

EXHIBIT NO. 108

*File  
1/15/44*

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of Chief*  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY  
*R. L. Hunt*

November 2, 1944.

The memorandum at the bottom of this file, a memorandum by Mr. Hornbeck, dated November 27, 1941, entitled "Problem of Far Eastern Relations. Estimate of situation and certain probabilities", indexed as 711.94/2512 PS/GD., Confidential File, is a memorandum regarding the contents of which there have been leaks and misrepresentation.

For purposes of the record there is now being superimposed a memorandum by Mr. Hornbeck, of date February 28, 1944, in which certain pertinent facts are stated and an analysis is made of the contents and true purport of the memorandum of November 27, 1941.

*FW 711.94/2512*



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February 28, 1944.

On Sunday evening, February 20, Mr. Drew Pearson made in his radio broadcast certain statements regarding Mr. Stanley Hornbeck. Among these, as reported to Mr. Hