deliveries to Germany. He expressed the opinion that the rumors of a German attack on the Soviet Union had been given out by the Germans in order to frighten the Soviets into maintaining deliveries.

He said that Italy was already under the control of the Germans, that German officers and officials were very much in evidence and that they had received express instructions not to "look down or talk down" to the Italians. Because of the mutual personal admiration between Hitler and Mussolini he was convinced that there was no possibility of the English driving a wedge between the two countries and that Italy would stand or fall with Germany. He said that Mussolini had not given any evidence of discouragement at his recent reverses and had expressed confidence that Italy would shortly "stage a comeback".

Matsuoka said that Ribbentrop had expressed the opinion to him that the coup d'état in Yugoslavia had been engineered by the Soviets, whereas he had expressed his own opinion that the British had been responsible for this development.

2. Matsuoka said that Hitler and Ribbentrop had urged him to come to some agreement with the Soviets and that he had told them he was desirous of doing so but would not "pay an excessive price". He said that in his three and one-half hour talk with Molotov last night he had gotten nowhere "as the Soviet demands were excessive". He expects to see Molotov again tomorrow at which time he hopes definitely to ascertain whether there is any possibility for an agreement.

He said that he was beginning to doubt the Soviet desire to reach an agreement with Japan except upon its own terms and that he was not too sure that they could be counted upon to carry out any agreement they might undertake. He said he did not see how he could consent to major territorial concessions as he did not believe the Japanese public would accept important concessions and he had endeavored to make this clear to Molotov last night. He said that the United States could be indifferent to the Soviet Union but that Japan would "either have to come to an agreement with the Soviet Union or fight".

3. Matsuoka indicated as he has on each previous occasion that I have talked with him his earnest desire to bring the war in China to
an end and his belief that the President could accomplish this by intimating to Chiang Kai-shek that the United States would withhold any further assistance to China if Chiang Kai-shek refused to accept "fair and reasonable terms". He repeatedly emphasized that if the President and Mr. Hull would "trust him" and assist him in bringing about peace in China everything in the Far East would be cleared up to their satisfaction.

4. Matsuoka stated that because of his desire to see Leningrad, his old post, he may defer his departure until the 13th and plans to go to Leningrad tomorrow night.

Repeated to Tokyo.

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**STEINHARDT**

762.34/517: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, April 9, 1941—11 p. m.
[Received April 9—9 p. m.]

722. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 709, April 8, 8 p. m. The following personal letter from Matsuoka marked strictly private has just been delivered to me. In view of his imminent departure I should appreciate immediate instructions as to the response I should make to his request for a paraphrase of my report to you of our conversation.

"My [dear] Steinhardt: Really I do not know how to thank you and Mrs. Steinhardt for the most pleasant luncheon given me yesterday.

May I ask you to be good enough to favor me with a paraphrased extract of your cablegram to the Washington Government, namely, of course, the parts setting forth my remarks in our conversation so that I may be sure that I correctly stated what I meant. Would it not be well at this time also to inform your President and the Secretary of State that a report printed in the London Times of April 4 alleging to be a portion of my conversation with His Holiness the Pope at Rome has not a shred of truth. The report was to the effect that there took place an exchange of views between myself and the Pope on questions of peace during which I am supposed to have told the Pope that although Japan was faithful to the Tripartite Pact she was prepared to cooperate in preventing the extension of hostilities to Yugoslavia and the United States of America. It was also reported that I regretted the fact that the Pope was supporting the Chiang Kai Shek regime which was receiving assistance from the Soviet and that Japan was in a position to expect support from the Vatican because she was prosecuting an anti-Communist war.

I believe that the President might just as well be further informed that I would assure him of utmost efforts on my part to redress wrongs
there might be found in China with regard to the legitimate American interests as soon as the war is ended together with my guarantee as to the free flow of commerce between the United States and the South Seas including of course such commodities as rubber, tin, and oil which America is in need of.

I may add in this connection frankly that Japan will not in future condone capitalistic exploitation in China or elsewhere where Japan can exercise considerable restraining influence. As the President and Mr. Hull must be aware, Japan's conception of a new order in greater East Asia is as I publicly stated on more than one occasion "no conquest, no oppression, no exploitation" and I straight [stand?] on this policy. I need hardly say that there are still a great many people in my country as in all other countries who are bent upon exploiting backward nations financially and economically, but I am committed with Prince Konoye to battle against it. Our group in Japan will fight against such an attempt, the more if it were made by Japan.

With very best wishes to you and your charming wife, Sincerely yours, Y. Matsuoka."

STEINHARDT

761.9411/74 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 10, 1941—1 p. m.
[Received 2:27 p. m.]

726. The Chinese Ambassador 43 told me last night that he had seen Lozovski 44 "several times recently" and that the latter had emphasized that if Japan wished a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union "it would be very difficult [?]" for the Soviet Union to refuse.

STEINHARDT

762.94/517 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt)

WASHINGTON, April 10, 1941—7 p. m.

448. Your 722, April 9, 8 [11] p. m. The Department, while not viewing with favor establishment of precedents for such action, would have no objection to your giving, if you see fit, a memorandum covering the substance of the record of the conversation which you have in the Embassy.

Department offers suggestions as follows: (1) you might reply to Matsuoka that you would be ready to give him orally, should you have

43 Shao Li-tzu.
44 Soviet Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
occasion to meet again, the substance of your recollection of the conversation; or (2) you might suggest that Matsuoka himself give you a written record of what he remembers himself to have said or what he intended to say, adding that you would be glad to communicate such record to your Government; or (3) you might offer to exchange records recording your respective recollections of what was said; or (4) if it would be helpful to you to do so, you might state, as on your own responsibility, that you make your reports with maximum possible of accuracy to your Government in confidence and that divulging of the contents thereof might easily lead to misunderstanding and would not be in conformity with sound practice, adding that you would be glad to supplement your report with any statement or statements that Matsuoka may care to make in amendment of or in substitution for what he said to you.

Department leaves the matter to your discretion.

Hull

762.04/519: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 11, 1941—5 p. m.

[Received 9 : 50 p. m.]

738. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. Department’s 448, April 10, 7 p. m. I very much appreciate the Department’s constructive suggestions and particularly the discretion which it left to me.

As I deemed it preferable not to put anything in writing, I called on Matsuoka this afternoon and read to him the following list of excerpts from my report of our previous conversation: (1) that he had made no commitments in Berlin or Rome; (2) that Japan had entered the Tripartite Pact to “preserve the peace”; (3) that Japan was not obligated to go to war with the United States but that if the United States declared war on Germany the situation might be different; (4) that Matsuoka does not anticipate that Germany will declare war on the United States but if so hopes that the United States will make no move in the Pacific until Japan has made its position clear; (5) that Japan will adhere to its obligations under the Tripartite Pact; (6) that Hitler and Ribbentrop had expressed to him the desire to limit the sphere of the war and had stated that they had no desire to become involved in a war with the United States; (7) that Hitler and Ribbentrop had suggested to him that he take steps to discourage anti-American agitation in Japan; (8) that he, Ribbentrop, and Hitler had all expressed a desire for peace; (9) that he had been favorably impressed
by Hitler personally; (10) that Ribbentrop had expressed admiration; (11) that Hitler expected to win the war by submarine and aerial activities against Britain and would attempt an invasion of Britain only if necessary; (12) that Italy was largely already under the control of the Germans and that he could see no possibility for Britain to drive a wedge between Germany and Italy; (13) that he had made substantially no progress in his talks with Molotov due to the excessive Soviet demands; (14) that the United States could be indifferent to the Soviet Union but that Japan must come to an agreement or become embroiled; (15) that he desired to put an end to the war in China and had suggested that the President could accomplish this by indicating to Chiang Kai-shek that the United States would refuse further assistance if he did not accept a fair and reasonable peace; (16) that he had expressed a desire that the President and Mr. Hull trust him.

As I read the foregoing Matsuoka categorically indicated his approval of each statement. His only comment was in connection with items 3, 8, 10 and 15 which he amplified as follows:

As to item 3, he remarked that he considered that under the Tripartite Pact Japan is obligated to go to war with the United States should the United States declare war on Germany but that, of course, "We would confer with Germany first."

As to item 8, he said that Hitler and Ribbentrop while expressing their desire for peace had made it clear to him that they did not consider that there was any possibility for peace at the present time and Hitler had emphasized to him several times that there would be no peace "unless England capitulated."

As to item 10, he amplified the same by stating that Ribbentrop had expressed the opinion to him that Britain was stronger defensively at the present time than "when the war started."

As to item 15, he amplified the same by stating that peace between Japan and China could only result from direct negotiation between the two countries as the Japanese public would not accept an intermediary.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1314: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, [April 11, 1941—10 p.m.?]
[Received April 11—10: 34 p.m.]

745. I asked Matsuoka this afternoon what progress he was making in his political negotiations with the Soviet Government. He replied
that the Soviets are no longer asking for the cession of lower Sakhalin but are seeking the surrender of the Japanese concessions in northern Sakhalin for which they are prepared to pay compensation. He said that he rather feared the reaction in Japan to the surrender of these concessions and that he is therefore undecided as to what course to pursue. He concluded with the remark that in any event he will leave on 13th whether an agreement has been reached or not.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

741.04/486: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 12, 1941—5 p. m.
[Received April 13—9 a. m.]

754. For the President [and] the Secretary. Kase ⁴⁶ called on me this afternoon and said that Matsuoka desired to meet the British Ambassador but that due to the fact that the Japanese Ambassador had been offended by Cripps’ attitude toward him ever since his arrival in Moscow (see my despatch No. 1179, February 28, 1941 ⁴⁶) Matsuoka was unable to invite Cripps to call on him. Kase accordingly suggested that Matsuoka should call on me at 12:30 tomorrow and that Cripps be present “by accident”. He stressed the fact that Matsuoka did not wish the Japanese Ambassador to know of the meeting nor the Germans or Italians and that he was desirous that the meeting should not receive publicity.

I pointed out to him that under the conditions existing in Moscow of close and constant surveillance of Chiefs of Mission by the Soviet authorities and foreign press representatives, it would be impossible for such a meeting to take place apparently “by accident” and that publicity with various undesirable implications was bound to follow. When I suggested as an alternative that I arrange to have the British Ambassador meet Matsuoka elsewhere Kase demurred on the grounds that Matsuoka did not wish Tatekawa to know of the meeting, since Tatekawa would object to his meeting Cripps.

Towards the close of the conversation Kase stated that Matsuoka intended to attend the Moscow Art Theater this evening. I stated that Mrs. Steinhardt and I also would attend that theater this evening and that the British Ambassador and Lady Cripps would be our only

⁴⁶ Toshikazu Kase, member of the Japanese Foreign Office staff accompanying Mr. Matsuoka.
⁴⁶ Not printed.
guests, thus affording Matsuoka an opportunity to meet the Ambassador and talk with him during the intermission without evoking any comment. I pointed out that such a meeting would appear to be quite casual inasmuch as a substantial part of the Diplomatic Corps is usually to be found at the Moscow Art Theater.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/1941 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 12, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received April 13—9:26 a. m.]

757. For the President, the Secretary, and Under Secretary. The British Ambassador told me this afternoon that he has been endeavoring for several days through the Japanese Embassy to obtain an appointment to see Matsuoka for the purpose of delivering Churchill’s message to him (see my 744, April 11, 9 p. m.47) but that, although he had spoken personally with Embassy [member?] with rank of Minister, he has not been able to obtain an appointment. When I explained that the purpose of my invitation to him to attend the theater (see my 754, April 12, 5 p. m.) was to bring about a meeting between Matsuoka and himself he said that he would take Churchill’s message with him and hand it to Matsuoka during one of the intermissions. He remarked in this connection that he had decided that should the Japanese Embassy continue its refusal to arrange an appointment for him with Matsuoka he would not attempt to deliver Churchill’s message in any other manner and commented that the present arrangement of course overcome the difficulty. He gave no evidence that he realized that his refusal to enter into relations with the Japanese Ambassador since his arrival in Moscow had been the cause of his failure to obtain an interview with Matsuoka.

The Ambassador informed me that he received a telegram from Eden this morning stating that King George of Greece had informed him that Prince Paul of Yugoslavia recently stated to the King that Hitler had told him that he must eventually attack the Soviet Union “to insure Germany’s sources of supply” but that he would choose his own time.

The Ambassador also told me that in the course of a conversation between Eden and Saracoglu, Eden advised the Turkish Foreign

47 Not printed, but see vol. v, p. 128, footnote 62.
Minister that Britain was not in a position at present to furnish adequate war material to both Greece and Turkey and felt that its first obligation was to Greece. In consequence, and recognizing the inadequacy of Turkish armaments, Britain would not expect Turkey to come to the assistance of Greece but merely to maintain a defensive position for the time being. Thus the failure of Turkey to take offensive action at the time of the German attack on Greece was explained—having British consent. He added that the present British line of defense from Lake Okhrida to the Aegean south of Salonika had been agreed upon in the light of the foregoing.

Cripps further stated that he sent a note to Vyshinski yesterday which constituted a review of Soviet errors of policy during the past 18 months and concluded with the admonition that a joint Soviet-Turkish demand upon Germany that it vacate the Balkans might be the last opportunity for the Soviet Government (and Turkey) to avoid an attack by Germany. In this connection he said he had learned from what he described as “a reliable source” that Germany has evacuated the civilian population from Königsberg and moved eight divisions to the Moldavian frontier obviously intended as a threat to Odessa.

STEINHARDT

741.94/487: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 13, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received April 13—3:13 p.m.]

761. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 754, April 12, 5 p.m. and 757, April 12, 8 p.m. The meeting between Matsuoka and Cripps took place last night at the theater as arranged without attracting any attention. In the course of their conversation, Matsuoka assured Cripps that Japan had no hostile intentions against Britain or British possessions in the Far East. He expressed the hope that the war would not spread and talked in a generally conciliatory vein. Cripps handed him a copy of Churchill’s message which Matsuoka surreptitiously slipped into his pocket without looking at it, obviously in order that it should not be noticed that he had received a document.

As we were walking back to our seats, I asked Matsuoka whether he had reached an understanding with Molotov to which he replied

*Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, Soviet Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
that he anticipated signing "a limited" agreement in the nature of a "pact of neutrality" before his departure. (See my 1638, November 28, 7 p. m.) 436. Chauvel 50 called at the Embassy this afternoon in great excitement at the news of the signing of the Russo-Japanese nonaggression pact. 51 He said it had come as a complete surprise to the French Foreign Office and in his opinion meant one thing: an immediate Japanese attack on Singapore or at least on the Dutch East Indies. He said that the Japanese Embassy here had for some time indicated that no Japanese move toward the south need be expected until the signing of a pact with Russia and that if such a pact were signed it would come soon after. From the Japanese and Axis point of view it was he said obviously a move to get us involved in the Pacific and to reduce our aid to Britain.

As to the Russian attitude, he was completely at a loss to explain it. It seemed quite contrary to the whole trend of Russian policy as shown by the Soviet attitude in Bulgaria, by the Russo-Yugoslav pact, the Russian announcement with respect to Hungary and the many general indications that Russia is worried at Germany's penetration in the Balkans and threat to the Ukraine. If such is really Russia's policy, he cannot see why she would sign a pact with Japan which is bound to weaken the British cause. His only possible explanation is that the outward Soviet attitude towards Germany's Balkan advance has been as false as the Russian negotiations with France and Britain which were terminated with such a shock by the signing of the Russo-German pact in August 1939. 52

He reiterated with much pessimism that we must expect a Japanese threat to Singapore in the very near future—"in the next fortnight".

761.9411/77: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State

VICHY, April 13, 1941—8 p. m. [Received April 14—8 a. m.]

436. Chauvel 50 called at the Embassy this afternoon in great excitement at the news of the signing of the Russo-Japanese nonaggression pact. 51 He said it had come as a complete surprise to the French Foreign Office and in his opinion meant one thing: an immediate Japanese attack on Singapore or at least on the Dutch East Indies. He said that the Japanese Embassy here had for some time indicated that no Japanese move toward the south need be expected until the signing of a pact with Russia and that if such a pact were signed it would come soon after. From the Japanese and Axis point of view it was he said obviously a move to get us involved in the Pacific and to reduce our aid to Britain.

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Leahy

40 Foreign Relations, 1940, vol. 1, in section entitled "Relations of Japan With the Axis Powers and With the Soviet Union."
41 See telegram No. 763, April 13, 11 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 944.
42 Signed at Moscow, August 23, 1939, Department of State, Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941, p. 76.
761.9411/81: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 13, 1941—10 p.m.

[Received April 14—5:30 a.m.]

762. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 761, April 13, 4 p.m. The Moscow radio this afternoon announced the signing of a treaty of neutrality between the Soviet Union and Japan and a supplementary declaration. The essence of the treaty is that each contracting party will observe neutrality if the other is the object of military action by a third party or parties. The essence of the declaration is a reciprocal undertaking to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchukuo and the Mongolian People’s Republic. For the protection of our codes the texts of the treaty and declaration are being sent in a separate telegram following and bearing the next number after this.

The extravagant predictions and threats against the United States which have appeared in the German press and which have been broadcast from Germany regarding the consequences to be expected from Matsunoaka’s visit to Berlin make it reasonable to suppose that the Soviet-Japanese treaty of neutrality will be hailed by Germany as the successful result of its efforts to bring about a Soviet-Japanese political agreement which would relieve Japan of the fear of an attack by the Soviet Union should Japan become embroiled in hostilities with the United States.

I believe, however, that the treaty was brought much less by German influence or a desire on the part of Japan to prepare itself for eventual collaboration with Germany in hostilities with the United States than by the fear on the part of Japan that it may become involved in hostilities with United States against its will and the desire on the part of the Soviet Government to prepare itself against a possible attack by Germany.

During the early months of the Soviet-Japanese negotiations it was clear that the Soviet Government was not unduly anxious to enter into a political agreement with Japan and that it would only do so for a high price, including substantial territorial concessions.

On the other hand while the Japanese Government did not conceal its eagerness to conclude a political agreement with the Soviet Union, which it desired to be of as far-reaching scope as possible, it was not willing to pay the price demanded by the Soviet Government especially in so far as concerned the cession of lower Sakhalin or even the surrender of the Japanese concessions in northern Sakhalin.
I believe that during the three weeks that have intervened since Matsukau's departure from Moscow for Berlin the attitude of both the Soviet and Japanese Governments has undergone a profound change. I am of the opinion that the Soviet Government having become convinced of the possibility of an attack by Germany decided to abandon its favorable bargaining position in exchange for an assurance of Japanese neutrality in the event of a German attack on the Soviet Union.

I likewise believe that as a result of his talks with Mussolini and Hitler, and also perhaps because of the impression made upon him by the threats against the United States which appeared in the German and Italian press in connection with his visit, Matsuoka returned to Moscow fearful that Japan might find itself maneuvered into a position which would lead to hostilities with the United States. In this connection it will be recalled (see my 581, March 24, 3 p.m.) that Matsuoka on the first occasion of his first visit to Moscow expressed the view to me that "American history indicates that it is the United States which goes to war with other countries."

In consequence he felt the necessity of coming to some agreement with the Soviet Government which would protect Japan against cooperation by the Soviet Union with the United States in such an eventuality and at the same time indicate to Germany that he does not consider Japan bound under the Tripartite Pact to go to war with either the Soviet Union or the United States in the event that Germany should declare war or take offensive action against either country.

It would appear from the foregoing that both Governments found it expedient to abandon their earlier specific desiderata (such as territorial concessions by Japan and cessation of aid to China by the Soviet Union) and rather than have the negotiations break down or be further prolonged enter into a simple and limited reciprocal commitment to remain neutral in the event that either country should become the object of military action by a third party or parties.

Matsuoka left this afternoon on the Trans-Siberian for Manchuli whence he will fly to Tokyo. Stalin was at the station to see him off, an attention he did not show to von Ribbentrop and which, in so far as I am aware, is without precedent. His action was presumably designed to lend the appearance to the treaty.

Shortly before his departure Matsuoka sent me the following letter marked confidential and written by him in longhand:

"Dear Steinhardt: I am leaving this afternoon as scheduled and wish again to thank you and your charming wife for the kind attention given me and the most pleasant chats I enjoyed at your Embassy."
Also thank you for your thoughtfulness in enabling me last evening to meet Sir Stafford.

I would also inform you that after being made to feel disappointed as to the conclusion of the Russian-Japanese pact of neutrality,—upon my present visit to Moscow (neither was I necessarily hoping or pressing for it), I was told that the Soviet Government was prepared to sign it at once when I called on Mr. Stalin to say good-by and to thank him in person for all the courtesies extended to me and my suite in my present visit to Europe. Of course I had said good-by to Mr. Molotov on the previous day.

They stressed the necessity and importance of settling the question of liquidating the concessions in northern Sakhalin simultaneously with the signing of the pact. I reiterated that I had no authority to discuss and settle it right now and the consequence was a deadlock. In all probability the pact will be signed before my departure and it will be published by the Moscow Government together with the text of a declaration. Believing Your Excellency is interested to know the above, I take pleasure in adding a bit of the inside story. Sincerely yours, Matsuoka."

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.9411/80: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 13, 1941—11 p. m.
[Received April 14—5:45 a.m.]

763. It was announced over the Panjor [Moscow] radio this afternoon that "a pact of neutrality between the Soviet Union and Japan was concluded April 13 and also a declaration concerning mutual respect of the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of the Mongolian People’s Republic and Manchukuo." The text of the pact is as follows:

"Article 1. Both high contracting parties undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between each other and mutually to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other contracting party.

Article 2. In the event one of the contracting parties becomes the object of military action on the part of another or several third powers the second contracting party will observe neutrality during the course of the entire conflict.

Article 3. The present pact becomes effective on day of its ratification by both contracting parties and remains valid during a period of five years. If one of the contracting parties does not denounce the pact one year before the expiration of its term, it will be considered automatically extended for the next five years."
Article 4. The present pact is subject to ratification within the shortest possible period of time. The exchange of instruments of ratification shall take place in Tokyo also within the shortest period of time."

The declaration reads as follows:

"In accordance with the spirit of the pact of neutrality concluded April 13, 1941, between the U. S. S. R. and Japan, the Government of the U. S. S. R. and the Government of Japan in the interest of securing peaceful and friendly relations between the two countries solemnly declare:

The U. S. S. R. undertakes to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchukuo, and Japan undertakes to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the Mongolian People's Republic.[3]"  

STEHARDT

761.9411/82 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhart) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 14, 1941—5 p. m.  
[Received April 14—1:50 p. m.]

765. The regular brief reports on the Sino-Japanese war which appear in the Moscow press began yesterday to quote Japanese sources and to indicate Japanese successes, in contrast to the previous pro-Chinese tone which these reports had consistently maintained.

STEHARDT

761.9411/84 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, April 14, 1941—6 p. m.  
[Received April 14—9:50 a. m.]

552. 1. In the absence of any information in regard to any secret commitments or understandings which may or may not have been made between the Soviet and Japanese Governments in connection with the conclusion of the pact of neutrality and friendship,[4] the following comment is of necessity based only upon the documents relating thereto published here which are represented to be merely summaries of the treaty and of the accompanying joint declaration.

5 The Ambassador in the Soviet Union in telegram No. 854, April 26, 1 p. m., reported that the pact “entered into force from April 25, 1941.” (761.9411/129)

54 For statement by the Japanese Prime Minister, see telegram No. 551, April 14, 5 p. m., from the Ambassador in Japan, Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. ii, p. 188.
2. In the comparison which obviously suggests itself between this agreement and the Soviet-German nonaggression treaty of August 1939 it will first of all be noted that the agreement with Japan is somewhat negative in character in that it does not provide as in the case of the German treaty, for concentration on problems of mutual interest, nor bind the contracting parties to refrain from aiding directly or indirectly the enemies of the other in the event of war but merely to "observe neutrality throughout the entire period of such conflict". It is noted however that article 2 which contains this commitment uses the language "an object of military action" which is identical with that used in the corresponding article of the Soviet-German pact which phrase, I am informed, was in that instance employed upon the insistence of Germany in order to render the treaty operative in the event of aggression by Germany on a third state and it may be assumed therefore that the Japanese insisted on identical language for the same purpose. Another distinction between the two treaties may be found in the fact that the present treaty comes into force following ratification by both parties whereas the Soviet-German Pact came into force upon signature.

3. The joint declaration of both Governments concerning the mutual recognition of the People's Republic of Mongolia and Manchukuo raises the question of the relation of the present treaty to Soviet relations with China and, in particular, aid to Chiang Kai-shek. Despite fact that in recognizing Manchukuo the Soviet Union has given its sanction to the separation from China of this area in derogation of Chinese sovereignty there is no indication either in the text of the treaty itself or in this declaration of any Soviet agreement to alter its present policy vis-à-vis the Chinese Republic. In conjunction with the all-important question of future Soviet aid to China possibly some light on the subject may be shed by the fact that the Soviet Union apparently during negotiations with Japan made a somewhat subtle distinction between a pact of nonaggression and a pact of neutrality. It will be recalled that last November in presenting the Soviet conditions involving the cession of Japanese territory for a nonaggression pact, Molotov told the Japanese Ambassador that in the event that these conditions for a nonaggression pact should prove to be unacceptable to the Japanese Government some form of a neutrality pact might be negotiated, thus indicating that in Soviet eyes there exists a greater distinction between the two types of pact than would appear on the surface. This distinction may possibly relate to the question of Soviet aid to China and in view of the importance to Matsuoka of returning to Tokyo with some agreement with Russia it is not unlikely
that he was willing to accept the present agreement without the much desired commitment for the cessation of Soviet aid to China.

4. Summing up the results of the treaty from this point of observation the following conclusions on the basis of incomplete information appear to be justified.

(a) It is a great personal success for Matsuoka in that publicly at least Japan was not forced to pay any price for its conclusion;
(b) on the basis of material now available, the treaty would appear to have been entered into more for the effects which each party calculates it will have on the other concerned third parties than for the defining of the obligations and policies of the respective signatories;
(c) irrespective of the subtleties of wording or representations on the part of the Soviet Government in regard to China, the very fact of the agreement itself should tend to facilitate rather than impede a conclusion of the China conflict;
(d) to the somewhat formalistic Japanese mind the pact with Russia will be regarded as redressing the one-sided nature of the Tripartite Pact with respect to the relations with the Soviet Union;
(e) in its larger aspect and one of greatest importance to ourselves the conclusion of the pact guaranteeing Russian neutrality in the event of Japanese involvement in a war with a third country or countries will undoubtedly strengthen the hands of and stimulate those elements in Japan which favor a vigorous prosecution of the southward advance.

Repeated to Moscow.

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761.9411/05a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)\textsuperscript{55}

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1941—11 p. m.

231. You will read in today’s radio bulletin a statement by the Secretary made this morning\textsuperscript{56} in response to inquiries by press correspondents in regard to the Soviet-Japanese pact relating to neutrality. It is suggested that, for purposes of background and for discreet use in conversation with officials of foreign governments if occasion therefor should arise and seem opportune, you may wish to review the memorandum on the subject of Russo-Japanese relations enclosed with the Department’s mail instruction of December 8, 1939.\textsuperscript{57}

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\textsuperscript{55} The same telegram sent to the Embassies in the United Kingdom and France as telegrams No. 1250, 6 p. m., and No. 318, 9 p. m., respectively.

\textsuperscript{56} See telegram No. 461, April 15, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 948.

\textsuperscript{57} Instruction not printed; for text of the memorandum, handed to the French and British Ambassadors on December 2 and 6, 1939, respectively, see Foreign Relations, 1939, vol. III, p. 92.
CHUNGKING, April 15, 1941—noon.
[Received April 15—7:55 a. m.]

136. My 135, April 15, 11 a. m. 58

1. The signing on April 13 of the “neutrality pact” and the accompanying “declaration” by the Soviet Union and Japan has without doubt come as a blow to the Chinese although it cannot be said to have come as a complete surprise. With the lone exception of the Communist organ which endeavors to support the action of the Soviet Union, the entire Chungking press this morning violently assails the action of the Soviet Union. It would appear that the Chinese authorities will appraise the value of the Moscow agreement in terms of the future Russian policy toward China and Japan. They will naturally wish to ascertain whether it will mean abandonment of Russian support of China and also whether Japan has received such assurance from Russia as to allow Japan to withdraw troops from Manchuria for use either in China or in the South Seas.

2. During an informal conversation yesterday the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs 59 informed me that the Chinese Government had received no intimation from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics prior to or immediately after the conclusion of the agreement that Russia intended to negotiate such a pact. It may thus be inferred that the Russians failed to consult with the Chinese Government in relation to this question before entering into negotiations with Mr. Matsuoka.

Sent to the Department, repeated to Peiping, Peiping please mail code text to Tokyo.

JOHNSON

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1941—5 p. m.

461. In response to inquiries in regard to the Soviet-Japanese pact, I made the following statement to the press on April 14:

“The significance of the pact between the Soviet Union and Japan relating to neutrality, as reported in the press today, could be overestimated. The agreement would seem to be descriptive of a situation

58 Not printed, but see Chinese Embassy’s communication of April 15, p. 949.
59 Hsu Mo.
which has in effect existed between the two countries for some time past. It therefore comes as no surprise, although there has existed doubt whether the two Governments would or would not agree to say it in writing. The policy of this Government of course remains unchanged."

HULL

761.94/1322

The Chinese Embassy to the Department of State. 60

Statement Issued by Dr. Wang Chung-hui, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Chungking, April 14, 1941

At the time of the signing of the Neutrality Pact on April 13, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Japan issued a joint declaration in which Japan undertook to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the so-called People’s Republic of Mongolia, and the Soviet Union undertook to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of so-called Manchukuo.

It is an indisputable fact that the four North-Eastern Provinces and Outer Mongolia are integral parts of the Republic of China and always will remain Chinese territory. The Chinese Government and people cannot recognize any engagements entered into between third parties which are derogatory to China’s territorial and administrative integrity. The Soviet-Japanese declaration just announced has no binding force whatsoever on China.

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1941.

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740.0011 European War 1939/9074 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 15, 1941—10 p.m.
[Received April 15—7:15 p.m.]

1489. Today Johnson and I had lunch with the Chinese Ambassador. 61 The Chinese Ambassador referred to the recent Russo-Japanese agreement as unpleasant but said that in fact it was no more than putting into writing an already accepted situation with the exception that under it Russia recognized Japan’s rights in Manchuria and Japan Russia’s rights in Outer Mongolia. He said he felt it would relieve Japanese troops in Manchuria for service to the south.

60 Noted by the Secretary of State on April 16.
61 Quo Tai-chi, recently appointed Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Later I saw Eden and Johnson saw Cadogan. Eden was very pleased with your interview with the press as contained in today’s radio bulletin. I thought he was worried about the situation although his summation on the Russo-Japanese Pact was not very different from the Chinese Ambassador’s. Neither the Chinese Ambassador nor Eden thought that supplies to China would be cut by Russia. Eden told me that when Stafford Cripps had seen Matsuoka in Moscow the latter told him that there was no reason for the English being disturbed about their relations with Japan. This was the only meeting they had and at the end of the interview Cripps gave Matsuoka the Prime Minister’s note which he put in his pocket without opening the envelope. (My No’s. 1288, April 2, 10 p. m. and 1366, April 7, 6 p. m.)

[Here follows report on other matters.]

In brief comment on the Russo-Japanese Pact, Cadogan thought that on [the whole?] it was not good for the British; that its chief danger would lie in encouragement Japan might get for some wild adventure to the south, particularly if Matsuoka whom he distrusts and considers erratic is in effective control of Japanese policy. There is also, he thinks, the danger that Russia may cut off supplies to China in order to please Japan although there has been little evidence in recent months that much Russian material was getting to China.

I think it is now clear that the Duke D’Aosta retired from Addis Ababa into the mountains rather than surrender in order to hold British divisions that might have been used to strengthen the British forces in Libya.

Winant

761.9411/137

The British Embassy to the Department of State

Telegram from British Ambassador in Moscow to the Foreign Office, Dated April 14th, 1941

My estimate of Russo-Japanese pact is as follows:
1. Up to Saturday night negotiations and hard bargaining were proceeding with a view to arranging a much more extensive agreement on a non-aggression basis. Russians had, between Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs’ visits, brought down their price, largely as a result of events in Europe and growing likelihood of an attack on U. S. S. R.

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*See telegram No. 231, April 14, 11 p. m., to the Ambassador in Japan, and footnote 55, p. 947.
*Letter not printed.
*Copy handed on April 16 to the Under Secretary of State (Welles) by the British Minister (Butler).
2. By Saturday night it appeared that Russian price was still too high and in consequence Japanese reconciled themselves to having no agreement.

3. That night either Russians or Japanese suggested the substitution of simple neutrality pact either to save Matsuoka’s face or else because Russians thought it would be valuable in the event of a German attack on U. S. S. R.

4. This pact was signed yesterday. It has never been doubted that if any agreement were reached at all, recognition of Manchukuo and Outer Mongolia would form part of any such agreement.

5. In my opinion the major significance of the whole affair is that Russia has on paper got security in the East in the event of German attack and has at the same time in appearance satisfied German desire for a Russian-Japanese rapprochement.

6. It is most significant and unprecedented that Stalin has gone to the station to see Matsuoka off and this playing-up to the latter’s vanity and compliment to his country indicates the lengths to which Russia would go to try and secure her eastern frontier in the light of the danger in the west.

7. In my opinion this development makes it more than ever necessary that Quo Tai-chi should travel via Moscow.

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761.9411/104: Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, April 16, 1941—10 a. m.

[Received 6: 23 p. m.]

137. My 136, April 15, noon. When I called on the Foreign Minister late yesterday afternoon in regard to another matter he made reference to the signing of the Russo-Japanese agreement in Moscow saying that he had found it necessary to issue a statement on April 14 in regard to the “declaration” (see my 135, April 15, 11 a. m.) but that the Chinese Government was not taking any definite position in regard to the “neutrality pact” pending clarification of some of the provisions contained therein. Dr. Wang said that he had summoned the Soviet Ambassador on the evening of April 14 and had explained to the Ambassador that he had found it necessary to issue a statement in regard to the declaration because silence would of course be construed as acquiescence in the provisions of the declarat-

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*Marginal notation at this point by the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck): “Not more than she had before”.

* ante, p. 949.

* Not printed.

* Alexander Semenovich Panyushkin.
tion. Dr. Wang went on to say that he had made inquiry of the Soviet Ambassador in regard to application of the provisions of article 2 of the “Neutrality Pact” and especially to whether the Sino-Japanese conflict came within the purview of the terms of that article and that the Russian Ambassador had replied that he had received no instructions but had expressed the personal view that article 2 had reference to future hostilities and not to those presently occurring. Dr. Wang said also that he had sought elucidation of terms such as “[future?] hostilities”, “neutrality”, et cetera. The Russian Ambassador had promised to seek instructions from Moscow especially in regard to application of article 2.

Sent to the Department, repeated to Peiping. Code text by air mail to Moscow.

JOHNSON

740.0011 European War 1939/10025 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 16, 1941—noon.
[Received April 17—2:05 a.m.]

776. I have learned from a confidential source that the Slovak Minister reported to his Government the substance of a conversation between Sakamoto, Director of the European Department of the Japanese Foreign Office, and himself during the former’s stay in Moscow to the following effect:

Sakamoto stated that neither the United States nor Japan wanted war and that he did not anticipate war between the two countries. He said that in Japan the United States was not regarded as an enemy country and that the shipment of munitions by the United States to Britain was not a matter of concern to Japan, which had no intention of endeavoring to interfere with such shipments. He said that in the event the United States entered the European war Japan might be obliged to join the war on the side of the Axis but that he was convinced that there would be no necessity for the United States to enter the war for a long time to come. He said that Japan was “disinterested” in European affairs and that its sole interest lay in the Far East and that Japan did not wish to be drawn into the European war and that a war between the Soviet Union and Germany would be regarded by Japan as a European affair.

He said he believed Germany “wished to and was capable of destroying the Soviet Empire” and he believed that Germany would be successful in the event of a war with the Soviet Union. He then ex-
pressed the opinion that if the Balkan campaign did not prove too long or exhausting to the Germans they would attack the Soviet Union as soon as the campaign was over but that if the Balkan campaign proved exhausting Germany would first rest its armies and reorganize before attacking the Soviet Union. He also said that he was under the impression that the Russians are well informed about Germany's designs and that he did not consider it out of the question that the Soviet Union might precipitate the crisis by attacking Germany while the Balkan campaign was still in progress if real and determined resistance was shown by the Yugoslavs, Greeks and British. He said in such event he anticipated that while Russia and Great Britain would be on the same side of the war the Soviet Union would not necessarily fight as an ally of Great Britain but independently and that in any event "Japan would definitely stand aside".

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.9411/97: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State

VICHY, April 16, 1941—1 p.m.
[Received 5:02 p.m.]

445. Embassy's telegram 436, April 13, 8 p.m. After two days without information the Foreign Office has now received a telegram from Moscow with reference to the Russo-Japanese pact which Chauvel showed us this morning. Labonner reported that the signature of the pact has occasioned less surprise than the unprecedented public attitude of Stalin in proceeding to the station to bid farewell "to one who was not Chief of State". While it had generally been expected by observers in Moscow, the telegram continued, that the Japanese would have to pay "a higher price" for such an agreement, developments in the West had hastened Moscow's acceptance.

Chauvel has come to the conclusion that the Russians feel, with the situation "deteriorating" as rapidly as it is in the Balkans and the "certainty" of a German move on the Ukraine within the next three months "whether the British make peace or not", the Kremlin must have insurance against any Japanese attack in the East in order to protect itself and "its interests" in the West. The only sure guarantee against such Japanese attack would be Japanese involvement in the south. Consequently Chauvel still confidently expects an early Japanese attack against Singapore. As an indication in this direc-

* Elrik Labonner, French Ambassador in the Soviet Union.
tion he says that, since the signing of the agreement with Russia, the Japanese attitude with respect to Indochina has become noticeably more aggressive (please see Embassy’s telegram No. 428, April 11, 6 p.m.\(^9\)).

He feels that the Russians must have weighed all the factors and decided that the weakening of the British through such a move and consequently of the Russian position in the West must be accepted as the price for insurance against Japan, “particularly as Moscow expects the United States to take care of the Japanese”.

Labonne reported that the Chinese Embassy at Moscow has expressed satisfaction with the considerable amount of material which the Russians have been furnishing the Chinese over the past several months and that the Embassy does not expect any change in this policy as a result of the Russo-Japanese pact. If such a change of policy does take place, said Labonne, it should be readily apparent in the very near future.

Leahy

761.9411/98 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 16, 1941—1 p.m.

[Received April 17—12 : 40 a.m.]

777. Foreign correspondents who were present at the Trans-Siberian railway station the evening Matsukawa left on his return journey to Japan state that it was apparent that most of the members of Matsukawa’s party and of the Japanese Embassy and of the Soviet delegation present to bid Matsukawa farewell (with the exception of Stalin) were somewhat intoxicated and that the behavior on the station platform while awaiting the departure of the train can only be described as frolicsome. There were many backslappings, bear hugs and even kisses exchanged between various persons present and several rather extraordinary remarks were claimed to have been overheard. The most interesting of these is one attributed to Stalin in variations of the following words: “Now that the Soviet Union and Japan have arranged their affairs, Japan will straighten out the East, the Soviet Union and Germany will take care of Europe and later on between them they will take care of the Americans.” That something approximating the foregoing statement actually was said has been confirmed by members of the German Embassy who were also present.

The visit and the signing of the treaty have of course provoked an abundant flow of gossip in Moscow including most recently the circu-

\(^9\) Not printed.
lation of a report to the effect that the real and hidden import of the Soviet-Japanese agreement is that it constitutes the first step toward a full association on the part of the Soviet Union with the tripartite powers in a concerted drive to impose their will on Europe and Asia. Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.9411/101: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 16, 1941—7 p.m.
[Received April 17—1:55 a.m.]

786. I called on the Chinese Ambassador this afternoon to ascertain if possible the Soviet attitude towards China since the signing of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact.

The Ambassador told me that on April 14 he had received a telegram from his Foreign Office instructing him to invite the attention of the Soviet Government to a declaration of the Chinese Government made after the signing of the pact to the effect that the action of third parties has no binding effect on China and to inquire in what respect, if any, the Soviet-Japanese pact would affect Soviet-Chinese relations. The Ambassador continued that he had immediately requested an interview with Molotov and had seen him yesterday. He said the interview was relatively brief and that in response to his statement and inquiry, Molotov had made the following observations:

1. The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact represents the Soviet Government’s desire for peace and “has nothing to do with China.”
2. In the course of the negotiations with Matsuoka “China was not discussed—was not even mentioned.”
3. In response to a statement by the Ambassador that China would carry on the war with Japan “to the bitter end” and to his inquiry as to whether Molotov thought the Soviet-Japanese pact “would affect Chinese resistance”, Molotov replied that he did not believe the pact would affect Chinese resistance but that such resistance was China’s “own affair and the manner in which it could best be conducted.”

The Ambassador told me that he had not put an inquiry as to whether China could count on further assistance from the Soviet Union as he had not been instructed to make such inquiry but assumed that his Government would direct him to do so at a later date. He said that he had not made the inquiry on his own responsibility as he had not wished to give Molotov the impression that China was entirely dependent upon Soviet assistance.

In expressing his opinion to me as to the effect of the pact, the Ambassador stated that his Government was not disposed to attach too
much importance to it and that in so far as it concerned further assistance from the Soviet Union, while he did not expect a complete cessation, he thought it would be “considerably less” than heretofore as he doubted that the Soviet Government would henceforth wish to antagonize Japan by deliveries of war materials to China on the scale of the past 2 years.

In discussing the situation in Europe, the Ambassador expressed the opinion that the Soviet Government would have to decide between armed resistance to Germany and what he described as “virtually complete surrender.”

STEINHARDT

661.9431/29: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 17, 1941—3 p. m. [Received 3:05 p. m.]

791. With respect to the Soviet-Japanese trade negotiations which he does not expect to be completed for another 2 or 3 weeks, the Japanese Ambassador told me last night that the Soviets were to deliver to Japan relatively small quantities of oil and also manganese and platinum and had agreed to take one million yen worth of silk. He said that the Soviet officials had irritated him by continuing at each meeting to press him for rubber and tin which he had repeatedly told them were not available to Japan for export. The Japanese have, however, he said, agreed in principle to purchase copper in Chile for delivery to the Soviets “who are to keep part and deliver part to Germany”.

As the Japanese desire many articles that the Soviets can deliver and have little to offer in exchange which the Soviets wish, discussions are now proceeding on the basis that the Japanese will endeavor to make purchases for Soviet account in the southern Pacific area and the Western Hemisphere which purchases the Soviets will finance if necessary. The Ambassador “believes” that some of these purchases when made will be for delivery to Germany by the Soviets as he said “we (Japan) have for some time been making substantial purchases for Germany and shipping these through the Soviet Union”.

He said that virtually the entire Far Eastern soy bean crop was being sought by Germany either in the bean or preferably, wherever possible, processed into oil.

In connection with the fisheries negotiations, the Ambassador said that having agreed to a 20 percent increase in rentals on fishing lots
for 1940 as against 1939 (see my 125, January 21, 8 p. m.71), the Soviets were now demanding a 100 percent increase over the present lot rentals as a condition to the conclusion of a long term fisheries convention. He remarked that as the principal market in the past for Japanese canned fish had been the British Empire which market was now almost nonexistent and as the Japanese ate principally fresh fish, he did not see how the Japanese could pay such rentals as they would in such case forfeit their competitive position in the world market.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.8411/138

The Navy Department to the Department of State

[WASHINGTON,] April 17, 1941.

The following message was received from the Naval Attaché at Ankara this date:

[Paraphrase] When explaining the Japanese-Russian pact, the Russian Naval Attaché said that the Russian policy is clear and that it is to allow everyone else to fight while Russia fights with no one.

761.8411/84 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1941—7 p. m.

234. Your 552, April 14, 6 p. m., numbered paragraph 1. The Department notes the statement that the documents published in Tokyo relating to the pact of neutrality concluded between the Soviet Union and Japan are represented to be merely summaries of the treaty and of the accompanying joint declaration. What has been reported from Moscow as the text of the pact and of the accompanying joint declaration published there does not differ materially from the summaries reported by you. The Department would appreciate your comments as to whether the designation by the Japanese Government of the pact and the accompanying declaration as summaries has any special significance.72

HULL

71 Not printed.
72 The Ambassador in Japan, in telegram No. 579, April 19, 11 a. m., replied that the designation had “no special significance and is merely a device to avoid a breach of the law which forbids the publication of the text of treaties prior to their ratification by the Emperor and publication in the Official Gazette.” (761.8411/110)
Tokyo, April 18, 1941—5 p. m.
[Received April 18—1:15 p. m.]

577. Embassy’s 517, April 7, 7 p. m.\(^a\)

1. In a conversation yesterday with the confidant\(^b\) mentioned in the telegram under reference, Dooman\(^c\) brought out the following points during a discussion which followed the suggestion that the United States use its good offices to bring about an end of the China conflict:

\(a\) By joining Germany and Italy in an alliance, Japan had assimilated the Far Eastern problem with the European problem, and it would be idle for Japan to suppose that, so long as she remained an ally of Germany, termination of the China conflict of itself would stabilize her relations with the United States;

\(b\) Japan has concluded a treaty with Russia, the ostensible purpose of which is to promote her own security, even though she has never concealed her fear of Russia, her mistrust of the Soviet Government, and her dislike of communism. One could therefore properly suppose that her real purpose in concluding that treaty lies outside of the treaty’s stipulations. The pursuit of policies erected on a foundation of distrust, suspicion and the attainment of ulterior objectives through devious methods must inevitably have disastrous consequences;

\(c\) By linking herself to such countries as Italy and Germany and by relying in the conduct of her foreign relations on expediency and opportunism, Japan has brought herself to such a pass that other nations in planning the defense of their legitimate interests have no choice but to take into account only the sinister aspirations of the extremists in this country and to discount entirely the peaceful protestations of the moderate elements. To illustrate, the countries opposed to Japan’s alliance are obliged to take under notice the views of the activists with regard to the southern advance rather than the declarations of those who say that Japan seeks economic developing in the South Seas by peaceful methods.

2. The confidant brought back today from his principal\(^d\) an oral message substantially as follows:

\(a\) When previously in office the principal had not only brought about the defeat of a project to conclude an alliance with Germany and Italy but he had brought to the attention of the American Government a proposal for the taking of steps to avert the war in Europe and to settle the Far Eastern question.\(^e\) His proposal had not

\(^a\) Ante, p. 128.
\(^b\) Named Fujii.
\(^c\) Eugene H. Dooman, Counselor of Embassy in Japan.
\(^d\) Baron Kichiuro Hiranuma, Japanese Minister without Portfolio, who was Prime Minister in 1939.
been regarded with favor. Therefore, it sat with ill grace upon the United States to place upon Japan entire responsibility for the situation created by Japan’s having joined the Axis. However, he would emphasize that the rescript issued by the Emperor when the alliance was concluded stipulated that the alliance was to be used as an instrument for peace, and that, although Japan would not fail if occasion arose to honor its obligations under the alliance, the primary preoccupation of the Government is to seek to carry out the Emperor’s wishes as set forth in the rescript.

(b) He could say in the strictest secrecy that the Cabinet had adopted a resolution at its last meeting (note: presumably on April 15) that the southward advance should be prosecuted only by peaceful means, and that a public declaration to that effect would be issued in the near future (note: the confidant expressed as his personal opinion that the declaration would not be issued until after Mr. Matsuoka’s return from Moscow). However, the policy laid down in the resolution would lie outside the compass of any situation which might be created by drastic economic pressure on Japan or by foreign naval dispositions having the character of a blockade against Japan.

(c) With regard to the treaty with the Soviet Union, he deeply deplored the arising of the conditions which caused his Government to enter into the treaty. However, by balancing the mutual obligations of Germany and Japan with regard to their respective relations with [the] Soviet Union, the treaty would serve, he thought, to prevent the extension of hostilities.

3. Dooman had remarked yesterday to the confidant that, while the prevailing opinion appeared to be that the principal was being groomed for an even higher office, it was our belief that the principal had entered the Cabinet only to strengthen it and to help it to remain in power. The message was returned that the principal deeply appreciated the comment and that the comment was entirely correct.

Grew

761.9411/114: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 20, 1941—8 p. m.

[Received 10:50 p. m.]

805. In the course of a conversation yesterday the German source known to the Department stated to me that the German Government “had not been entirely satisfied with the Soviet-Japanese Pact”. He expressed the opinion that the Soviet Government’s motive in signing the pact had been to put itself in a position to join the Tripartite Pact if it chose to do so or to be safeguarded against a Japanese attack in the event of a German invasion. He does not think, however, that

a German attack on the Soviet Union is imminent but believes that
rumors of such an attack have been put out by Berlin and will be
sustained in order to inspire fear in the Soviet Government in an
effort to force it to join the Tripartite Pact, increase deliveries
to Germany or accede to other German demands which he anticipates
will shortly be made. He expressed the opinion in this connection
that the “Soviet Union is now at the crossroads” and that it must
shortly either join the Tripartite Pact or at least “go along with the
new order”, or “face an attack by the German Army along a front
from the Baltic to the Black Sea”. He believes that the Soviet Union
will decide “to go along” and in doing so will “take what it can get”
in reward.

He believes that Stalin “has been tremendously impressed by the
collapse of Yugoslavia as, being a Georgian and a mountaineer, he
respects force and had assumed that the Yugoslavs with their moun-
tainous country could resist the German mechanized equipment for a
long period of time.”

He expressed the opinion that Stalin’s jovial behavior toward the
Germans present at the railroad station at the time of Matsuoka’s
departure and the editorial (see my 777 April 16, 1 p. m. and 802 of
April 19, 2 p. m.\textsuperscript{19}) in Pravda foreshadow an attempt by the Soviet
Government to improve its relations with Germany which he admitted
had “deteriorated in recent months”. In this connection he said that
the German Government knows how to deal with the Soviets and that
he expects Germany will now assume “a more severe and disagreeable
attitude toward the Soviets than at any time since August 1939 as
experience has taught Germany that when it wants anything from the
Soviet Government the way to get it is to be stern and disagree-
able.[\textsuperscript{17}] He added that the Soviets consider that when they are well
vented by another power it is a sign of weakness or of the desire to
curry favor, whereas stern and disagreeable treatment indicates to
them self-confidence and strength on the part of the other government
which instills fear and results in concessions.

He expressed the opinion that the German military successes
throughout Europe thus far have been due almost exclusively to its
possession of large mechanized forces and that the defeats sustained
by other powers including Britain had been occasioned by the absence
of adequate mechanized equipment. He said that modern war is a
war of tanks, armored cars and mechanized equipment and that any
country which does not possess such equipment in quantities compara-
table to those Germany puts into action obviously could not resist an
assault.

\textsuperscript{19} Latter not printed.
He admitted that Matsuoka gave Stalin "certain assurances" with regard to the surrender of the Japanese concessions in Northern Sakhalin but expressed doubt that Matsuoka "could put it through."

He implied that the recurrent rumors of invasion of England are put out from Berlin for the purpose of immobilizing as many British forces as possible in England and added that such rumors may be expected periodically throughout the duration of the war.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1321

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

No. 5529

Tokyo, April 21, 1941.

[Received May 16.]

Sir: In connection with the conclusion on April 13 of the pact of neutrality between the Soviet Union and Japan and with reference to the Embassy's telegrams nos. 450, March 29, 10 a. m., and 538, April 11, noon, I have the honor to outline as background material the following account of the course of the Soviet-Japanese negotiations leading up to the Pact, which has been conveyed to a member of my staff by the members of the immediate family of Mr. Togo, former Japanese Ambassador to Moscow.

According to the above-mentioned sources, in early October, 1940, Ambassador Togo, following negotiations begun in the summer, had reached a series of agreements with the Soviet Government consisting of the following: (1) a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact; (2) a permanent fisheries convention; (3) an agreement in principle for a commercial accord the details of which were to be worked out separately. In addition, the Soviet Government had given categorical assurances that following the signature of a non-aggression pact with Japan Soviet aid to General Chiang Kai-shek would cease. Although these agreements were to be ready for signature in early October, Mr. Matsuoka in connection with the reorganization of the Japanese Foreign Office and diplomatic service did not desire that Mr. Togo, who was already slated for retirement, should sign these agreements which represented a considerable diplomatic victory for Japan. He,

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62 Drafted by the Second Secretary of Embassy in Japan (Bohlen), formerly in the Soviet Union.
63 Letter not printed.
64 As quoted in the Japanese press, Moscow Pravda on April 19, in reviewing foreign reactions to the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact, declared that the first proposal for such a pact was made in July, 1940, by the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow and was accepted in principle by the Soviet Government but that discussions as to the terms delayed the final conclusion. [Footnote in the original.]
therefore, brought about the recall of Ambassador Togo and sent in his place, Lieutenant-General Tatekawa who was to have the honor of signing the agreements. However, when the negotiations were resumed by General Tatekawa in the middle of November, 1940, following Molotov’s return from Berlin, the Soviet attitude completely changed and the negotiations made no progress largely, according to this source, because of the personal incompetence of General Tatekawa. The Soviet Union then for the first time presented a number of territorial and other demands as the price of the conclusion of a nonaggression pact and cessation of aid to China. These demands included (1) the cession by Japan of southern Sakhalien; (2) certain islands of the Kurile and, in addition, important frontier rectification in favor of the Soviet Union of certain portions of the Siberian-Manchurian frontier, and certain “special facilities” for Soviet trade in Korean and Manchurian ports. As a result of these demands which were categorically and definitely refused by the Japanese Government, the political negotiations with the Soviet Union which in October had been virtually successfully concluded came to a standstill.

In the beginning of January, Mr. Matsuoka consulted with former Ambassador Togo as to the advisability of a personal visit to Moscow as a means of breaking the deadlock in the political negotiations, a suggestion which Mr. Togo strongly approved. It was decided, however, that in order to avoid too great an appearance of eagerness that the visit would be announced as one to Berlin and Rome which would likewise afford the Foreign Minister an opportunity of holding important consultations with Hitler and Mussolini. Despite the public announcement that the purpose of Matsuoka’s visit to Europe was to consult the German and Italian Governments, official Japanese circles in Tokyo, particularly in the Foreign Office, were well aware that the concrete aim of his trip was to attempt to rescue the negotiations with the Soviet Union which had broken down due to his “blunder” in changing ambassadors at an unpropitious moment. Consequently, in these same circles it was felt that Mr. Matsuoka would make every effort to obtain some form of agreement with Russia since to return empty-handed would seriously compromise his position. On the other hand, it was felt that if he obtained some political agreement with the Soviet Union on satisfactory terms his personal prestige would be so greatly enhanced that he might well succeed Prince Konoye as Prime Minister in the event of the latter’s resignation.

According to the same source, Mr. Matsuoka, during his first visit to Moscow en route to Berlin, was afforded little encouragement by Stalin as to the prospect of effecting a settlement on any reasonable terms and it was only during his stay on the return trip that the
Soviet Government showed a disposition to accept a reasonable basis of negotiations and only at the very close of that stay was Soviet agreement to the pact forthcoming.

While it appears obvious that too much emphasis is placed on the personal element in explanation of the failure of Japan to obtain the desired agreement last autumn and that certain of the details of the foregoing account are colored by the same personal factor, in its main outline the résumé of the Soviet-Japanese negotiations coincides with information from other sources. It is for example true that in early October a Soviet-Japanese political agreement on terms favorable to Japan was believed imminent and in this connection it may be added, according to a member of my staff who was in Moscow at the time, members of the German Embassy there were quite outspoken in characterizing the removal of Mr. Togo at that time as a very serious political mistake on the part of the Japanese Government. The opinion may be offered, however, that in so far as the change of ambassadors had any effect on Soviet policy, such change was due less to the personality of the individuals than to the interval which elapsed between Mr. Togo's departure on October 17th and the beginning of General Tatekawa's negotiations with Mr. Molotov in November, since during this interval occurred the visit of Mr. Molotov to Berlin.

Possibly the chief interest of the foregoing information lies in the illustration it affords of the degree to which Soviet policy in the Far East, particularly towards Japan, varies in ratio to the state of Soviet-German relations.

Without going into details, which do not lie within the purview of this despatch, it can be stated that according to available information the periods in the Soviet-Japanese negotiations outlined above when the Soviet Government was adopting a conciliatory attitude toward Japan correspond in time with periods when Soviet apprehension as to Germany's immediate intentions was greatest and, conversely, that the stiffened Soviet attitude in the negotiations with Japan followed the receipt of assurances by the Soviet Government as to Germany's policy towards the Soviet Union. For example, during the months of September and October, 1940, it was reported that the Soviet Union was extremely uneasy as to the possibility of a complete reorientation of German policy in Eastern Europe which found its reflection in the apparent willingness of the Soviet Government to conclude a far-reaching political agreement with Japan on terms favorable to the latter; following Molotov's return from Berlin the assurances which he obtained there as to Germany's intentions were clearly not without effect in bringing about a revision of the Soviet attitude toward Japan and the demand for territorial and other concessions as the price for
an agreement. This attitude remained adamant up to the German military successes in the Balkans which apparently again revived Soviet apprehensions as to the immediate future and it may be assumed were in a large measure responsible for the somewhat sudden decision of the Soviet Government on April 13 to conclude a political agreement with Japan.†

There is little to be added to the opinions expressed in the Embassy’s no. 552, April 14, 6 p. m., in regard to the immediate effect on Japan and Japanese policies of the neutrality agreement with the Soviet Union. Subsequent information tends to confirm the view expressed therein that Mr. Matsuoka obtained an agreement of only a limited character designated as a pact of neutrality involving no Soviet commitment in regard to the question of Soviet aid to China.‡ It may be, however, a mistake to place too great emphasis upon the negative character of the pact and thereby to underestimate its actual and potential significance. While it is true that the pact in itself changes little and adds little to the actual state of relations between the two countries, and may therefore be regarded as little more than a formulation in a public document of a previously existing situation, it should nonetheless be borne in mind that the Tripartite Pact itself insofar as Japan is concerned is affirmed by Japan, specifically in the imperial rescript which was issued when the alliance was concluded and by public declarations of its highest officials, to be designed primarily to prevent the extension of hostilities. Indeed even the conditions under which it becomes operative are not clearly defined and are left to Japan to determine. Furthermore all agreements concluded by the Soviet Union prior to and subsequent to the outbreak of the European war, with the exception of the short-lived treaties with the Baltic States, have been entirely negative in character. But it is precisely towards the continuance of such a negative policy on the part of the Soviet Union that, up to the present, Axis and Japanese diplomacy has been successfully directed, whereas the interest of the anti-Axis powers would lie in the adoption by the Soviet Union of a positive anti-Axis policy. Consequently any reaffirmation on the part of the Soviet Union of its intention to continue a negative policy of non-involvement in the present war and especially, in the present instance, of the extension of that policy to the Far East, must be counted as a diplomatic success for Japan and its Axis associates. Furthermore, even if the agreement is little more than a public statement of an already existing situation it nonetheless indicates on the part of the signatories a certain expectation that that situation will persist for at least the immediate

†See Moscow’s telegram no. 762, April 13, 10 p. m. [Footnote in the original.]
‡See Moscow’s telegram no. 790, April 17, 2 p. m. [Footnote in the original; telegram not printed.]
future, and as long as the conditions which gave rise to the pact do persist the trend towards improvement in their relations will be likely to continue.

In regard to the general situation in the Far East perhaps the most important aspect of the pact for Japan lies in the implication which it contains in regard to future Soviet-Chinese relations. Although as indicated above, there is no evidence to justify the belief that the Soviet Union entered into any commitment in regard to China, which appears to have been excluded from Mr. Matsuoka’s discussions in Moscow, it remains a fact that the conclusion of a neutrality agreement with Japan would appear to be in direct violation of Article 2 of the Soviet-Chinese pact of non-aggression of August 21, 1937, and whereas in the latter pact Soviet policy in the Far East appeared to have one basis, namely support of the Chinese Republic, it now has two fundamentally contradictory points of departure. It would appear logical that should Soviet-Japanese relations, as predicted both in the Japanese and Soviet press, develop favorably on the basis of the neutrality pact, then, irrespective of Soviet assurances to China to the contrary, such a development would be accompanied inevitably by a progressive and gradual drift away from previous Soviet policy of aid to General Chiang Kai-shek. There have been indications in recent Japanese press comment which reveal that Japan is hopeful of some such development as a result of the agreement with the Soviet Union. Japan may therefore be expected to use every effort to cultivate its relations with the Soviet Union but in view of the history of the recently concluded negotiations, outlined above, it would appear that the future trend of Soviet-Japanese relations, will be in large measure determined by the progress of the European war and the extent of the real or potential German threat to the Soviet Union.

Respectfully yours,

JOSEPH C. GREW

761.9411/142

The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

No. 845

CHUNGKING, April 22, 1941.

[Received May 15.]

Sir: With reference to paragraph numbered six of my telegram no. 138, April 16, 1941, quoting editorial comment from the Hsin Hua Jih Pao in relation to the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact, I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy in translation of a pamphlet circulated in Chungking on April 20, 1941 by represent-

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* Not printed.
atives of the Chinese Communist Party purporting to give expression to the opinion of the Chinese Communist Party concerning this subject.

In summary, the pact is held to be in accord with the traditional Soviet policy of "peace and neutrality", to ensure the safety of Russia's eastern border and the peaceful development of socialism, to have elevated the position of Soviet Russia, to involve no change in Russia's policy toward China, and to have settled the question of border disputes in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia to the benefit of China. Now that the pact has been concluded, China is urged to persist in resistance, organization and progress.

Of perhaps chief interest and significance is the pointed assertion that the question of future Russian aid to China may depend on the treatment accorded by the Kuomintang to the Chinese communists. The argument advanced in defense of the Russian action in contracting to respect the integrity of "Manchoukuo" seems to lack conviction.

The attitude of the Chinese Communist Party, as reflected by the comment offered in the Hsin Hua Jih Pao and the article enclosed with this despatch, would appear yet once again to be a faithful echoing of the policy espoused by Moscow—whatever its character. It was so when Soviet Russia came to an agreement with Germany in August 1939, when Soviet Russia invaded Finland, when Russia swallowed up a portion of Poland and the three Baltic States and Bessarabia. In this instance the Chinese Communist Party gives evidence of supporting a policy of the Soviet Union which may not prove advantageous to the rights and interests of China. It will be interesting to observe to what extent the fortunes of the Chinese Communist Party are affected by the recent action of the Soviet Union in concluding a pact of neutrality with Japan.

Respectfully yours,

NELSON TRUSLER JOHNSON

762.94/332: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 24, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received April 24—6:42 p. m.]

843. With reference to Berlin's 1559 of April 23, 3 p. m., I have learned from a reliable source that shipments from the Far East to Germany over the Trans-Siberian Railway are now moving westward regularly at the rate of 100 cars a day without further difficulties and that the German Embassy in Moscow is confident of a substantial increase in the volume of traffic in the near future. The mere fact that

*4 Not printed.
the impediments which existed to this movement prior to Matsuoka's visit to Moscow have been removed would seem to justify the confidence expressed by members of the German Embassy.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

761.9411/124: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, April 25, 1941—6 p. m.
[Received April 25—10:25 a. m.]

602. The following information has been obtained from a reliable source:

The Black Dragon Society, which is both anti-Fascist and anti-Communist, sent a delegation to call on Mr. Matsuoka immediately after his return to Tokyo from Moscow and put to him a series of interrogatories with regard to the extent of the agreement which he had concluded at Moscow. Mr. Matsuoka gave the most categorical assurances that the Japanese-Soviet neutrality treaty contained no secret clauses, that the complete text of all documents signed or agreed upon had been published, and that no oral engagement of any kind was given either by Japan or the Soviet Union. He added that the question of the signatories reducing their respective military forces in [Manchuria?] and in Siberia had not even been discussed.

Repeated to Moscow.

Grew

761.94/1323

The British Embassy to the Department of State

Telegram from London Dated April 22nd, 1941

Following received from Moscow:

After receiving the message Matsuoka proceeded to talk volubly about his trip and his policies. The following were among his points of policy.

(1) He had always been quite frank with His Majesty's Ambassador at Tokyo about his visit. Having signed the Tripartite Pact for better or worse, he had wanted to see Hitler, Von Ribbentrop and Mussolini. He had read a great deal about the two former, but had never met them.

(2) His stay in Moscow was merely a question of passage, though he had always wanted to achieve a rapprochement with the U. S. S. R.

Transmitted on April 25 to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck); noted by the Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State on April 28.
(3) He did not think that he would be able to make any agreement in Moscow. Russians were very hard bargainers.

(4) He regretted the attitude of His Majesty’s Government and the Press and could not think why we were so suspicious of Japan’s intentions in the South.

(5) All Japan wanted was legitimate export expansion and nothing more.

2. I pointed out the fact that they associated themselves with our enemies in the Tripartite Pact and the well-known desire of Germany that Japan should create difficulties for us in the Far East were a perfect basis for serious suspicion.

3. He explained that Japan had entered into the Pact in order to try and stop a disastrous war in the Far East owing to the most unfriendly attitude of the United States. But he had given instructions that attacks on Great Britain and the United States in the Japanese Press were to stop and he was most anxious to avoid a war in the Far East or embroilment in the European war.

4. He spoke of his interview with the Pope and his own fear of the destruction of civilisation which it would take a matter of 2,000 years to rebuild. He emphasised his view of the danger of a world revolution if Germany were defeated. He had obviously been much impressed by Hitler’s anti-Red propaganda.

5. When I pointed out that a war was inevitable if one man tried to rehabilitate the world by force, he said “at any rate he will never dominate Anglo-Saxon or the Japanese peoples.”

6. His whole attitude displayed nervousness at the situation of his own country and fear of being drawn into the war. He obviously desired to create the impression that Japan would not fight for any southward expansion.

7. Speaking of American attitude he said that they wanted Japan to withdraw from China, but this the Japanese would never do as they were determined to introduce the new order in China.

8. Finally he asked me to thank the Prime Minister for sending him a copy of the message and also to express his friendly remembrances to yourself.

740.0011 European War 1939/10383: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, April 27, 1941—noon.

[Received 12:12 p.m.]

605. Embassy’s 534, April 10, 10 p.m. Following is Mr. Matsumoka’s reply to Mr. Churchill’s recent message the original of which

59 See footnote 39, p. 928.
it is understood was to be delivered by the Japanese Ambassador in London:

"Gaimusho, Tokyo, April 22, 1941. Your Excellency: I have just come back from my trip and hasten to acknowledge the receipt of a paper, handed to me at Moscow on the evening of the 12th instant by Sir Stafford Cripps with remark that it was a copy in substance of a letter addressed to me dated London, April 2, 1941, and forwarded to Tokyo.

I wish to express my appreciation for the facilities with which your Government made efforts to provide our Ambassador when he wanted to meet me on the continent. I was keenly disappointed when I learned that he could not come.

Your Excellency may rest assured that the foreign policy of Japan is determined upon and after an unbiased examination of all the facts and a very careful weighing of all the elements of the situation she confronts, always holding steadfastly in view the great racial aim and ambition of finally bringing about on the earth the conditions envisaged in what she calls Hakko-Ichiu, the Japanese conception of a universal peace under which there would be no conquest, no oppression, no exploitation of any and all people. And, once determined, I need hardly tell Your Excellency, it will be carried out with resolution and utmost circumspection, taking in every detail of changing circumstances.

I am, believe me, Your Excellency's obedient servant, Yosuke Matsuoka. His Excellency the Right Honorable Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain."

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow.

Grew

761.9411/130: Telegram

_The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State_

Moscow, April 28, 1941—11 a. m.
[Received 1:20 p. m.]

857. The Moscow papers yesterday published telegrams sent by Matsuoka to Stalin and Molotov on the occasion of the ratification of the Soviet-Japanese pact. In his message to Stalin after renewing his expressions of congratulation and thanks over what he described as a "Blitzkrieg" accomplished without diplomatic formalities, Matsuoka said: "I believe and do not doubt that thanks to the cooperation of Your Excellency, relations between Japan and the Soviet Union will strengthen even more."

The press also published a joint reply from Stalin and Molotov which in addition to the usual polite phrases contained the following statement: "We express the firm conviction that the pact of neutrality which has entered into effect is a basis for further improvement of
Soviet-Japanese relations the development of which the peoples of our country will greet with satisfaction.”

STEINHARDT

761.9411/132: Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGING, May 10, 1941.

[Received 4:25 p.m.]

174. My 137, April 16, 10 a.m. Last evening while visiting the Foreign Minister I inquired whether the Chinese Government had received any assurances from the Soviet Government in connection with its inquiry regarding the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact signed at Moscow. Doctor Wang stated that Molotov had assured the Chinese Ambassador at Moscow that throughout the discussions nothing was said or considered relating to China and that the policy of the Soviet Government toward China would be unchanged as long as China continued its resistance to Japan. Similar assurances had been received from Soviet Ambassador here. He said that Molotov stated that ever since the arrival of the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow last summer the Japanese had been seeking a nonaggression pact similar to the one signed by the Soviet Government with Germany in 1939, that the Soviet Government had refused to sign such a pact but had finally consented to sign with the Japanese a neutrality pact similar to neutrality pact signed between the Soviet Government and the German Government in 1926.

I inquired whether the Chinese Government had any confirmation of the reports that traffic over the Trans-Siberian Railway by passengers had been stopped. He stated that there was no truth in these reports and cited the fact that the British Legation personnel from Hungary had traveled over without difficulty and reports from Chinese consular officers and Chinese travelers to the same effect. He said that there had been two troop trains reported as moving west on the railway but that these had not proceeded as far as European Russia. His comment was that reports were evidently of Japanese origin to give emphasis to their new pact with Russia. He stated that it was his information that the Japanese at first enthusiastic about the Matsuoka pact had upon further thought grown cool on the subject. It was his own view that the pact was a triumph by Molotov as it separated Japan from the Axis.

*Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, was succeeded as Chairman of the Council of Commissars of the Soviet Union (Premier) on May 6 by Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, who continued also as Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.*

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Peiping. Peiping please repeat to Tokyo. Code text by air mail to Moscow.

JOHNSON

740.0011 European War 1939/10806 : Telegram

The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, May 11, 1941—10 a.m.
[Received 10:38 a.m.]
178. Last evening before dinner, Generalissimo took me aside and asked me to tell you that he had good information that Germany plans attack on Soviet Russia between end May and middle June and expressed personal opinion that any irritation of Germany by United States during that period would cause Germany to change policy and refrain from attack. I inquired whether I was to understand that he desired that Germany attack Russia, he replied in the affirmative but gave no explanation.89

JOHNSON

740.0011 European War 1939/10845 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

TOKYO, May 15, 1941—6 p.m.
[Received May 15—9:40 a.m.]

681. Embassy’s 673, May 14, 5 p.m.,90 paragraph numbered 2.
1. In discussing yesterday with my British colleague operation of article 3 of the Tripartite Pact, the Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed the personal opinion that Japan could consider herself entirely absolved from responsibility for the implementation of that article only in the event of an actual German attack on American territory. The foregoing opinion was, however, subject to the Minister’s overriding reservation that he was not at the moment conveying the settled policy of the Japanese Government on that subject.
2. A more extensive report of yesterday’s conversation between the British Ambassador and the Minister for Foreign Affairs is being telegraphed via Shanghai in Embassy’s 680, May 15, 5 p.m.91

GREW

89 In telegram No. 184, May 14, 11 a.m., the Ambassador in China reported that on May 13 Generalissimo Chiang amplified his remarks by stating his opinion that “if the United States entered war against Germany at present moment this would throw Germany and Russia into closer relationship, a situation which he considers would be very dangerous.” (740.0011 European War 1939/10001)
91 Not printed.
Washington, May 22, 1941—5 p.m.

287. There is repeated below for your information the substance of a strictly confidential telegram of May 17 from Moscow:

“The Japanese Ambassador told me last night that in the course of a conversation with Molotov 2 days ago Molotov had said that the rumors of an impending German attack on the Soviet Union were the result of 'British and American propagands' and were entirely without foundation. Molotov had added that in fact Soviet-German relations were ‘excellent’.

“I asked the Ambassador whether it was a fact that the Soviet Government was cooperating with Germany by increasing shipments from the Orient over the Trans-Siberian railway to which he replied ‘Germany now has 140 fully trained and equipped divisions on the Soviet frontier, the Soviets have 110, of which only 34 are fully trained and equipped. I think the cooperation will steadily increase.’ He confirmed the fact that shipments to Germany over the Trans-Siberian have been steadily increasing but was unable to give me the percentage of increase during the past few weeks.

“Insofar as concerns Soviet-Japanese relations the Ambassador said that the Soviets had been ‘behaving somewhat better’ since the signature of the neutrality pact but that the conclusion of a trade agreement had been delayed by a renewed demand for rubber by the Soviets at the last moment. He remarked that the Soviet Government had abandoned its request for tin as he believed they had located a source of supply but were most insistent upon the Japanese delivering rubber. He said that no progress had as yet been made towards a fisheries convention.”

HULL

Moscow, May 27, 1941—6 p.m.

[Received 7:20 p.m.]

1051. The Japanese Ambassador told me this morning that his negotiations with the Soviet authorities looking towards a trade agreement and a permanent fisheries convention continue to be “deadlocked.” He said that in addition to their repeated demands for rubber, the Soviet authorities now insist that Japan make substantial purchases in North and South America for Soviet account, pointing out that the United States and other countries of the Western Hemisphere would more likely hesitate to refuse sales to Japan than to the Soviet Union. He added that the Soviet demands particularly
in respect of rubber, tin, and copper were so excessive that up to the present his Government could not see its way clear to meet them. He also said that the conferences to fix the permanent boundary between Manchukuo and Outer Mongolia were nearly finished and that conversations will shortly begin to fix the permanent border between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union particularly with respect to the question of the ownership of certain islands in the Amur River which has long been a source of conflict between the two Governments.

With respect to Soviet-Japanese relations in general, he said there had been no marked improvement in these relations since the pact of neutrality with the possible exception of a more reasonable attitude by the Soviets in connection with the demarcation of frontiers.

The Ambassador said that based on his general observations and talks with Axis diplomats and members of the Soviet Government, he does not anticipate a German attack on the Soviet Union this summer although he is aware of the fact that his colleague in Berlin does not share this view and that preparations have been made by the Germans to carry out such an attack and by the Soviets to resist it. Speaking as an army officer, he gave it as his opinion that the Soviet Army is not capable of any real resistance to Germany and that the conquest of such areas in the western part of the Soviet Union as Germany might undertake would be a comparatively simple matter although he expressed some doubt as to the ability of the Germans to translate any such conquest into economic or other advantages greater than those now flowing from Soviet cooperation.

Tatekawa likewise stated that he understood that the British are about to take steps to interfere with Japanese whaling operations in order to prevent the continued shipment of whale oil to Germany over the Trans-Siberian.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

762.9411/281: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, May 31, 1941—noon.
[Received May 31—5:03 a.m.]

754. The Foreign Minister released a statement yesterday which is translated as follows:

"It appears that some American newspapers have recently published statements speculating that Japan was becoming cooler toward the Tripartite Alliance. However, there is no doubt whatever that the Tripartite Alliance is the keynote of Japan's national policy. As far as I am concerned, I do not believe that responsible American Gov-
ernment officials entertain any such false idea. If, however, there is any such misunderstanding, it is certainly a great misunderstanding. If such distorted reports are circulating in American newspaper circles, I cannot but think that they are based on a report floated for a special purpose. I consider that it is not improper to take the present occasion to clarify this point.

Furthermore, I wish to take the present opportunity to clarify the following points:

(1) Japan's fundamental policy has for a long time been firmly established and has undergone no change whatever.

(2) Since the conclusion on September 27, last, of the Tripartite Pact, Japan's foreign policy has consistently been conducted with this Pact as its pivot. This should be clear to all from the statements on various occasions by Prime Minister, Prince Fumimaro Konoye, and myself as well as from the subsequent development of Japan's policy. There has, of course, been not the slightest deflection from this course of policy.

(3) It is, therefore, absolutely impossible to imagine that Japan should fail in the slightest degree to carry out faithfully her obligations under the Tripartite Pact.

(4) As has frequently been affirmed, Japan's policy toward the South Seas is peaceful. Should, however, untoward international developments render the execution of such policy impossible, it is a possibility that Japan may have to reconsider her attitude in the light of the changed situation."

Grew

661.9431/32: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 12, 1941—4 p. m.

[Received June 13—3:10 a.m.]

812. The following "joint" communiqué of the Japanese and Soviet Governments concerning the Japanese-Soviet commercial negotiations was issued by the Cabinet Bureau of Information at 1 p. m. today and is published in the afternoon papers:

"Negotiations which have been under way between the Japanese Ambassador Tatekawa and Soviet Trade Commissar Mikoyan in Moscow since February 8 on a Japanese-Soviet commercial pact and a pact concerning their trade and payment have made favorable headway, as a result of a mutual spirit of compromise, and the Japanese Government has gone through necessary procedures for the drafting of the two pacts."

According to the announcement of the Cabinet Board of Information, two pacts will be concluded; (1) a Japanese-Soviet commercial agreement valid for 5 years and automatically renewed unless de-

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union in telegram No. 1136, June 12, 4 p. m., reported a similar announcement in Moscow (761.94/1328).
nounced by either party which will extend reciprocal most-favored-
nation treatment in regard export and import duties, restrictions on
exports and imports, ships and cargoes, customs procedure, tonnage
dues, harbor dues, pilot fees, and other matters; (2) an agreement
concerning trade and payments valid for 1 year and in the absence of
cancellation by either party automatically renewable for a similar
period. The latter agreement provides for a total annual trade turn-
over[?] of 60 million yen between the two countries, with Japanese
exports to the value of 80 million yen of raw silk, cocoons, machines,
instruments, camphor oil, general merchandise, and imports of equal
value from the Soviet Union of petroleum products, manganese ore,
platinum, fertilizer and general merchandise with payments to be
effected on the basis of the yen.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai, repeated to Moscow.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/12029 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 13, 1941—9 p. m.
[Received June 13—1 : 30 p. m.]

820. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary.

1. My Polish colleague has informed me in strictest secrecy of a
telegram received from Mr. Zaleski, Polish Minister for Foreign Af-
Fairs in London, dated June 11, of which the following is a translation.
Even while making full allowances for the Nazi capacity for intrigue,
it is difficult to appraise this information at its face value, but I pass it
on to the Department in view of its substantial source and in case it
should fit in with other information known to our Government.

2. (Begin translation.) On May 23 Doctor Schacht*8 informed
the Chinese Government that in order to avoid, if possible, the inter-
vention of the United States in the European war, Germany would be
prepared to abandon Japan and to effect a rapprochement with China.
China has decided to reply with a refusal and to so inform President
Roosevelt. Doctor Schacht foresaw that after German offensive in
the direction of the Near East, Germany during the course of the
summer will attack Soviet Russia. He did not hide the serious losses
of Germany, the dissensions among the Nazis and the discouragement
which is increasing among German population as a result of the
prolongation of the war.

Doctor Schacht's observations may well represent an effort on his
part to endeavor to conciliate the British and American pacifists in
return for collaboration for the destruction of communism.

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*Hjalmar Schacht, German Minister without Portfolio and former Presid-
ent of the Reichsbank.
The Soviet Minister in Stockholm is aware that Germany actually proposed to Russia to allow her a free hand in the Pacific which would lead to the assumption that this would entail the abandonment of Japan by Germany. The Soviet Government is reported to have refused to enter such a combination. (End translation.)

Grew

762.9411/270: Telegram
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 19, 1941—10 a. m.
[Received 3:20 p. m.]

852. Rumors persist in Tokyo that a division of opinion on matters of high policy exists within the Cabinet. While Japan is publicly committed to the tripartite alliance a strong resistance to totalitarianism, especially of the Nazi type, has recently become apparent. This fact together with considerations in the field of international relations such as trends in American policy and possible future moves of Germany in respect to Soviet Russia may be responsible for the “standstill” atmosphere which now prevails in Tokyo.

It may be of value to point out certain indications of this conflict of opinion within Japan, one notable reflection of which is the exceedingly mild nature of the reply to the Government of the Netherlands Indies.94

1. During discussions by delegates to the meeting of the Council of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, it was divulged that a pamphlet containing the text of Matsuoka’s address delivered at Hibiya Hall on April 26 was suppressed. Matsuoka on that occasion vehemently defended the German totalitarian system, stated that Japan’s economic structure was greatly inferior to that of Germany and criticized Japanese business and Government leaders for incompetence and a lack of sense of responsibility. Probably for these reasons and because the tone of the speech was “Hitleresque” in the extreme, circulation of the 200,000 copies of the pamphlet, printed from the complete text supplied by Matsuoka, was prohibited by the Home Ministry.

2. Yanagawa, the Minister of Justice, is understood to have caused the arrest during the past few months of 440 minor Government officials whose expressed totalitarian ideas have made them subject to accusation under the provision of the thought control law specifying penalties for persons advocating the overthrow of the capitalist system. The recent imprisonment of the Director of the Agriculture

94 See telegram No. 835, June 18, 3 p. m., from the Ambassador in Japan, vol. v, p. 179.
Policy Bureau of the Agriculture Ministry for appropriating funds for Matsuoka propaganda, is now reported to have been the direct cause of the resignation on June 11 of Ishiguro, the Minister of Agriculture.

3. The press of June 17 announced that a new Bureau for Thought Control would be set up within the Cabinet and that one of its principal objectives would be the suppression of dangerous thoughts held by Government officials.

4. The speeches by delegates to the Council of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association have been extremely enlightening in indicating dissatisfaction with Japan’s policy and opposition to the trend toward Nazi Fascism. Speakers have admitted the existence of important pro-British and pro-American elements in Japan and at least one has urged that Japan should not imitate the Nazi system.

5. The above indications as well as the occasional expression of editorial criticism of German policy (such as that quoted in Embassy’s 644, May 6, 6 p. m.*) strongly suggest the lack of unity in the nation. They also imply that the direction of Japan’s diplomatic policy has not been finally determined and that a sudden change is not impossible.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/12252 : Telegram
The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 20, 1941—7 p.m.
[Received 11:15 p.m.]

1183. In the course of a conversation with the Japanese Ambassador this morning he told me that he had called on Molotov a few days ago and had sought to draw him out on the subject of Soviet-German relations. Molotov had indicated that there was no reason for alarm and said that if there were any “differences” it was his function to smooth them out. The Ambassador gained the impression that while the Soviet Government perhaps anticipates demands from Germany it assumes they will be of such a nature that they cannot be met and that it is complacent about its ability to meet the situation. He added, however, that since yesterday he had been unable to share Molotov’s sanguine outlook.

Insofar as concerns the Japanese position in the event of the outbreak of war between the Soviet Union and Germany, the Ambassador said, “I do not think we will come in right away. We will probably

* Not printed.
wait to see what happens and if the outcome is what I think it will be we will pick up the pieces.” He told me in the strictest confidence that the German Embassy has today started to make arrangements to evacuate 80 of its personnel and that he also had started today to evacuate as many of the members of his Embassy as possible. When he had made it clear to me that he expects a German attack on the Soviet Union, I asked him whether he could “guess the date” to which he replied, “I think about the end of the month because I have just heard that the weather in Germany is still ‘too wet’ but that by the end of the month it should be ‘dry enough’.” I then asked his opinion as to the duration of such a conflict to which he replied, “The Germans tell me that they have 35 mechanized divisions which they would employ and that they believe they can complete the operation in 2 months. I believe they have selected the months of July and August.” Tatekawa remarked that he anticipated “chaos” and perhaps even mob rule in Moscow, adding that he thought the Government would probably “run away” without making any provision for the remaining diplomats and that he hoped the situation would not be too difficult for the diplomats between the time of the departure of the Soviet Government and the entry of the German Army into Moscow. He said that he assumed the Germans would bomb the bridges on the Trans-Siberian Railway making this means of exit impassable. He expects all communication with the northwest and south would be cut off as soon as the war broke out and expressed grave doubt that telegraphic communications would be available to the Diplomatic Corps.

Speaking as a military man, he expressed the opinion that the Red Army, which he said was anxious to fight Germany, might make a creditable showing for a brief period of time but that when the break came it would be largely a question of the Germans collecting hundreds of thousands of prisoners.

Towards the close of our discussion I asked the Ambassador whether in his opinion the tension which has been now built up to a peak might not be a pressure move or bluff designed to extract the maximum concessions from Stalin. He replied, “Of course, that is entirely possible and I have no definite information that a final decision has been made in Berlin to attack. But since yesterday I have had the distinct impression that Hitler has decided to liquidate communism and that he intends to attack irrespective of any concessions that Stalin might be prepared to make and that after having liquidated communism he may endeavor to negotiate peace with England.”

Repeated to Tokyo.

Steinhardt
JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH AXIS AND WITH U.S.S.R.

740.0011 European War 1939/11970: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, June 21, 1941—2 p.m.

347. For your strictly confidential information, the Department has furnished the Embassy in London, in connection with the current reports of a possible Anglo-Russian rapprochement in the face of Russo-German tension, the following outline of this Government’s present policy toward the Soviet Union:

1. To make no approaches to the Soviet Government;
2. To treat any approaches which the Soviet Government may make toward us with reserve until such time as the Soviet Government may satisfy us that it is not engaging merely in maneuvers for the purpose of obtaining unilaterally concessions and advantages for itself;
3. To reject any Soviet suggestions that we make concessions for the sake of improving the atmosphere of American-Soviet relations and to exact a strict quid pro quo for anything which we are willing to give the Soviet Union;
4. To make no sacrifices in principle in order to improve relations;
5. In general, to give the Soviet Government to understand that we consider an improvement in relations to be just as important to the Soviet Union as to the United States, if not more important to the Soviet Union;
6. To base our day-to-day relations so far as practicable on the principle of reciprocity.”

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/12350: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

TOKYO, June 23, 1941—5 p.m.
[Received June 23—11:08 a.m.]

867. 1. There has thus far been no authoritative or otherwise definitive reaction here to the German attack on Russia. The importance of this development was, however, attested to by a meeting yesterday of the “Inner Cabinet” and by conferences of high officials at the Foreign Office and War Department. The papers this morning report briefly that war between Germany and Russia is bound to have serious repercussions internally as well as on Japan’s foreign policies and that, while the Japanese Government for the present will continue merely to await further developments, it may, if circumstances warrant, make an announcement in the near future for the purpose of clarifying its position.

*For correspondence on United States attitude respecting the German attack on the Soviet Union, see vol. 1, under Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, section entitled “The Beginnings of Assistance From the United States for the Soviet Union After Its Invasion by Germany.”*
2. The German Ambassador called yesterday evening on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to communicate officially to the Japanese Government the German declaration of war against Russia. The Foreign Office release states that the call lasted one hour, thus suggesting that the call was something more than pro forma.

3. [Here follows report on press reactions.]

4. The papers yesterday conducted surveys of the views of anonymous business leaders and publicists. Consensus would appear to be that yesterday’s development in Europe does not call for any hasty decision on the part of Japan. The view is put forward that, whereas China can no longer count on help from Russia, American help to China will undoubtedly increase. Reference was also made to the termination of trade between Germany and Japan. Mention was also made with considerable emphasis of the need for Japan to go forward as quickly as possible with plans for the completion of the Japan-China-Manchukuo economic and industrial bloc.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow. Code text via air mail to Shanghai. Shanghai please repeat to Chungking.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/12378 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 23, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received June 23—6:40 p. m.]

869. 1. A colleague who enjoys intimate personal relations with a former Japanese Prime Minister this morning had an hour’s talk with this elder statesman and pointed out to him that Mr. Matsuoka’s policies had brought about the following situations: (a) Japan’s hands are tied vis-à-vis Germany owing to the Tripartite Pact; (b) Japan’s hands are tied vis-à-vis Soviet Russia owing to the neutrality pact; (c) negotiations with the Netherlands East Indies have failed to produce the desired results; (d) the China conflict is no nearer a settlement; (e) Japan’s relations with the United States have steadily and materially worsened.

2. The Japanese statesman said that he entirely agreed and that in the course of a conference with the Government to which he expects shortly to be summoned he will charge the Foreign Minister with responsibility for this deplorable situation and may point out that when Germany signed the non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia subsequent to the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact, the then Foreign Minister, Mr. Arita, had accepted responsibility and had resigned.
3. While insufficient time has yet elapsed since Germany's declaration of war against Soviet Russia to appraise the repercussions and eventual effect in Japan, my colleague received the impression that his friend considers the fall of the Cabinet not impossible.

Sent to the Department, repeated to Moscow. Code text via air mail to Shanghai. Shanghai please repeat to Chungking.

Grew

Memorandum by Mr. William R. Langdon of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs 87

WASHINGTON,] June 23, 1941.

GERMANY'S ATTACK ON THE SOVIET UNION: JAPAN'S REACTION

A press report from Tokyo yesterday said that the Cabinet had gone into extraordinary session to discuss the new situation created by Germany's attack on Russia. We may assume, on the basis that Japanese policy has been predatory and opportunistic in recent years, that one of the questions occupying the mind of the Cabinet is what advantage might be taken of the new situation regardless of the recent Matsuoka-Stalin neutrality pact, specifically whether or not Japan should grab off Siberia east of Baikal.

It is believed that the military aspect of the situation will cause Japan to hesitate invading Siberia. An autonomous army, steadily strengthened and enlarged since 1931, is stationed in the Soviet Far East. We have heard for years that it has been laying up supplies of all kinds and we know that it has facilities at Habarovsky, Chita and other Far Eastern centers for maintenance and a certain degree of replenishment of war materials. For example, a traveler east of Baikal, as long ago as 1938, noted at least two large airdrome-plane repair plants from the train window. There is no doubt that this army has by now reached very large proportions, too large to be transported in time to the western front over the rickety trans-Siberian Railway system. Thus, the Soviet Far Eastern army must be left behind or moved west very slowly. It must also be remembered that there is a Soviet Maginot Line of sorts along the eastern and northern Manchurian frontier.

Were Japan's full military force available for invasion, no doubt the Soviet Far Eastern army could be disposed of. But this is not the case, and the Japanese forces which might be free for a Siberian

87 See also memorandum of June 23 by the Chief of the Division (Hamilton), p. 276.
campaign are believed inadequate to overcome the Red army’s resistance. Moreover, the Japanese have acquired a wholesome respect of Russian artillery, tanks, and to a lesser degree planes from their 1938 Changkufeng and 1939 Nomonhan encounters with the Red army and are not likely to tackle them again with the shoe-string forces available.

In estimating Japan’s probable course we must not take it for granted that the Japanese people at the present moment are only and constantly thinking of war and bigger and better adventures. We must bear in mind the war weariness of the Japanese at home and their growing discomforts and shortages. The latter, in respect to war materials and facilities for reproducing them, especially mechanized equipment, can only become more acute with our own export controls and with the cutting off of transportation with Germany, and we can only expect from now on a deterioration of Japanese defense industries. Other deterrents to invasion of Siberia besides the initial resistance of the Red army, which the Japanese would expect to be at least as stiff as at Changkufeng and Nomonhan, would be the possibility of (1) a dreaded winter campaign in Siberia, (2) bombing of Japanese cities and Hsinking from Vladivostok and other points, (3) the organization and rearming of Chinese guerillas in Manchuria and possibly Korean malcontents, and (4), even if the initial campaign should be successful, repetitions of the Nikolaievsk “massacre” and Red “partisan” murders of Japanese of 1918–1922, still fresh in the minds of the Japanese people.

894.00/1081

Memorandum by Mr. Max W. Schmidt of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] June 24, 1941.

THE EFFECTS ON JAPAN OF THE PRESENT WAR BETWEEN GERMANY AND RUSSIA

1. The most immediately apparent effect of the declaration of war between Germany and Russia is the closing, for the present, of direct transportation routes between Germany and Japan and the stopping of shipments of goods and travel via Russia between Japan and Germany. Existing economic and political relations between the two countries are such as apparently to make it desirable to both Germany and Japan that transportation and travel routes between the

* Capital of “Manchoukuo.”
** Initiated by the Chief of the Division (Hamilton).
Far East and Europe be reestablished as soon as possible. Those circles in Japan, however, which desire that Japan's ties with the Axis be weakened, probably look with equanimity upon the severance of physical connection with Germany.

2. It is believed that the immediate reaction of the Japanese people by and large will be one of confusion, giving rise to considerable uncertainty, even in highly placed circles, of the most desirable course to follow. Pro-Axis elements will attempt to foster the feeling that Germany is now actually and directly aiding Japan by attacking and weakening Japan's traditional enemy, Russia. This view will probably receive rather wide acceptance. The "golden opportunity" arguments will be subjects of further polishing by Japanese pro-Axis orators. At the same time, large numbers of Japanese will find considerable difficulty in adjusting their minds to the continuing rapid changes in German political tactics (Matsuoka's conclusion recently of the Neutrality Pact with Russia adds to the confusing series of the anti-Comintern pact, 1936, the German non-aggression pact with Russia, 1939, the Tripartite Pact, 1940, and now the German declaration of war on Russia). Hitler and the German cause will most likely be lowered morally in the eyes of many Japanese, especially in the eyes of such men as Baron Hiranuma and his associates. There should be readily apparent to many Japanese leaders the probability that a German success against Russia, if achieved and stabilized, would in the long run turn Russia in the direction of Asia to the detriment of Japan.

3. The Japanese people and leaders cannot be expected to forget what they have for many years considered as the Russian dagger pointed at the heart of Japan. Providing that an attack on Russia should be deemed to be militarily feasible, many Japanese would regard such an attack at this time as presenting an opportunity to remove the threat to Japan from the maritime provinces and to settle such perpetually troublesome problems as the maritime fisheries, concessions in northern Sakhalin, border disputes stretching from Mongolia across Sakhalin, Russian aid to China, Russian tutelage of Chinese communists, et cetera. The desirability of removing the military and ideological danger of Russia is well-known to and appreciated by Japanese of all classes. An attack by Japan on Russia might further confuse thinking in the United States and might be in Germany's opinion highly desirable so far as that attack would not interfere with Germany's probable ultimate objective for eventual control of the Far East through offsetting Russia, China and Japan, one against the other. Should Germany experience difficulty in speedily settling its war with Russia, it is believed possible that Hitler might encourage Japan's natural inclination to attack Far Eastern Russia.
4. If Japan can assure itself that Russia is no immediate threat (possibly through knowledge of Russian large-scale transfer of troops and equipment or of such aggressive weapons as bombing planes from Siberia to the European front) and if Japan can further assure itself that no third country would be allowed or would be in a position to use Siberian bases against Japan, then Japan may decide “to go southward”. It is likely that Hitler will urge the Japanese to continue to threaten the Netherlands East Indies, Singapore and the southwestern Pacific areas in order to continue tension between the United States and Japan. It is probable that Germany would prefer that there be no decisive action or definitive settlement in the Pacific until such time as Germany itself may be in a position directly to participate. However, in the event Germany shows considerable promise of advancing to Suez and/or the Persian Gulf (possibly with the benevolent neutrality of Turkey), Japan and Germany, if their present political relations continue to exist or are further strengthened, may find it highly desirable to attempt to establish connection between the Far East and Europe by sea. To accomplish this objective Japan would necessarily have to undertake its “advance to the south”.

5. It is believed that should there develop in Japan following the declaration of war between Germany and Russia any real sentiment favoring further military undertakings, such sentiment is far more likely in the first instance to be in the direction of action against Russia than toward a reinforcement of whatever sentiment there may be in Japan at the moment favoring an attack against European possessions in the southwest Pacific. It is conceivable, however, that developments in the German-Russian war may be of such a character as subsequently to turn Japan’s paramount attention southward.

Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] June 24, 1941.

MR. WELLES: Herewith two memoranda prepared by officers of FE commenting upon probable Japanese reactions to the outbreak of war between Germany and Russia. The first memorandum, prepared by Mr. Schmidt,¹ and concurred in by the senior officers of FE, represents what I believe to be the most probable Japanese reactions. The second memorandum, prepared by Mr. Langdon,² a senior Japanese language officer who has just returned to the United States from some five years service at Mukden followed by a short assignment at the Tokyo

¹ Dated June 24, supra.
² Dated June 23, p. 981.
Embassy, sets forth factors which may operate to discourage embarkation by Japan upon a military attack upon Siberia. While I believe that the factors listed by Mr. Langdon warrant consideration, they represent in my opinion factors bearing only upon one side of the question.

The two memoranda contain tentative and preliminary expressions of view which, although they may be changed in the light of further analysis and further developments, I believe you will find of interest. The viewpoints expressed in both memoranda point to the probability that there is likely to ensue in Japan a period of uncertainty and of extreme difficulty in deciding upon a future course.²

M[AXWELL] M. H[AMILTON]

Copies to Mr. Hornbeck and Mr. Atherton.³

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740.0011 European War 1939/12545 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

Moscow, June 26, 1941—4 p. m.
[Received June 27—9:40 a. m.]

1232. . .

Tatekawa further told me that the Japanese Government is now in continuous session and that it will probably reach a decision within the next 48 hours on the subject of a declaration of war against the Soviet Union or neutrality. He expressed the opinion that it will decide to remain neutral and that it anticipated the collapse of the Soviet Government following the defeat of the Soviet armies by Germany whereupon it would exploit the situation in the Far East. He expressed the firm conviction that the Japanese people are opposed to embarking upon war with the Soviet Union and said that the Japanese Government would be guided accordingly. He added that his Government had already decided that Germany had been the aggressor and that consequently Japan was under no obligation as an ally of Germany to take part in the war.

At the close of our talk the Ambassador expressed the opinion that should the German Army reach Minsk and there be indication that the Soviet Government intended to leave Moscow the chiefs of missions should call on Molotov and inquire of him what provision the

² Notation by Mr. Welles: “Very interesting — S. W.”
³ Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.
Soviet Government was making to take the Diplomatic Corps with it to the new seat of Government.

Speaking as a military man Tatekawa expressed the view that the Soviet Union would not necessarily be vanquished by the fall of Minsk or even the fall of Moscow provided it did not permit its major armies to be trapped through failure to withdraw them in ample time. He said that the break through at Vilna had come so soon he doubted it was now possible for the Soviet general staff to save the armies in the north unless they could make a stand in the neighborhood of Minsk for sufficient time to permit their orderly withdrawal.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/12546: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 26, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received June 27—11:42 a. m.]

886. Embassy’s 868, June 23, 6 p. m. ¹

1. The Soviet Military Attaché this morning told a member of the staff that in reply to the Soviet Ambassador’s inquiry on June 24, in regard to Japan’s attitude in the Soviet-German war, Matsuoka had stated that the policy of his Government had not yet been formulated and that Japan’s attitude would be in large measure influenced by an examination of the responsibility for the outbreak of war. Matsuoka went on to say that Japan’s fundamental policy was association with the Axis and that the neutrality treaty with the Soviet Union was of secondary importance and that therefore it would be necessary for the Japanese Government to consider whether under the circumstances relations with the Soviet Union could be brought into conformity with Japan’s fundamental policy.

2. An unusually well-informed Japanese remarked today to us that Japan’s policy of cooperation with the Axis powers had been predicated on continued close association between Germany and Soviet Russia and that the breaking out of war between these two countries had destroyed the fundamental basis of Japan’s pro-Axis policy. This statement, which I believe to be substantially true, will serve to put in true perspective the observations above reported of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow.

GREW

¹ Not printed; it reported a Soviet request that Japan define its attitude toward the Soviet-German war (740.0011 European War 1939/12331).
WASHINGTON, June 27, 1941—2 p.m.

355. Press reports from Tokyo indicate uncertainty and misunderstanding in Japan in regard to the policy of the United States with reference to the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Russia. For example, the War Minister is quoted as stating at a conference of munitions makers on June 24 that with the future attitude of the United States unpredictable, Japan is at the crossroads of her destiny, while the *Yomiuri* is reported to have expressed the fear that Great Britain and the United States may use Russian possessions as a military base, causing a crisis in Japan's national defense. Again, *Yomiuri* is credited with saying that American friendliness for Russia is due to an effort to gain a foothold against Japan, and the *Hochi* with finding a military menace in such friendliness.

You are authorized, in your discretion, in conversations which you may have with responsible Japanese, to say that the attitude of the United States in regard to the hostilities in Europe has been made abundantly clear on many occasions; that the purpose of this Government is to protect the security of the United States and of the Americas; that Hitler's armies are regarded as the chief threat to America; that therefore the fixed policy of this Government is to aid Great Britain and other nations which are resisting Hitler's armies in as much as such resistance contributes to our security; and that such opposition will be welcomed, from whatever source it may spring. Consequently, any measures which this Government may have in mind designed to aid Russia will have for their sole purpose the defense of the security of the United States and will offer no threat whatever to the security of nations not involved in the conflict on the side of Hitlerism.

Welles

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740.0011 European War 1939/1284 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 27, 1941—6 p.m.

[Received 11:10 p.m.]

891. Berlin's 2556, June 25, 4 p.m.*

1. The position here is still as reported in recent telegrams, namely, the press has excluded from publication any discussion or other indication of approval or disapproval with regard to the German attack on

*Not printed.
Soviet Russia or with regard to alleged Soviet provocations, and elements within the Japanese Government which formulate national policy, such as the Cabinet and the High Command, continue to hold conferences. There is no reason to believe that decision on future policy has yet been taken. Therefore, any analysis which could be made at this time of the position which Japan may take in view of the new situation in Europe must of necessity be speculative. The German view of the Japanese reaction as reported in the telegram under reference, however, would appear to be so disingenuous as to require comment on the basis of our observations here.

2. The statement that the general Japanese reaction is one of full sympathy for Germany is wholly imaginative, as no indication of Japanese reaction has been permitted to appear, or at any rate has appeared, in the press. There is, of course, a large and strong element whose sensibilities have not been offended even by disclosure of Germany’s calculated betrayal of Soviet Russia: an element which has been well entrenched at the Foreign Office as well as in the army and navy. Leaders of this group, including several retired admirals and generals, are reported to be making strong representations to the Government to adopt a policy of unequivocal support of Germany. Apart from the fact that Japanese privately express themselves as being shocked by the long calculated and callous attack by Germany on the nation whose cooperation alone made practicable Germany’s decision to start the European war, the facts that such representations are thought to be necessary by the pro-German group and that the Government is continuing to examine the situation, are clear evidence that the German view of the Japanese reaction as being one of “full sympathy” for Germany is incorrect.

3. As the Department is aware, Wang Ching Wei’s visits to Japan resulted from his dissatisfaction over Japan’s neutrality treaty with Soviet Russia and Japan’s efforts to conclude a working arrangement with Chinese Communists. As one of the ostensible reasons for Wang’s flight from Chungking was Chiang Kai Shek’s cooperation with the Communists and with Soviet Russia, the former was being placed in a logically difficult position by his associates, the Japanese, seeking collaboration with both the Chinese Communists and Soviet Russia. In our view the reference in the recent joint statement to combating communism, which we believe was inserted in the statement because of Wang’s insistence, has significance the compass of which is restricted to the Far Eastern situation. That the Germans can find still wider significance in that reference is an interesting disclosure of failure thus far on the part of the Japanese Government to furnish Germany a more substantial basis for hope of Japanese collaboration against Soviet Russia. It must be evident that the present situation is one
which presents Japan with a unique opportunity to procure Soviet assistance to bring to an end the conflict with China, which remains as Japan’s first preoccupation, as it is the cause and origin of the extremely dangerous position in which she now finds herself.

4. With regard to the question whether there should have been prior consultation with Japan before the attack on Soviet Russia, we do not believe that the final Japanese decision will be largely influenced by relevant stipulations or absence thereof in the treaty of alliance. From a legalistic point of view Japan could properly observe simultaneously the letter of that treaty and also of the neutrality treaty with Soviet Russia.

Indeed if Japan’s position were to be decided purely on the basis of legal considerations such decision would not have required any delay. The fact is of course that Japan is again at the crossroads. She entered into an alliance with Germany on the basis of expectation that peace, if not close cooperation, would be maintained between Germany and Soviet Russia. The betrayal of that expectation has overturned one of the fundamental bases of Japan’s adherence to the Axis.

5. To sum up, thus far there is no evidence that any decision on policy has been taken by the Japanese Government and there is no definite indication at this time of the trend of thought which will eventually prove dominant. It seems to us that, unless decision is taken to go “all out” on the side of Germany, a decision which would not seem to consort with the prevailing political atmosphere, a situation such as this, arising in considerable measure from failure on the part of the Japanese to read aright the German character, cannot be passed off without important internal adjustments. We would expect in such event that procedure would follow closely that taken when the Hiranuma Cabinet fell as a result of the German-Soviet nonaggression treaty, namely, that policy would first be formulated and that adjustments of personnel within the Government would be made along the lines best calculated to implement such policy.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Berlin and Moscow.

Grew

740.001I European War 1939/12628: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, June 30, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received June 30—10:05 a.m.]

904. I am informed orally that in the course of an interview granted yesterday by the Prime Minister to Mr. Neukeu [Menken?], representative of Paramount News Company, Prince Konoye stated that Japan would be able to reconcile the Tripartite Pact and the Neutral-
ity Treaty with Soviet Russia. He said further that while he foresaw a German victory and German domination of the western part of Soviet Russia, he did not expect that German influence would extend to the east and he thought that there might not be a collapse of the present Soviet regime. He is reported to have emphasized that Japan desired only friendly relations with the United States and that there was no reason for a conflict to arise between the two countries.¹

The representatives of the Associated Press and United Press, who were informed of this interview, are of the opinion that in view of Prince Konoye’s reported remarks it is improbable that the Japanese Government will issue any formal statement of policy in the near future.

Repeated to Moscow.

GREW

749.0011 European War 1939/12686a : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, June 30, 1941—6 p.m.

362. 1. A United Press report under Tokyo date line of June 29 appears in today’s American papers in regard to comments made by Prime Minister Konoe in an interview on the morning of June 29 in his private residence.² According to the press account, the Prime Minister asked that Americans make a vigorous effort to understand Japan’s position, which he conceived to be that of a factor for peace and stability in East Asia, and he insisted that Japan was not a partner to any German plan for world conquest. This statement is not attributed to the Prime Minister as a direct quotation. Some direct quotations attributed to the Prime Minister are that “Japan is very anxious to maintain friendly relations with the United States and we see no reason why our two countries cannot remain friendly”; that “let me emphasize again that we are very anxious to maintain friendship for the United States. We consider that the German-Japanese alliance is designed to keep the United States from involvement in the European war”; and that “the Tripartite Pact has one chief purpose—of a defensive nature. I do hope that the people of the United States will understand its spirit as we envisage it. Let me repeat, again and again, that I can see no reason why the Japanese and American people cannot remain friendly”. According to the press account, the Premier asserted that Japan’s recent political relations with Germany all have been motivated by a desire to keep the European war away from the Far East. The Premier is reported to have said that

¹ See also memorandum by Mr. Joseph W. Ballantine, June 30, p. 285.
² See memorandum by Mr. Joseph W. Ballantine, June 30, p. 285.
the "defensive nature" of the Three Power Pact could not be too
greatly stressed.
2. Please inform the Department urgently whether this reported
interview has been given publicity in the Japanese press.9
3. Please also give the Department urgently your appraisal of the
significance, if any, of the interview.
4. Your 904, June 30, 8 p. m., has just been received. The press ac-
count appearing here contains no reference to the statements made
in the first two sentences of your telegram under reference.

WELLES

740.0011 European War 1939/12689 : Telegram
The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, July 1, 1941—2 p. m.
[Received 9:17 p. m.]
400. In speaking with Kollontay10 this morning she stated that
there had been no change in Russian attitude toward assistance to
China and she mentioned that whereas Turkey, Iran and other coun-
tries had announced their neutrality in Russo-German war China had
proclaimed friendly neutrality.
She believed that fighting was going on as planned; Red Army
strategy was a slow retirement, while inflicting as great losses as pos-
sible on German troops, to 1939 frontiers of Russia which were strongly
fortified and where a great stand would be made.
With regard to Soviet-Japanese relations, she told me confidentially
that no Russian troops had been removed from Manchurian frontier
since signing of Matsuoka-Molotov agreement.

STERLING

740.0011 European War 1939/12731 : Telegram
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

TOKYO, July 2, 1941—7 p. m.
[Received 8 p. m.]
924. Embassy's 916, July 2, noon.11
1. A bulletin just issued states briefly that a conference of high
officials was held this morning in the presence of the Emperor and
that decision on important national policies was reached. There has
still been no indication of the direction in which the majority opinion

9 The Ambassador in Japan replied in telegram No. 916, July 2, noon, that the
interview was not mentioned in the local press (740.0011 European War
1939/12687).
10 Mme. Alexandra Kollontay, Soviet Minister in Sweden.
11 See footnote 9, above.
was tending prior to the taking of the decision above-mentioned, and there is available therefore practically no conclusive material on which to base any definitive estimate of the significance of the interview which the Prime Minister gave Menken. Any such appraisal would necessarily be an attempt to predict the policy which has been in process of formulation during the past 10 days, and we can only emphasize that any such attempt would be at this time wholly speculative. There are, however, a few straws in the wind.

2. The first of these is the striking dissimilarity in tone and content between the statements and views attributed to the Prime Minister by Menken and the statement issued by the Prime Minister on October 4 last year (Embassy’s 946, October 5, 5 p. m., 1940 18). It would seem to us that Prince Konoye’s present plea for American friendship and for understanding by the United States of Japan’s position, his reference to Japan not being party to any German plan for world conquest and his alluding to the three-power alliance as an instrument for defense, are all a far cry from the pugnacious and menacing character of his statement of last year (it is being freely admitted by Japanese that the earlier statement was a “bad mistake” and that it had been suggested by Mr. Matsuoka as a part of his “diplomacy by menaces”). A few days ago the Prime Minister asked a close Japanese friend of mine whether I was fully aware of his strong desire to improve Japan’s relations with the United States. He had previously spoken most confidentially to another reliable Japanese contact of the prospect of adjusting American-Japanese relations. So far as the Prime Minister, along with some of his close associates who are themselves persons of considerable consequence, is concerned we can, I think, accept the statements which he made in his interview as reflective of his strong desire, if not determination, to avoid conflict with the United States.

3. To us perhaps the most significant observation attributed to Prince Konoye is his statement that the principal purpose of the triple alliance is defensive. It will be recalled that the position which Mr. Matsuoka took with me and with several of my colleagues after his return from Moscow was in effect that, except in the case of Germany’s attempt to invade the United States, outbreak of war between the United States and Germany would probably result in Japan’s involve-

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18 The Department’s telegram No. 832, July 10, 2 p. m., advised the Ambassador in Japan as follows: “From what we have been told by the Japanese here we gather that the interview in question was designed specifically and deliberately to meet intimations given us by those Japanese that it would be helpful for the Japanese Government to give some clearer indication than it has yet given of the desire of that Government to pursue peaceful courses.”

19 Foreign Relations, 1940, vol. 1, in section entitled “Relations of Japan With the Axis Powers and With the Soviet Union.”
ment in the war on the side of Germany. Through various contacts we brought to the attention of the Prime Minister and his associates the interpretation being placed by Mr. Matsuoka on Japan’s obligations as defined under the alliance treaty. We pointed out that if Mr. Matsuoka’s interpretation was in fact that of the Japanese Government the enlargement of Japan’s obligation beyond that stipulated in the treaty itself converted an alliance which might perhaps plausibly be characterized as defensive into an offensive alliance. We further communicated the view that it was difficult to see how an offensive alliance could be reconciled with the characterization of the treaty by the Imperial rescript 14 (issued when the treaty was concluded) as an instrumentality for peace (I am inclined to construe Prince Konoye’s observation under reference as a fairly open assurance that Mr. Matsuoka’s interpretation of Japan’s treaty obligation to assist their allies has not been accepted by the Cabinet as a whole []).

4. As some clarification of Japan’s position will presumably be forthcoming shortly, I am reluctant to indulge in prophecy. We have been impressed by the frequency with which Japanese contacts have been referring, ever since the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, to the wisdom of Japan’s steady and progressive withdrawal, instituted with Japan’s withdrawal from the League of Nations, from involvement in the affairs of Europe. Although I consider it highly unlikely that Japan will denounce or otherwise formally terminate her alliance with Germany, the almost universally expressed desire for noninvolvement in the European war, as well as Prince Konoye’s statement to Menken that Japan’s recent political relations with Germany have been motivated by desire to keep the European war away from the Far East, strongly suggests that the decision which is reported to have been taken today by the Imperial Conference will be of such a nature as to restrict and not enlarge the chances of conflict with the United States as a result of new Japanese initiatives.

5. With regard to paragraph numbered 4 of the Department’s 362, June 30, 6 p.m., a copy of Menken’s despatch obtained yesterday indicates that the following statements attributed to the Prime Minister were deleted by the censor: “Declaring Japan’s intention ‘adhere to all her treaties’—both toward Germany, Russia—Konoye opined Germans may win on Russia’s western front but unbelieved Russia will collapse or come under rule new regime other than Stalin’s [apparent omission] Konoye said unbelieved German offensive anti-Russia result establishment Germans on Pacific through Russia.”

Grew

The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, July 4, 1941—2 p. m.
[Received July 4—11: 10 a. m.]

274. During courtesy call at Embassy today Generalissimo Chiang told me an attack by Japan on Siberia is certain. He stated Japan will denounce neutrality pact with Russia and simultaneously or shortly thereafter attack in Siberia. He stated his source of information is very reliable and suggested I inform my Government.

Gauss

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew) 36

WASHINGTON, July 4, 1941—3 p. m.

372. For the Ambassador and the Counselor only. Please communicate to the Prime Minister as under instruction a message sent by the Secretary of State at the specific request of the President substantially as follows:

The Government of the United States is receiving reports from a variety of sources to the effect that the Government of Japan has decided to embark upon hostilities against the Soviet Union. As the Government of Japan is aware, the Government of the United States has earnestly desired to see peace maintained and preserved in the Pacific area and has done its utmost to contribute to achievement of this high end. Utterances by responsible Japanese officials, especially statements communicated to the Secretary of State by the Japanese Ambassador at Washington in recent months during the course of conversations between them, have furnished the Government of the United States hope that the Government of Japan also desired to maintain and preserve peace in the Pacific area. Those utterances and statements have been so utterly contrary to the reports that this Government is now receiving as to make it very difficult for this Government to give credence to the reports. It goes without saying that embarkation by Japan upon a course of military aggression and conquest would render illusory the hope which this Government has cherished and which it understood the Government of Japan shared that the peace of the Pacific might not be further upset and might indeed be strengthened and be made more secure. The Government of the United States earnestly hopes that the reports under reference are not based on fact and the Government of the United States would deeply appreciate an assurance from the Prime Minister of Japan to that effect.

36Approved by President Roosevelt on July 3 at 3:30 p. m.
When you have communicated the foregoing message to the Prime Minister, please inform me immediately of that fact by telegraph.\textsuperscript{17}

Welles

\textsuperscript{17} The Ambassador in Japan, in telegram No. 939, July 6, noon, reported he had transmitted the message for the Japanese Prime Minister that morning, and that he expected “to receive his reply shortly, probably today.” (740.0011 European War 1939/12851) For Mr. Grew’s statement as handed to Prince Konoye’s private secretary, see \textit{Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931–1941}, vol. \textit{ii}, p. 502.

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740.0011 European War 1939/12823 : Telegram

\textit{The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State}

Tokyo, July 4, 1941—10 p.m.
[Received July 4—1:30 p.m.]

930. The Soviet Ambassador came to the Embassy today by appointment to express his felicitations on Independence Day. He said that in his recent talk with the Foreign Minister, Mr. Matsuoka had stated that Japan is in a very delicate and difficult position; that there would be no alteration in Japan’s policy for the present but that if circumstances should change, Japan’s policy might also change. According to the Ambassador, the Minister for Foreign Affairs made no allusion to the Japanese-Soviet neutrality treaty except that he “remembered it.” The Ambassador characterized Mr. Matsuoka’s foregoing statement as “very strange.”

It is understood that the ladies of the Soviet Embassy are leaving for Russia tomorrow.

Repeated to Moscow.

Grew

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740.0011 European War 1939/12820 : Telegram

\textit{The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State}

Paris, July 5, 1941—10 a.m.
[Received 1:55 p.m.]

808. Embassy’s telegram 802, July 3, 4 p.m.\textsuperscript{18} Ostrorog\textsuperscript{18} informs us that a telegram has now been received from Arsene-Henry indicating that probably a decision was reached at the recent Imperial Council meeting in Tokyo in favor of a move against Russia. The so-called northern party seems to have “won out,” according to Henry, and has been strongly supported by German influence at Tokyo. The German motives he reported are threefold: first, for obvious military

\textsuperscript{18} Vol. v, p. 522.

\textsuperscript{18} Stanislas Ostrorog, of the French Foreign Office.
reasons, to create further difficulties for Russia; second, in the hope of bringing about a clash between the United States and Japan; and third, because Germany has no desire to see the Japanese move south toward the Dutch East Indies, an area with respect to which the Nazis have aspirations of their own. Ostrogors marked that obviously Germany "did not recognize the Nanking regime for nothing" and some commitment for a move against Russia may well have been obtained from Japan.

Leahy

740.0011 European War 1939/12862 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 5, 1941—7 p. m.
[Received July 7—6:05 a.m.]

933. The following is the substance of a telegram sent to London by my British colleague July 4:

"I called on Minister for Foreign Affairs today and observed that after reading his statement regarding the German-Soviet war with close attention, I had been struck by the absence of any repudiation of the recently concluded Neutrality Pact with Soviet Russia, which I had imagined would be the governing factor in the situation. His Excellency replied that it had always been made clear that just as the position of Soviet Russia was unaffected by the Tripartite Pact, so the position of Japan under that pact was the same as [under?] the Neutrality Treaty. He had explained this situation in his first broadcast statement to the Japanese people after his return from the U. S. S. R., and he had recently repeated this view to the Soviet Ambassador, who had telegraphed it to his Government. The fact that the Soviet Government had objected neither at the time of the broadcast address, nor on the occasion of his interview with the Russian representatives, indicated their acceptance of this view of the situation. The Tripartite Pact imposed on Japan no obligation to enter this war on Germany's side. Similarly, Japan would not be prevented by the Neutrality Pact from taking any action arising out of this war which the preservation of Japanese interests might demand. Thus Japan's liberty of action in respect of the situation created by the German-Soviet war remained unaffected, whether by the Tripartite Pact or the Neutrality Pact.

2. However, Minister for Foreign Affairs continued, it would be wrong to look on the Pact merely as a legal document [for?] one must also bear in mind [the cordial?] and close community of interests between the Allies which had resulted from it. He could best describe the objectives of Japan's policy under the following three heads: (1) maintenance of Japan's position and interests in East Asia; (2) avoidance of anything calculated to disturb the mutual confidence and understanding existing between Japan [and?] her allies; (the continu-
ance of efforts to improve relations with the U. S. R. to permit the
pursuit of objective); (3) it would be necessary for the Soviet Govern-
ment carefully to avoid any action which, by embarrassing Japan’s
relations with her allies might imperil the strict observance of point
(2) above; rightly or wrongly, Japan’s whole foreign policy now
revolved around the tripartite alliance. He had asked the Soviet
Ambassador to make all this clear to his Government, and the latter
would no doubt confirm what had passed between them.

3. I confessed that His Excellency’s interpretation of the Neutrality
Pact came as a surprise to me; but it was at least satisfactory to note
His Excellency’s confirmation of my supposition that the Japanese
Government did not consider themselves under any obligation to inter-
vene under the Tripartite Pact. Japan’s position is, as far as one could
see at present, almost unique among the great powers, in that it is
advisable if she wished to avoid involvement in the European conflict
and impairment of her vital interests I felt sure that His Excellency
would do everything in his power to avert from his country the horrors
of modern warfare on a vast scale. Minister for Foreign Affairs
replied that he was fully conscious of the great responsibility which
weighed upon him and the Japanese Government in the extremely
delicate situation which had now developed; it was a moment at which
all parties concerned with peace in the Pacific must be careful to avoid
even the slightest false step and must maintain as calm and objective
an outlook as possible. [3]

Sent to the Department via Shanghai.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/12861: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 6, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received 11:20 p. m.]

943. For the Acting Secretary. Department’s 372, July 4, 3 p. m.

1. I immediately sent by safe hand last evening a strictly private
letter to the Prime Minister at his private residence in the country
requesting an appointment for the purpose stated.

2. Early this morning the Prime Minister’s private secretary came
to the Embassy and said that while the Prime Minister would be very
glad to see me he feared inevitable publicity if I were to come to him.
He suggested our meeting at a golf course but pointed out that all
courses would be crowded today, Sunday, and that tomorrow his
entire time would be occupied with ceremonial meetings in connection
with the anniversary of the outbreak of the “China affair.” He there-
fore suggested that we meet at golf on Tuesday or Wednesday next.
I replied that the matter was too important for delay but that I would
entrust the substance of the message to the private secretary (who is favorably known to me as worthy of confidence) to communicate to the Prime Minister and to bring me Prince Konoye’s reply today.

3. Mr. Ushiba, after having conferred with his chief, returned to the Embassy at 6 o’clock this evening and communicated Prince Konoye’s reply as follows:

“Tokyo, July 6, 1941. My dear Ambassador, May I express my sincere thanks for your courtesy of communicating to me the message sent by the Secretary of State at the specific request of the President of the United States. My answer to it will be given by the Foreign Minister as soon as possible after he has returned from Gotemba. Yours sincerely, P. Konoye.”

4. Mr. Ushiba expressed his regret at the incomplete nature of the Prince Konoye’s reply to the Secretary’s message but explained that in Japan there was no precedent for a Prime Minister to treat directly with foreign Ambassadors in matters concerning foreign affairs. I politely, but emphatically, requested Mr. Ushiba to point out to the Prime Minister, as from me, that it would be erroneous to assume that my démarche had been taken for the purpose of going over the head of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and that the procedure adopted was closely in line with the conversations which the Japanese Ambassador in Washington had held directly with the President of the United States who had informed Admiral Nomura that he would always be happy to confer with him. I left Mr. Ushiba in no doubt as to my regret that the Prime Minister had not felt able to reply to the message directly. Mr. Ushiba said that the Prime Minister had endeavored to get into immediate touch with the Foreign Minister today but had failed to do so. He expected Mr. Matsuoka to return to Tokyo tomorrow and would request him to make an appointment with me. I urged that the appointment be made not later than tomorrow in view of the urgency of the matter under reference.

6. [sic] I do not interpret the Prime Minister’s reply as in any respect in the nature of an intentional rebuff. Tradition and precedent in Japan are strong. I however advance the thought that the Secretary’s message sent at the specific request of the President may well give rise to reopened debates within the Japanese Government as to the course which may have been marked out in the recent Imperial Conference, provided that such course envisages an attack on Soviet Russia in the near future, and that the Prime Minister’s letter may represent this desire to play for time in replying to the American Government. This thought is, however, pure speculation.

Grew
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 6, 1941—9 p.m.
[Received July 7—3:31 a.m.]

944. (Note: The following telegram was drafted Saturday afternoon, 20 but was held up pending certain developments of which the Department is aware. There is available to us here no trustworthy information which would make necessary substantial revision of this telegram.)

1. I feel that there is now available sufficient material to warrant my placing before the Department an appraisal (which, although still somewhat speculative, will indicate the general trend of my views) of the policy and attitude of the Japanese Government as reformulated by the decision of the Imperial Conference on July 2.

2. The 10 days of deliberations and conferences between groups and elements which formulate policy were among the many signs that the German attack on Soviet Russia produced on this country a serious disturbance, if not an internal crisis. The deliberations are said to have [boiled?] down to a conflict between Baron Hiranuma, representing the moderate school of thought, and Mr. Matsuoka, and they have been accompanied by rumors of the most sensational character, one being that Baron Hiranuma as Home Minister threatened to cause the arrest of several extremist politicians but was informed that if he should attempt to do so he would be assassinated and that he desisted. Whether or not these rumors are true, they are probably reflective of a sharp cleavage of opinion among the nation’s leaders. In the absence of unanimity or of a clearly dominant school of thought, we can say with some degree of assurance that the pursuit by Japan of a positive and dynamic policy creating new commitments and involvements would be unlikely.

3. Although Japan derived considerable self-satisfaction from securing a place among the great powers in the process of settling the first World War, the fact that she had become deeply involved in the problems of Europe, in which she did not have vital concern, was not fully appreciated until the Manchurian conflict came before the League of Nations. It will be recalled that Japan, following her withdrawal from the League in 1933, announced that she would proceed to liquidate her European commitments and would confine herself to the Far East. That policy, then labelled “free and independent policy,” was officially confirmed immediately after the outbreak of the present War. Thus,

20 July 5.
the conclusion of the Axis alliance, again involving Japan in the affairs of Europe, was a sharp reversal of a policy which had been pursued with some show of determination for 8 years; and for some months before the outbreak of the German-Soviet war there had been increasing realization that Japan, by allying herself with Germany and Italy, had assumed certain risks which had not been demonstrated to be unavoidable.

4. As pointed out in several of our recent telegrams, German concepts with regard to the relations between the German bloc and the Japanese bloc, especially the secondary place which the latter was to take in the new scheme of things and German desires for a privileged position in China notwithstanding the "new order in East Asia" had begun to raise doubts in the Japanese mind whether all would be well for Japan in the event of a German victory and whether after all full confidence could be placed on German promises. I hear that one of the points which has been repeatedly brought up for Matsuoka to answer is whether he could clear Germany of bad faith toward Japan in connection with the German attack on Russia. It is understood that the references to the German statement issued simultaneously with the attack on Russia to the intention of Germany, when concluding the nonaggression pact, not to be bound by that pact, and to the advice which was alleged to have been given Mr. Matsuoka while he was in Berlin (when plans were actually being laid to attack Russia) to conclude a pact with Russia and so improve Soviet-Japanese relations, have been repeatedly cited, with Mr. Matsuoka being repeatedly challenged to refute this German evidence of deliberate deception of Japan. While there would be no warrant for saying that Japanese confidence in German good faith has collapsed, I would not say that it is today sufficiently robust to form the basis of new Japanese initiatives calculated to serve German interests more closely than Japan's own interests.

5. We believe that it would not have been possible to reformulate Japanese policy in the light of the Soviet-German war without regard to the above discussed three factors, namely, lack of united opinion, desire to restrict as far as consonant with accepted engagements the risks of involvement in the European war, and decreasing confidence in German good faith.

6. We have heard it stated with some confidence by certain foreign observers here that the policy alleged to have been adopted at the recent Imperial conference is to await the results or at least the trend of the German-Soviet conflict before considering a possible eventual attack on the maritime provinces and in the meantime to push the southward advance. The reported plan is, however, to proceed with
the southward advance gradually and step by step in order to avoid an
open clash with the United States, the first step in the program to be
aimed at Indochina and the acquisition of air and military bases on
Camranh Bay and elsewhere. It is also stated that the decision to
proceed with the southward advance is to be actually aimed against
the Axis with the thought that Japan must consolidate her position to
the southward before Germany attains full victory in the war and is
in a position to interfere with Japanese ambitions.

7. The best information available here is that the Germans are not
pressing Japan to intervene against Soviet Russia but that they are
anxious that Japan should engage in activities which would divert
the attention of the United States to some extent away from Europe.
The plan above described which has been attributed to the Imperial
Conference would seem to fit in fairly well with reported German
desires; and we think it not unlikely that what has been described as
a plan on the part of the Japanese is either a German suggestion or
an attempt to rationalize and put into concrete form such German
desires.

8. So far as we can see, the "momentous decision" reported to have
been taken by the Imperial Conference has many of the earmarks of a
decision to adopt an attitude of watchful waiting, possibly for the
disintegration of the Soviet Union. Indeed all the material now avail-
able would seem to support that appraisal—the statement of the Prime
Minister to an American correspondent that Japan would honor its
treaties with both Germany and Soviet Russia, the statement (already
reported to the Department \(^2\)) of the Foreign Minister to the Soviet
Ambassador, and the statement on July 4 of the Foreign Minister to
my British colleague,\(^2\) whose report is being separately telegraphed
to the Department. With reference to the last statement, I might say
that normally an exposition by a Foreign Minister of his country's
policies and attitude so clear in most respects as that given by Mr.
Matsuoka to Sir Robert would require little commentary, but the
impression that he sought to convey—that mutual confidence and un-
derstanding between the members of the Axis alliance remains unim-
paired and that unanimity of opinion prevails in this country—con-
{}flicts so palpably with the truth that his exposition needs to be treated
with reserve. I hope that it will be read in the light of the present
report.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow. Code text via air
mail to Peiping and to Shanghai for Chungking.

\(^2\) See telegram No. 930, July 4, 10 p. m., from the Ambassador in Japan, p. 935.
\(^2\) See telegram No. 933, July 5, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in Japan, p. 936.
The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 8, 1941—4 p.m.
[Received July 8—12:40 p.m.]

953. For the Acting Secretary only. My 943, July 6, 8 p.m.
1. The Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to call this afternoon and handed me in strict confidence a Japanese text accompanied by a strictly confidential unofficial English translation thereof embodying a "message in reply sent by His Imperial Majesty's Foreign Minister at the request of the Prime Minister for delivery to the President of the United States of America, dated July 7, Showa 16". 22 (See Embassy's 954, July 8, 5 p.m. 23)

2. At the same time the Minister handed to me in strict confidence a Japanese text accompanied by a strictly confidential unofficial English translation of the oral statement handed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo on July 2, 1941. 24 (See Embassy's 955, July 8, 6 p.m. 25)

3. Having read the Minister's message I said that I was in a position to advance pertinent comment on the final paragraph of the Japanese message and it [7] thereupon conveyed orally to Mr. Matsuoka the substance of Department's telegram No. 355, June 27, 2 p.m. I particularly emphasized the first sentence of the second paragraph of that telegram and dwelt at some length on the policy of the United States in that connection. The Minister replied to the effect that reports reaching Japan have convinced the Japanese people that the United States is determined to intervene in the European conflict and that this conviction has caused widespread anxiety in view of Japan's obligations to her allies in the Tripartite Pact.

4. I then asked the Minister what sort of "future developments" he had in mind which would largely determine Japan's future policy toward Soviet Russia as set forth in the final sentence of his oral statement of July 2 to the Soviet Ambassador. The Minister replied that he had in mind a good many possible developments among which he might mention as illustrations: the altered situation which would be created if Soviet Russia should form an alliance with Great Britain or if the United States should attempt to send considerable quantities of war supplies to Soviet Russia through Vladivostok to be used against Germany, Japan's ally. He said that there are powerful elements in Japan who are trying to force him into hostilities against Soviet Russia and that if these elements and the Japanese people should become aware of the conveyance of such American supplies great

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23 Not printed.
provocation would be created which would strengthen the hand of those extremists and would render his own position and his own sincere efforts to preserve peace even more difficult than they are at present.

5. Mr. Matsuoka especially asked me to convey to you the fact that neither the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo nor the Soviet Government had raised any question or objection in connection with the public statement which he, Mr. Matsuoka, had issued on returning from Europe (please see Embassy’s 588, April 22, 7 p. m.\(^*\)). He also said that he had recently appealed both to Stalin and Molotov to cooperate with him by endeavoring not to render more difficult the extremely difficult path which he is now treading.

6. The Minister said that he had recently met the Soviet Ambassador at the railway station in Berlin [sic] when the latter was saying good-bye to his wife and other ladies of the Soviet Embassy who were about to return to Russia. He said to the Ambassador that the ladies of the Japanese Embassy in Moscow had left that capital in order to avoid the dangers of possible bombing by the German Army but that no such dangers existed in Tokyo and there was no good reason whatever for the Soviet ladies to leave. The Minister said that the Soviet ladies had, therefore, abandoned their plans for departure.

7. The Minister said that in these difficult times we must all of us guard against the often baseless rumors which are floating around in every country and when I mentioned the reports published in various Japanese papers such as the Yomiuri, the Hochi, etc., Mr. Matsuoka shrugged his shoulders and said that he never read newspapers of that nature.

8. In the light of the Minister’s written and oral statements I find it very difficult to believe that the Japanese Government has decided at this time to embark on hostilities against the Soviet Union.

Grew

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740.0011 European War 1939/12988 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 8, 1941—6 p. m.
[Received 10:40 p. m.]

1320. 1. The Japanese Ambassador who called this morning described the present Japanese attitude toward the Soviet-German war as “wait and see” adding that Matsuoka was not only perturbed by but actually angry at the German attack on Russia as it had “disrupted all his plans”. He said that were it not for the fear that the Government would fall and “Matsuoka lose his job” there was sufficient feeling

\(^*\) Not printed.
in Japanese circles to cause Matsuoka to propose Japan's withdrawal from the Axis. He pointed out that while Japan had considerable forces in Manchukuo they were only sufficient for defensive and not offensive purposes and that in his opinion the only development that could save Matsuoka's position was the disintegration of the Soviet Union from which Japan could profit without conducting a major war. 

[Here follows a report of the views of the Japanese Ambassador, General Tatekawa, on the military campaign of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union.]

STEINHARDT

Telegram From Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Dated July 8, 1941

From most reliable sources originating from Japan it is learned that a secret agreement has been concluded and signed between Germany, Italy and Japan on the 6th of July, covering on the one hand recognition of Japanese spheres of interest, and on the other Japanese undertaking to advance southward and against Siberia. Please communicate the news to the President immediately.

Since the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, the Soviets have repeatedly announced their desire to conclude definite military arrangements with us against Japan. Will you ask the President if he would be in favor of such an arrangement, and if the situation is ripening for a military pact between China, Russia and Great Britain with the friendly support of the United States.

740.0011 European War 1939/12903 : Telegram
The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1941—5 p. m.

384. For the Ambassador and the Counselor only. Your 954, July 8, 5 p. m., last sentence.28

We approve the comments you made as reported in paragraph numbered 3 of your 953, July 8, 4 p. m., and desire that you inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that those comments have your Government's thorough concurrence and approval. In so doing please also in your discretion mention the points set forth in the Department's

25 Received in the Department on July 10. Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.
27 Approved by President Roosevelt on July 10.
28 Telegram not printed; see last sentence of statement handed the Ambassador in Japan by the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs on July 8, Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931–1941, vol. ii, pp. 503, 504.
telegrams to Tokyo no. 280, May 17, 6 p. m., and no. 312, June 6, 6 p. m., and state that the self-defense policy of the United States and the protective measures which may be adopted pursuant to and for the purpose of carrying out that policy will necessarily be shaped by the acts of aggression taken or likely to be taken by aggressor nations. You might indicate that, this being so, information from Hitler as to his future contemplated steps of aggression would assist the Japanese Government in forming an estimate as to what steps of self-defense the United States may be forced to take in order to protect its own security. Your communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs should be an oral one.

_Welles_

740.0011 European War 1939/13121a : Telegram

_The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)_

WASHINGTON, July 11, 1941—11 a.m.

386. We have received further information from a high authority of a foreign government to the effect that, according to reliable and most confidential reports reaching his Government, Germany, Italy and Japan several days ago entered into a secret agreement whereby Germany and Italy recognized the special position in the Far East which Japan claims for herself and in return Japan agreed to take action against French Indochina and Thailand and later to attack the Soviet Union. A further such report from the same source was to the effect that Japan's moves southward and northward as described above would be carried out simultaneously.

_Welles_

_Mr. Lauchlin Currie 21a to President Roosevelt 22_

WASHINGTON, July 11, 1941.

Re: Reply to Chiang Kai-shek's message.

In accordance with your instructions, I discussed this matter with Mr. Welles. He suggests that you authorize me to convey the following message to T. V. Soong:

In answer to the Generalissimo's enquiry as to whether the President would be in favor of definite military arrangements between the Soviet and Chinese Governments, the President has authorized me to inform

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20 _Ante_, pp. 201 and 254.
21 See telegram from Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, p. 1004.
22 See also memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State, July 10, p. 300.
21a Administrative Assistant to President Roosevelt.
22 Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. Notation in ink by President Roosevelt: "L. C. OK EDR"

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you that the United States Government, not being a party to the agreement, cannot take responsibility for it. However, the President added that he was of the opinion that such military arrangements would definitely be to China’s benefit. His attitude toward the suggested pact between China, Russia and Great Britain was similar. The President would appreciate further information as to the nature of the proposed military arrangements and pact.

LAUCHLIN CURRIE

740.0011 European War 1939/13180 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 16, 1941—2 p.m.
[Received July 16—9:10 a.m.]

1008. For the Acting Secretary. Department’s 384, July 10, 5 p.m.
1. As the Foreign Minister is ill and is still confined to his bed I saw the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs & today and conveyed to him orally and in strict confidence all of the points outlined in the Department’s telegram under reference and telegrams referred to therein.

2. The Vice Minister, after carefully considering my statement, asked whether he was justified in assuming that the statement meant that the United States might shortly declare war on Germany. I replied that I could not authorize him to read into the statement anything beyond its actual contents. With reference to the antepenultimate sentence taken from the Department’s 312, June 6, 6 p.m., the Vice Minister asked whether this reference was aimed at Japan. I replied that the reference was aimed at no particular country but only at countries “where the shoe fits.”

3. The Vice Minister said that he would bring my statement to the attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs as embodying the reply of my Government to the inquiry contained in the final paragraph of the message of the Foreign Minister of July 7 [8].

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/13231 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 17, 1941—11 a.m.
[Received 11:50 a.m.]

1015. (The following telegram was drafted and about to be dispatched shortly before announcement of the resignation of the Konoye

**Chuichi Ohashi.**

**For text, see Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931–1941, vol. II, p. 509.**

**Ante, p. 254.**

**See statement handed the Ambassador in Japan on July 8, Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931–1941, vol. II, p. 503.**
Cabinet. I trust that this analysis may still prove helpful as a gauge by which to measure future developments, subject to the influence of new personalities in the Government and such new trends of policy, whether moderate or extremist, as may now be adopted.)

In my long experience in Japan there has never before been a time when greater difficulty has been encountered in discharging my duty of keeping the Department informed of developments in this country and of presenting seasoned views and estimates of Japanese policy. Due to lack of contacts with well-informed Japanese who are now threatened with severe penalties for disclosure of information, and due also to widely conflicting rumors, judgments cannot now be formed with that assurance with which I have presented estimates in the past, an assurance which in the main has been warranted by subsequent events. The following comment being speculative is somewhat discursive but it is partly based on observation at close hand of factors to which the Department may not be sensitive. These factors are perhaps at least more reliable indices than the extravagant and heterogeneous rumors which now fill the air. I make no pretensions at being able to predict the future course of events in this area, but for what they may be worth, my best judgment and estimate of the situation, as I see it, are hereunder presented.

1. Evidence of increased mobilization and military activity in Japan, the recent extensive calling of reserves to the colors, the recall of Japanese ships from abroad and other indications of apparent preparation for some impending event are giving rise to the usual circulation of widely diverse rumors in Tokyo and other cities in Japan. The opinions of many of my colleagues which at best can be but pure speculation may be said to fall into three schools of thought as follows:
   a. The view that an attack on Vladivostok and the Maritime Province is in preparation;
   b. the view that an attack on French Indochina is in preparation;
   c. the view that military operations against China are to be intensified in the hope of giving China a knock-out blow in the near future.

2. My feeling is that the last of these possible developments is the most likely explanation of the factual evidence before us, that something is impending. It is the hypothesis supported by the greatest number of facts and requires the explaining away of the minimum of contrary evidence and argument.

3. Before discussing that question, however, it should be pointed out that not only the Japanese themselves but many of my colleagues are in a state of high nervous tension and are apparently cabling home each crop of rumors without subjecting them to close analysis. The report of an impending attack on Indochina mentioned in the Department's 386, July 11, 11 a. m. closely resembles that brought to me by
an American press correspondent. I have traced the latter report directly to the German Military Attaché who is also the source of a rumor that the Japanese will attack Singapore at some date between July 20 and August 10. The date specified by him as the beginning of the Japanese attack on Indochina through the occupation of Saigon was July 13. At the same time I have endeavored to weigh each of the various rumors against known facts and I am of the opinion that the report which I yesterday cabled to the Department of impending Japanese efforts to obtain a privileged position in Indochina should be taken seriously. This last report coincides very closely with vague allusions in the Japanese doctored press to the need for destroying Chungking's communications with its back door or again to the importance of "strengthening defenses against attacks from Singapore".

4. With regard to point a, paragraph 1 above: I do not doubt that plans for an eventual attack on Vladivostok and the Maritime provinces figure prominently in the Japanese hypothetical program but I believe that we may discard as preposterous the thought that Japan, while still deeply involved in China, would undertake another major war on the Asiatic Continent unless or until the German-Soviet war should bring about military or political collapse, or both, in the Soviet Union. In such a contingency Japanese action would appear to be inevitable and it is, of course, possible that the present military activities are either primarily or secondarily preparatory for such a contingency. It is also possible that troops are being sent from points on the Japan Sea to the Northern Korean ports of Seishin and Rashin, in which case we would not be apt to know of such movements, but reports from consuls and foreign travellers do not indicate that abnormal troop movements are taking place in Korea and Manchuria. Furthermore, no official anti-air raid precautions are being taken in Tokyo at this time which is of significance because air raids on this and other Japanese cities would probably be the first Soviet reply to a Japanese attack on Soviet territory.

5. With regard to points, paragraph 1 above: The opinion is held among some of my colleagues that Japan will seek by agreement certain bases in Indochina and Thailand—following the action of the United States in acquiring rights to station troops in Greenland and Iceland—in order to place herself in a better posture of defense against Germany (in the event of a German victory) as much as against the United States and Great Britain. Whether this is so or not I cannot say, but it is interesting that my colleagues have also sensed the declining confidence to which I have several times alluded of the Japanese in the good faith of Germany. My feeling is that if the present gathering to-

gether by Japan of a further large military force is intended primarily for military operations in a grand scale in China, urgent efforts will be made by Japan to secure from the French new bases of operations fairly close to the heart of unoccupied China.

6. Regard to point (c), paragraph 1: I can see no reason to revise my opinion that China is still Japan’s chief preoccupation. It was Japan’s China policy which brought Japan into her present difficult position, and it is not easy to see how she can extricate herself from that position without liquidation, by victory or by a negotiated peace or possibly defeat, of the China problem. Time, especially since the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, is running short. A victory by Germany might mean, not exposure of Japan to a German threat, the problem of seizing Soviet territories in the Pacific with attendant risks of trouble with the United States. The defeat of Germany, or even the demonstration by Russia of ability to stand firmly against Germany, might well adversely affect German morale and thus start a process of disintegration of German military force. I need not enlarge on the fact that the Japanese without exception dread the prospect of the war in Europe ending with Japan still enmeshed with China. It will be recalled that the Commander in Chief in China recently issued a pronouncement that China was tottering and that “one more push” was all that was needed for her defeat. There is nothing known to us which would successfully controvert the view that, if a large additional force (estimated to be between 1 and 2 million men), is being organized for immediate action and not merely for precautionary reasons, the logical theatre for the employment of this force would be China. A large force would, of course, also be required for any attack against Soviet territory, but the absence of special anti-air precautions and of large troop movements northward would have to be explained away if an immediate attack in that direction were under contemplation.

7. As we observed in our 944, July 8 [8], 9 p.m., the lack of complete unity of opinion among Japan’s leaders, the desire not to increase Japan’s involvements in Europe, and the declining confidence in Germany’s good faith, are, among other factors, operating against the pursuit of a dynamic policy calling for new initiatives which might well greatly increase the risks of Japan’s involvement in the war without, at the same time, materially promoting her efforts to bring the China conflict to an end. It has been made clear to me by Mr. Matsuoka that for better or for worse Japan will cooperate with Germany, at least within the four corners of the Alliance Treaty; and I am prepared to take that statement at its face value; I am further prepared to believe that what are conceived by some to be Japanese common interests with Germany might bring about Japanese action which would extend the war in Europe to the Pacific, but at the same time no evidence has
as yet been brought to my knowledge which would support the view
that Japan will resort to initiatives risking conflict with the United
States unless such initiatives are calculated by the Japanese to be the
only available method for bringing the China conflict to an end, or
arising out of obligations assumed by Japan in concluding the alliance
with Germany.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/12212 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 17, 1941—6 p. m.
[Received July 17—9:15 a. m.]

1020. For the Acting Secretary. My 1008, July 16, 2 p. m. The
Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to call at the Foreign Office
this afternoon and said that after he had conveyed to the Foreign
Minister the communication orally communicated by me yesterday,
Mr. Matsuoka had requested him to communicate to me the following
reply.

(See my 1021, July 17, 7 p. m., for quoted matter.

Grew

761.94/1349 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 24, 1941—1 a. m.
[Received July 23—6 p. m.]

1068. Colleague who enjoys close relations with a former Prime
Minister was today [yesterday?] told by the latter that the Japanese
Government is awaiting an approach by the Soviet Government for
the purpose of reaching a general agreement. The Ambassador be-
believes, but is not certain, that such an expected approach will arise
from conversations already held between Molotov and the Japanese
Ambassador in Moscow. According to informant, the Japanese Gov-
ernment will be disposed to conclude such an agreement on the follow-
ing four conditions:

(1) Demilitarization of Vladivostok.
(2) Mutual withdrawal of troops to a given distance from the
Manchurian-Siberian frontier.
(3) An undertaking by Soviet Russia that no base on any part
of Soviet territory will be ceded to any third power (meaning the
United States or Great Britain).

*2 Telegram not printed; for quoted statement, see oral statement by the
Japanese Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941,
vol. ii, p. 513.
(4) Implementation of article 3 of the Karakhan-Yoshizawa agreement of 1925 providing that Japan should be given priority in the importation of raw materials from Siberia.

It was not made clear what Soviet Russia would gain by such an agreement except a further guarantee of neutrality beyond the neutrality treaty between the two powers.

Not repeated to Moscow.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/13477: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 25, 1941—10 p.m.
[Received July 25—6:25 p.m.]

1084. 1. Tolischus 40 tells me that he has learned from a source close to the Prime Minister which he regards as completely reliable that shortly after the assembly of the new Cabinet the German Ambassador called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs 41 and asked him to convey to Prince Konoye a message to the effect that (1) Germany will have successfully completed its campaign in Russia in August, (2) Germany will invade Great Britain in September and (3) the war will end in a German victory before winter. It, therefore, behooves Japan to remain loyal to the Tripartite Alliance.

2. Informant furthermore told Tolischus that Germany wants Japan to invade Soviet Russia instead of pursuing the southward advance and that the Germans desired the dropping of Matsuoka not only because he talked too much but because he was responsible for the neutrality treaty with Soviet Russia.

3. The foregoing report is communicated to the Department without any undertaking on my part as to its accuracy but because Tolischus informs me that he is entirely convinced of its reliability.

Grew

740.0011 P. W./337: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 27, 1941—8 p.m.
[Received July 27—2:45 p.m.]

1104. Embassy’s 1052, July 23, noon, 42 paragraph numbered 3. It is significant that in my recent talks with the new Foreign Minister

42 Adm. Teijiro Toyoda.
43 Ante, p. 336.
the only thing that has made him really angry has been any allusions on my part to the belief in the United States that Japan's present policies were the result of German pressure or that Germany now exercises any influence on Japan. It is generally known in official circles that Matsuoka telegraphed to Ribbentrop some 48 hours before Germany's attack on Soviet Russia to ask if there were any truth in the rumors of such an impending attack and that he received from Ribbentrop a categorical denial. Matsuoka in fact confirmed this story to my Turkish colleague.

Grew

740.0011 European War 1939/1941: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

Tokyo, July 29, 1941—10 p.m.
[Received July 29—6:18 p.m.]

1122. Since the beginning of the Soviet-German war, we have received only plain language telegrams from Moscow and consequently have no information in regard to the development of the military and political situation as it affects the question of Soviet resistance. As the Department will have observed from the reports from our consuls at Dairen, Mukden, and Harbin, there is accumulating evidence of unusual military activity in Manchuria and according to some of these reports movements of troops in the direction of the Soviet border. While there is yet no accurate information on which to base an estimate of the present number of Japanese troops in Manchuria or of the extent to which they have increased recently, it is beginning to be apparent that a considerable portion at least of the reservists called up are being sent to that area. Furthermore there are a number of unconfirmed rumors in foreign circles in Tokyo to which some of my colleagues attach importance that the Japanese Government is making preparation for a possible attack on Russia sometime after the middle of August, and in this connection the Department's attention might be drawn to the evasive reply of the Japanese Foreign Minister to an inquiry from my British colleague (see my 1109, July 28, 9 p.m."

The various reports and rumors are yet without sufficient foundation to base thereon any reliable opinion, it would be most helpful to me if the Department would repeat here any indications which it may have from Moscow or elsewhere concerning the prospects of the success or failure of the German offensive in the immediate future since it must be assumed that this factor will in large measure determine the attitude of Japan.

Grew

" Vol. v, p. 237.
Memorandum by Mr. Harry L. Hopkins, Special Assistant to
President Roosevelt

CONFERENCE AT THE KREMLIN, JULY 31, 1941, 3 TO 4 P. M.

Present: Mr. Molotov, Foreign Commissar U. S. S. R.
        Ambassador Steinhardt
        Harry L. Hopkins

Mr. Molotov stated that while the Soviet-Japanese relations presumably had been fixed by, first, the conversations with Matsuoka and, secondly, the neutrality pact signed between the two countries, nevertheless, the attitude of the new Japanese Government toward the Soviet Union is uncertain and, since the Soviet Government is by no means clear as to the policy which the Japanese Government intends to pursue, it is watching the situation with the utmost care.

He stated that the one thing he thought would keep Japan from making an aggressive move would be for the President to find some appropriate means of giving Japan what Mr. Molotov described as a "warning".

While Mr. Molotov did not use the exact words, it was perfectly clear that the implication of his statement was that the warning would include a statement that the United States would come to the assistance of the Soviet Union in the event of its being attacked by Japan.

Mr. Molotov did not express any immediate concern that Japan was going to attack Russia and on Russia's part Mr. Molotov stated repeatedly that Russia did not wish any difficulties with Japan.

He left me with the impression, however, that it was a matter of very considerable concern to him and that he felt the Japanese would not hesitate to strike if a propitious time occurred. Hence his great interest in the attitude of the United States towards Japan.

I told Mr. Molotov that the Government of the United States was disturbed at the encroachments which Japan was making in the Far East and I was sure the American people would not look with any favor on Japan gaining a further hold in Siberia; that our long period of friendly relations between Russia and the United States, with our two countries only fifty miles apart, should be some indication of our interest in seeing stability in the Far East, including Siberia.

I told him that our Government was watching developments in the Far Eastern situation with great care and looked with misgivings and concern at the threatening attitude of Japan, both to the South and to the North. I told him, however, that our attitude towards Japan was a reasonable one and that we had no desire to be provocative in our relations with Japan.

*Copy transmitted to the Secretary of State by President Roosevelt.
I told him I would give the President his message regarding his, Molotov's, anxiety about Siberia and his desire to have the President indicate to Japan that further encroachments would not be tolerated.

I asked Mr. Molotov what their relationships with China were in the light of new developments and whether or not they could continue rendering the substantial material assistance they had been giving to Chiang Kai-shek or whether the Soviet Union's requirements in its own war with Germany would preclude their continuing to supply China.

Mr. Molotov replied that, of course, the Soviet Union's requirements for war material must of necessity adversely affect delivery to China; that while they do not wish to cut them off entirely and would continue to give everything they could, the necessities of their own situation required them to divert the Chinese supplies to their own battle line. Molotov expressed the hope that the United States would increase its own deliveries to make good the deficiency caused by Germany's attack on the Soviet Union.

I told Mr. Molotov that the American people were impressed by the gallant defense of the Soviet Army and assured him of the desire of the President to render every possible aid in the terms of materials to the Soviet Union as speedily as possible.

Mr. Molotov asked me to convey the Soviet Government's thanks to the President for sending his personal representative on this mission to Moscow.

Harry L. Hopkins

740.0011 European War 1939/12517: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)

Washington, August 1, 1941—7 p.m.

455. Your 1122, July 29, 10 p.m. The Department has received little information from any source bearing upon the situation under reference. Neither the British nor the American military attachés in Moscow are permitted to visit the front and are given little information concerning the actual progress of hostilities.

According to our information the German armies have apparently not advanced to any considerable extent during the past 2 weeks and have been subject to severe counter attacks especially in the Smolensk salient. Strong German-Finnish pressure on Leningrad continues and it is not impossible that that city will be encircled or occupied in the near future. It is the consensus of our military authorities, however, that the main German objective is the destruction of the Soviet armies in Western Russia.

In view of the lack of sufficient reliable information on the actual progress of hostilities, we are unable to comment at this time with
any sense of prophetic accuracy on the prospects of the success or failure of the German offensive in the immediate future. We will, however, endeavor to advise you from time to time of significant developments.

Welles

740.0011 European War 1939/13677: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 5, 1941—noon.  
[Received 2:45 p.m.]

1443. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. The Chinese Ambassador told me yesterday that his Government has ascertained from reliable sources that under cover of the move in Indochina the Japanese have increased their forces in Manchuria—principally around Kalgan—by not less than 100,000 and not more than 300,000 men. He said that it is the opinion of the Chinese Government that having increased its military strength in Manchuria Japanese policy would now be to wait developments. He also stated that his Government believes that a demand has been made by Japan of Thailand for air and naval bases. The Ambassador also said that Soviet deliveries of war material to China have continued up to the present time in accordance with the commitments undertaken by the Soviet Government prior to the outbreak of the Soviet-German war. He added that he has not yet discussed with the Soviet authorities what their position would be after the deliveries previously agreed upon have been completed.

Steinhardt

740.0011 European War 1939/13833: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 9, 1941—3 p.m.  
[Received August 10—6:30 a.m.]

1461. The Japanese Ambassador called on me this morning. I received the impression that the principal purpose of his call was to endeavor to ascertain what assistance the United States contemplates rendering the Soviet Union. In response to his approaches along this line I made it clear that I would furnish no information as to the nature and extent of American aid to the Soviet Union and in order to discourage future inquiries of the same nature intimated that information of this character constitutes a military secret.
With respect to Japanese-Soviet relations the Ambassador stated that while no conversations are taking place in Moscow he understood that the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo had recently renewed his inquiry of the Japanese Foreign Minister as to whether there has been any change in the Japanese attitude toward the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact and that he had been assured that there has been no change and that there will be no change "as long as the Soviet Government remains neutral in spirit." When I asked Tatekawa for his interpretation of the phrase "neutral in spirit", he replied: "I suppose our Foreign Office wanted to qualify its statement that there was no change."

Insofar as concerns reports of a substantial increase in the number of Japanese troops in Manchuria the Ambassador said the increase had not been so great as rumors would indicate as there had also been a withdrawal of forces in order to grant leave to large numbers of men. Tatekawa stated that he doubts that Japan intends to attack the Soviet Union in the immediate future.

The Ambassador remarked that he believes Britain contemplates taking action in Iran, and in this connection stated that the Soviet Government has refused to grant travel permits to members of his staff desiring to visit Iran in view of which his Government probably will retaliate by withholding transit permits from Soviet diplomats desiring to pass through Japan. He complained that the Soviet Government has persistently refused to accede to his requests for transit visas for Japanese desiring to return to Japan from Europe by way of the Soviet Union.

Tatekawa made no comment on the Soviet-German conflict other than to say that Oshima, the Japanese Ambassador at Berlin (whom he described as very pro-Nazi), had been permitted by the Germans to visit Smolensk within the last few days. He stated that all trade between Japan and Germany had ceased.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/1418: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 20, 1941—8 p.m.
[Received August 21—1:30 a.m.]

1547. The Chinese Ambassador told me this afternoon that he has received information from Chungking to the effect that the Japanese have for some time past been withdrawing troops from the Yangtze area, some of which have been sent south to Indochina and others
north to Manchukuo. He also said that it is the opinion of his Government that Japan will not attack the Soviet Union unless and until the Germans have occupied Moscow and that even then it was by no means certain that the Japanese would move against the Soviet Union unless there was reasonably clear indication of a collapse of Soviet resistance.

The Ambassador said with respect to deliveries by the Soviets of war material to Chiang Kai Shek that they were continuing according to the terms of the existing agreement and that so far as he was aware no discussions have as yet taken place with the object of entering into a new agreement. He said that the relations between his Government and the Soviet Government are “entirely satisfactory.”

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/14561 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Leahy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

VICHY, August 30, 1941—3 p.m.
[Received August 31—2:05 p.m.]

1111. We found Ostrorog this morning in a decidedly optimistic mood over recent developments in the East. We report his views below to show the interpretation given recent developments by the French Foreign Office:

He began by “congratulating” the United States on separating Japan from the Axis. The arrival of our merchant ships at Vladivos-tok without molestation, the failure of the Japanese to make further moves in Thailand, the President’s conversations with Ambassador Nomura are taken here, he said, to mean that Japan has decided that Germany is going to lose the war and she must therefore for practical reasons adjust her relations with the Anglo-Saxon powers accordingly. “With all objectivity I must say that this has been possible at French expense: the moderate civilian elements in Japan were able to give the military extremists a peaceful conquest in Indochina which will probably prove sufficient to satisfy them,” he said. “These moderate elements,” he went on, [“] have not yet succeeded in winning the Emperor to an open reversal of policy but that will come. Reports from Ambassador Henry lead me to believe that there may soon be discussions for a settlement of the Sino-Japanese war with the United States either formally or informally playing the role, always an advantageous one, of mediating power. Negotiations would of course be of long duration and could be successful only on the basis of complete military evacuation of China by the Japanese, possibly with recognition of some special Japanese economic interests in that country. While you might argue that this would merely give Japan a free hand for operations
either in the South or against Russia, I believe that you and the British and Dutch are now sufficiently strong to make both impossible. Furthermore, it is not to American interest to see Japan crushed. She plays a useful role in the Far East and our Chinese friends of today would quickly become insupportable without the counterbalance of Japan. We will remember how difficult they were in the period from 1928 to 1931. If the Sino-Japanese war were ended and your relations with Japan placed on a satisfactory basis it would free you, of course, for greater efforts in other areas.”

While he feels confident that the Germans are much annoyed at the Japanese “defection” from the Axis, he does not believe Hitler is in any position to exert pressure on his oriental allies. German chagrin, he said, must be doubly great in view of the recognition of the Nanking regime which the Japanese extracted as a sine qua non even for consideration of an attack on Russia. Ribbentrop and the Wilhelmstrasse, he said, have always advocated friendly relations with Chiang Kai Shek for the maintenance of Germany’s somewhat favored position in China after the war. The recognition of Nanking, he continued, which the Germans for 7 months declined to accord is a blow which the “personal vanity” of Chiang Kai Shek will never forgive. It must be therefore, he said, an extremely bitter pill for the Germans that, after presenting the Japanese with a concession that cost so dearly, the Japanese have made no move on Vladivostok.

Leahy

740.0011 European War 1939/15301: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 22, 1941—2 p.m.
[Received 2:50 p.m.]

1695. I learn indirectly but from a source that I believe to be reliable that members of the Japanese Embassy here are not impressed by the progress of the campaign against the Soviet Union, although I understand that the Germans are keeping the Japanese fully informed and are emphasizing their successes. Japan is said to believe that Germany cannot long continue to support the heavy losses which they have been suffering.

The Japanese Naval Attache stated to my informant that the Soviet Far Eastern Army has not only not been weakened since the outbreak of the Soviet-German war but in some respects has been strengthened. He said that regardless of German successes in the west he did not
believe that Japan would attack the Soviet Union as long as the morale of the Soviet Far Eastern Army remained high but that if the country should begin to disintegrate Japan would probably take advantage of the situation.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1858 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 22, 1941—5 p.m.
[Received 5:45 p.m.]

1696. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. In an endeavor to ascertain whether conversations or negotiations of moment are at present being carried on between the Soviet and Japanese Governments, I called on the Japanese Ambassador today.

He told me that he has not seen Molotov since August 15th and that the only subjects he has under discussion with the Soviet authorities are a Japanese protest concerning floating mines from Vladivostok (one of which blew up a Japanese fishing vessel with the loss of four Japanese lives, while seven others have been picked up in Japanese fishing waters); a Soviet protest at the continued increase of Japanese forces in Manchuria; and other “minor” subjects.

In so far as concerns the Japanese protest at the movement of American oil to Vladivostok,46 the Ambassador described it as “formal” as he said he did not see how anything more could be done about the matter by his Government in view of the clear right of the Soviet and American Governments to carry on trade. He said he doubted that the protest would be followed by any further action by the Japanese Government, “particularly as four tankers have already arrived at Vladivostok.”

With respect to Japanese policy in general, the Ambassador expressed the opinion that his Government would consolidate its position in Indochina but said that he does not anticipate any move towards Thailand in the near future. Tatekawa also stated that although the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo was carrying on discussions with the Japanese Foreign Office he did not believe that the subjects under consideration were “political” or “important”.

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

46 See telegrams Nos. 1390 and 1334, August 28, 7 p.m., and 11 p.m., from the Ambassador in Japan, p. 406.
The Ambassador in China (Gauss) to the Secretary of State

CHUNGKING, October 17, 1941—11 a.m.
[Received October 17—10: 35 a.m.]

420. The Military and Naval Attachés of the Embassy inform me that high Chinese military officers expect that the Japanese will attack Siberia within a few days. This information follows upon reports here, which we are unable, however, to confirm, that Soviet Russia has substantially reduced its Far Eastern army including its air arm. 

Sent to the Department, repeated to Peiping and Shanghai.

GAUSS

761.94/1306

Memorandum by Mr. William R. Langdon of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] October 20, 1941.

The Soviet Union is technically protected from Japanese attack at this time and until April 13, 1946 by virtue of the provisions of article 2 of the Neutrality Pact with Japan of April 13, 1941 reading as follows:

“In case either one of the high contracting parties becomes an object of military action by one or more third parties, the other party shall observe neutrality throughout the entire period of such a conflict.”

By virtue of article 1 of the same pact each contracting party agrees to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other, and by virtue of a joint declaration issued simultaneously with the conclusion of the pact Japan respects the territorial integrity and inviolability of the People’s Republic of Mongolia and Russia respects the integrity and inviolability of the “Empire of Manchukuo”.

If Japan at this time were to attack either Siberia or Outer Mongolia such attack, in view of the above-quoted provisions of the Neutrality Pact and Joint Declaration, would constitute a breach of faith that would irreparably injure Japan’s national honor. Nevertheless there are a number of issues pending between Japan and the Soviet Union that remain unsettled as far as Japan is concerned, and it is conceivable that the Soviet Union’s preoccupation at the moment may tempt Japan to use these issues as a pretext for seizure of Russian territory. The existence of such issues is specifically mentioned in the concluding sentence of Premier Konoye’s public statement made April 13, 1941, on the occasion of the conclusion of the Pact, namely:

*Initialed by the Chief of the Division (Hamilton) and noted on October 22 by the Under Secretary of State.*
“I have no doubt that the Pact will serve as a basis for rapid solution in a concrete manner of various pending considerations between the two countries.”

No formal attempt has been made by either country to solve the questions pending between them since the above declaration was made. The most important of these issues at the moment are:

1. The fisheries question;
2. The Northern Sakhalin oil and coal concessions;
3. A non-aggression pact (including Soviet abstention of aid to Chiang Kai-shek);
4. Border demarcation;
5. A commercial accord;
6. Soviet abstention from spreading Communism in Japan, China and Manchuria;
7. A pledge not to cede Siberian or Kamchatkan bases to a third power, or to lease such bases to such power;
8. Cession or leasing to Japan of Sakhalien;
9. A pledge that the Soviet Union will not utilize in the Far East war supplies delivered at Vladivostok;
10. Demilitarization of border zone, including Vladivostok.

With regard to question (1), Japan wants a permanent fisheries convention, a convention that will take the place of the year-to-year extension of the Fisheries Convention of 1928—1941 is the sixth one-year extension of this treaty—whereby Japanese fishery companies bid against the Soviet Government for annual leases of given fishing grounds. The Japanese are losing ground in this year-to-year arrangement, and annually suffer suspense and inconvenience from the Soviet’s obstructive tactics. A permanent fisheries convention on Japanese terms would be an important gain for Japan.

With regard to question (2), Japan acquired from Russia by the Treaty of Moscow of 1925, as a quid pro quo for withdrawing her troops from the Russian half of Sakhalien, which she occupied during the Allied intervention in Siberia (1918–1920), prospecting and mining rights for eleven and forty-five years, respectively, in 272,000 acres of land in northern Sakhalien. The prospecting rights were extended to 1941. In the meantime, Japan has been extracting some 150,000 tons of crude oil annually from wells discovered in northern Sakhalien. In recent years the Soviet Union has made it very difficult for the Japanese concessionaires to operate these wells, as the Soviet Union has insisted on the use of a high quota of Soviet labor, Soviet labor conditions, payment of wages in rubles fixed at an arbitrary exchange rate, et cetera. Japan might propose to the Russians that (a) they extend the prospecting rights for ten years and (b) give extra-territorial jurisdiction to Japan over the area of the mining rights during the remainder of the mining term, which would allow Japan to use her
own laborers and pay them in her own currency, Japan paying to the Soviet Union a small royalty.

Question (3), concerning a non-aggression pact, is not in itself of value to the Japanese at this time, but such a pact could be phrased in a manner that would obligate the Soviet Union to refrain from supplying arms to a country with which Japan may be at war (viz., Chiang Kai-shek).

The border demarcation question (question 4) is no longer important, as a Commission is in progress of delimiting the Soviet–Outer Mongolian–“Manchukuo” frontier. However, concessions might be made by the Soviets in the way of moving the frontier backward to give “Manchukuo” some additional territory in Outer Mongolia, some islands in the Amur River, a strategic hill or two along the Korean frontier, etc et cetera.

Question (5) regarding a trade agreement is not important at the moment because of Russia’s preoccupation, but an accord advantageous to Japan could be signed now for implementation following the restoration of peace.

The question of Communism (question 6) is not a very real question between the two countries, as Japan can and does take care very well of the problem of Communism in territory under her administration or occupation and would not in any event trust Russian pledges to abstain from spreading Communism by undercover methods. However, a formal undertaking by Russia to abstain from association with subversive Communist activity in Japan, China and Manchuria might have some psychological value at this time, especially in view of the growing strength of the Chinese Communist Party.

The first six questions pending between the two countries seem capable of negotiation, as they do not impinge on the Soviet Union’s sovereignty. A pledge not to cede bases to a third power on the Pacific or Sea of Japan Littoral (question 7) may very well be given to Japan, as an attack on Russia by Japan would release Russia from this pledge. A pledge not to store at Vladivostok military supplies obtained from the democracies but to move them to European Russia (accompanied possibly by permission to Japan to maintain a mission to supervise the movement (question 9)) likewise could be given without harm to Russia’s position if Russia should feel that circumstances did not require retention of such supplies at Vladivostok and other Far Eastern bases.

The cession or lease of Saghalien and the demilitarization of the border zone (Manchurian as well as Korean), including Vladivostok, (questions 8 and 10) are fundamental matters for Russia and it is seriously doubted whether Russia could yield in respect to them.
Even were the Russians disposed to yield on matters of this kind to a friendly neighbor, it is certain that they would not be similarly disposed to Japan owing to their deep distrust of Japan. However, if the Japanese could convince Stalin that the making of concessions by Stalin would result in Japan’s moving southward militarily rather than northward, Stalin might be disposed to make some rather far-reaching concessions. While it is believed highly unlikely that Stalin would be willing to agree to dismantle existing defensive fortifications, he might be willing to give an undertaking to Japan to withdraw Soviet airplanes from Vladivostok to some point such as Habarovsky. He might also, should there develop in European Russia a desperate need of planes, be willing to go so far as to agree to transfer the entire Soviet Far Eastern air force to points west of Lake Baikal. It is conceivable also that Stalin might under pressure of circumstances agree to lease northern Sakhalien to Japan for a term of years.

The probability is that the Soviet Far Eastern army is so strong that, even with a substantial reduction, this army would remain confident of being able to defend the Soviet Far East against a foe as pre-occupied and weakened and industrially incapacitated as Japan. If Stalin should share this confidence, it seems extremely unlikely that Russia would be willing to yield to Japan any territory or sovereign rights in the Far East. A firm, unyielding attitude on fundamental issues by the Soviet Union at this time, when winter is descending upon Siberia and making campaigning out in the open almost unendurable for human beings, would seem to be the most likely attitude that the Soviet Union will follow with respect to Japan. Another point to remember is that it may be in the mind of the Soviet leaders that a Japanese attack on Soviet territory would precipitate American entry into the war, and that the desire of these leaders that America enter the war may cause them to take an adamant stand vis-à-vis Japanese demands, which might provoke such an attack. However, it is believed that the Soviet Union would prefer, as between a Japanese attack to the north or a Japanese attack to the south, to have Japan move southward.

The foregoing discussion is an attempt to explore the probabilities of a negotiated settlement of points of conflict between Japan and the Soviet Union. While a negotiated settlement of issues not of a fundamental nature would seem to present no great difficulty, it appears improbable that Russia would yield to any Japanese claims touching upon the Soviet Union’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Such a yielding remains, however, a possibility.48

48 The Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Henderson) wrote Mr. Hamilton on October 22: “We fully agree. The memorandum in our opinion is excellent.”
Tokyo, November 7, 1941—1 p.m.
[Received November 7—10:08 a.m.]

1760. Embassy's 1759, November 6, 8 p.m., 49 second paragraph.

1. In regard to the general question of a Japanese attack on Siberia, while obviously the real intentions of the Tojo Government in this respect are not known, it can be said that there have been no indications since the formation of the new Government which would tend to support the views that action against the Soviet Union is contemplated in the immediate future. Indeed, surface indications which are not conclusive suggest rather an intention to seek the maintenance of normal relations with the Soviet Government or possibly to exploit through diplomatic means Russia's precarious position for the purpose of obtaining the fulfillment of certain Japanese desires, particularly in respect to the Soviet attitude toward Chiang Kai-shek. As previously reported, the appointment of both a Minister and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs 50 who have had personal experience in constructive diplomatic negotiations with the Soviet Government is of significance in regard to Japan's immediate intentions towards the Soviet Union.

2. Furthermore, since the formation of the Tojo Government, the Japanese press in general has adopted a more objective and moderate attitude towards the Soviet-German war. In its leading editorial of October 31, the Nichi Nichi spoke of certain unclarified aspects of the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union, and specifically mentioned that despite the neutrality pact, the Soviet Union attitude toward Chiang Kai-shek constitutes an obstacle to the development of genuinely friendly relations and concluded by urging the new Foreign Minister, Mr. Togo, to seize the opportunity to place relations between the two countries on a more stable basis. The Japan Times and Advertiser, which is regarded as expressing the views of the Foreign Office, has, in the past 2 weeks, commented editorially on the Soviet-German war and has, in general, developed the view that no collapse of the Soviet Union is to be anticipated even if Leningrad, Moscow and the whole of European Russia should be occupied by Germany, since the Soviet Union possesses sufficient resources in men and material and industrial capacity to continue with British and American help to wage effective warfare from behind the Urals.

According to the best available information, there are from 500,000 to 800,000 Japanese troops in Manchuria, a quantity sufficient to exploit any collapse of the Soviet structure, extending into Siberia,
but not, in the opinion of military observers, sufficient to undertake an invasion of Siberia in the face of an intact Soviet Far Eastern army and air force. While obviously any clear sign of an impending Soviet collapse would alter the situation immediately, it would appear that for the immediate future at least the Japanese will continue their past policy of watchful waiting in regard to the Soviet Union.

3. It is too soon to evaluate the possible effects on the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union of the accidental sinking announced yesterday of the *Kehi Maru* which the Japanese claim was sunk following collision with a Soviet floating mine. While there is no indication so far of an intention on the part of the Japanese press to play up this disaster and a protest has merely been delivered to the Soviet Ambassador in Tokyo, the accident occurs against a background of previous Japanese complaints in regard to the danger of loose Soviet mines in the sea of Japan.

Grew

762.9411/311: Telegram

*The Chargé in Germany (Morris) to the Secretary of State*

BERLIN, November 25, 1941—6 p.m.

[Received 7:27 p.m.]

4175. My 4167, November 24, 6 p.m. The press will doubtless have reported the year extension of the Anti-Comintern Pact and the adherence of seven new members which took place in Berlin today and I am not sure that this intended demonstration resembling so many others that Berlin has witnessed in the recent past calls for much serious comment. It is obvious that in the present instance the pretext for a dress parade of Axis puppet states was particularly slender for if, as the Germans would have us believe, Bolshevist military power has been definitely smashed at least three times in the last 6 months and nothing remains for the German armies but a series of mopping up operations it is not apparent why an international conference should have to be called for the ostensible purpose of envisaging another 5 years of vigorous and menacing Comintern activity. From this we can only surmise that the real reasons for staging a demonstration at this moment must have been of a decidedly ulterior motive. There is little doubt that Berlin circles had hoped to soften the advent of another hard war winter for the subject peoples of Europe by holding a conference at this time to celebrate the successful conclusion of the Russian campaign and to announce the beginning of demobilization and reconstruction on the continent of Europe. Cold military facts having precluded the realization of this plan, the present demonstra-

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61 Not printed.
62 Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Nanking regime, Rumania, and Slovakia, who joined Germany, Japan, Italy, Hungary, Spain, and “Manchoukuo”.
tion was probably designated to fill the resulting gap; and if it appears even emptier and more pathetic than similar marionette shows which Ribbentrop has held in the past this is probably the result of its stopgap character.

There has been no official statement as to what further formalities or discussions are envisaged but it is intimated that something more of this nature designed in the words of the Dienst aus Deutschland “to emphasize and deepen the meaning of this manifestation in still another form” is contemplated. It is not believed, however, that all of the visiting plenipotentiaries will wish to remain any longer than necessary in Berlin now that they have performed these services expected of them.

Repeated to Rome.

Morris

740.0011 Pacific War/864 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Kuibyshev, December 9, 1941—9 a.m.
[Received December 10—3:31 a.m.]

2035. There has as yet been no official indication of the reaction of the Soviet Government to the Japanese attack upon the United States and the resultant hostilities. The news was first received here in the early morning hours Monday, on which day no local papers are published. Today’s Kuibyshev paper devotes approximately two-thirds of its foreign affairs page to the hostilities in the Pacific area, most of the text, however, consisting of Tass news despatches from the various capitals concerned. While no Soviet comment accompanies these items, it is noticeable (a point of significance in analyzing the Soviet press) that the greater part of these despatches are from American and British sources.

In so far as the reaction of the Soviet public is concerned, such information as has come to me by courtesy of the American journalists and others who have some slight contact with Soviet citizens indicates that, as was to be expected, the feeling is hostile to Japanese, entirely favorable to ourselves—although the possibility that our involvement in actual hostilities might result in the curtailment of the flow of American war supplies to the Soviet Union was expressed in more than one instance. Nothing has been reported to me indicating that either official or private Soviet commentators contemplate action at this time by the Soviet Government which on the contrary, it is assumed, will continue at least for the present to be guided by the Soviet-Japanese pact of neutrality.

I called on Vyshinski this evening for the purpose of discussing pending Embassy questions with him and although our conversation

53 December 8.
54 Soviet Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
inevitably dealt with the Japanese-American hostilities, he made no comment other than to indicate his very cordial good will. I did not, of course, attempt to elicit from him any statement on this subject. I did, however, ask him if he had had any communication from the Japanese Ambassador and he replied that Tatekawa had just called to convey to him a formal oral declaration that Japan is at war with the United States, Great Britain and several members of the British Commonwealth.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/17290: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 10, 1941—8 p. m.
[Received December 10—4:25 p. m.]

5986. This is just to remind you of Eden's mission and to suggest that you might want to take advantage of it. It is possible for me to communicate with him from here.

When Eden left it was not his intention nor the Prime Minister's to press for a declaration of war against Japan. I understand that at some point in the earlier conversations it was suggested that two British divisions might be made available on southern section of the Eastern Front. The British are not in a position to go through with this suggestion. This and a general inability to make a direct contribution on the Russian front seemed to me in part responsible for their not wanting to over press for additional military assistance at this time. On the other hand the British have complied with Stalin's insistence on a declaration of war against Finland, Hungary and Rumania and the military situation on the Russian front, particularly in the south, is much improved. I only give you the above as background in following up the suggestion in the first sentence of this message. The warning in the first paragraph of my message No. 5876, December 4, midnight still holds.

WINANT

740.0011 Pacific War/1047: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Kuibyshev, December 18, 1941—1 p.m.
[Received 6:06 p.m.]

2504. The noncommittal attitude with respect to the American-Japanese war that has been maintained by Soviet officials and the So-

56 The British Foreign Secretary was going to the Soviet Union.

56 Not printed.
viets press since the outbreak of hostilities (during which time Lozovski has held no press conferences) has finally been changed by the appearance of an editorial on the subject in Pravda. Excerpts from this editorial as reprinted in today's local paper are contained in a telegram bearing the next succeeding number.

Inasmuch as a Pravda editorial must be assumed to express and lay down official policy it is of especial significance that this document states bluntly that the Japanese attacked us "treacherously and without warning" and that the negotiations in progress in Washington at the time of the attack "were obviously for the purpose of making the preparation for this treacherous attack". It is also of much interest that definite assertions regarding the outcome of the war are made, such as that despite initial successes "the Japanese invader has leaped into a very risky adventure which does not forebode him anything except ruin" and that "Japan will incontestably be defeated".

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/17503 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Winant) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 14, 1941—6 p. m.
[Received December 14—2:15 p. m.]

6046. For the Secretary and Under Secretary only. The assumption in your 5868, December 13 that I expected Eden to act for us in place of United States Embassy to Soviet Union is incorrect.

Eden and Maisky will both be in Moscow in direct contact with Stalin and I have known Maisky intimately for 3 years. He is friendly with the United States and in no way friendly with Japan. I wanted to see us take advantage of their presence in Moscow in urging British support of an invitation to make use of Russian marit ime province airports from which to bomb Japanese industry and to support a declaration of war by Russia against Japan if that was what was wanted. This would necessitate intervention by the President with the Former Naval Person.

If such intervention were wanted it would in my opinion help to have it pressed by Eden in person. Knowing the time tables, it would probably be necessary for me to ask Eden to prolong his stay in Moscow. My messages 5986, December 10 and 6006, December 11 give you background.

58 Solomon A. Lozovski, Soviet Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.
59 Not printed.
60 Soviet Ambassador in the United Kingdom.
61 Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister.
62 Latter not printed.
The last sentence of Department’s 5868 of December 13 states: “You will realize, however, that air bases in the Far East are of urgent importance to us.” My 4977, October 18, contains the following: “Holding of Russian forces in Siberia would protect their airfields which might be of great strategic importance to us if there was trouble with Japan.”

WINANT

761.94/1375: Telegram

The Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union (Dickerson) to the Secretary of State

KUBYSHEV, December 19, 1941—6 p.m.

[Received December 20—3:48 a.m.]

2085. Volskaya Kommuna today publishes without comment a Tass despatch from Tokyo dated yesterday and briefly summarizing the speech of the Japanese Foreign Minister before the special session of Parliament. Togo is quoted as stating in respect of Soviet-Japanese relations that Japan has not altered its policy of assuring security in the north and that the Soviet Government has also repeatedly declared its intention of adherence to its neutrality pact with Japan.

DICKERSON

740.0011 European War 1939/17882: Telegram

The Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union (Thompson) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 26, 1941—1 p.m.

[Received 7:47 p.m.]

17. [From Thurston.] In the course of a conversation last evening General McFarlane informed me that he has had several con-

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*Not printed.

*Ambassador Winant (telegram No. 6147, December 19, 1941, 11 p.m., filed under 740.0011 European War 1939/17699), in reporting a four-hour conversation between Mr. Eden and Premier Stalin, said: “As regards the Far East, Stalin said he was sorry that in the present circumstances he was not now in a position to help us there.” Mr. Winant added that he had received on December 19 “an additional special note” from Mr. Eden as follows: “Stalin’s attitude about the Far East is perfectly loyal and in fact he stated that he would be in a position to help us there in the spring. He is, however, clearly determined not to provoke Japan at present and considers that he is not in a position to do so. In these circumstances I felt that it would not only be useless but also unwise to speak to him about the United States use of air bases in Siberia.” Mr. Eden expressed regret that he had not been “able to do more.”

*Walter Thurston, Charge in the Soviet Union regularly stationed at Kubyshev, was at this time in Moscow.

versations with high Soviet authorities regarding the question of Soviet participation in the war against Japan and said that he had expressed to them the purely personal opinion that Soviet participation would be highly desirable from the Anglo-American viewpoint. He stated however that he recognized that the Soviet Union is not now in a position to engage in hostilities in the Far East and will not be until next spring. At the same time it is probable that owing to its preoccupation with the war in China and its new activities in the south as well as because of unfavorable winter weather conditions Japan is not in a position at present to attack Russia. The General added it must be presumed that the Japanese view the situation in somewhat the same manner and will take no action at present. As they probably also recognize the impossibility of maintaining a situation wherein two of the major powers on either side of the present world conflict are not themselves engaged in war they undoubtedly plan in due time to strike at the Soviet Union without warning. He has expressed the opinion to the Soviet authorities therefore that they should prepare themselves, endeavor to gauge the Japanese plan as accurately as possible and strike first.

[Here follow opinions as to German military plans.] Thurston.

THOMPSON

740.0011 European War 1939/17923: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 27, 1941—1 p. m.
[Received December 27—11: 33 a. m.]

19. Sir Stafford Cripps informed me this morning that he has resigned his post as Ambassador and plans to return to England. I inferred that he contemplates reentering political life there.

With respect to Japan, Cripps expressed the opinion that the Soviet Union is not now in a position to engage Japan successfully and that by entering the war in the Pacific it would weaken the effort against Germany. He added however that he believes that Russia will be at war with Japan within 3 months and implied that the Soviet Government both expects and desires that hostilities shall be initiated by the Japanese.

THURSTON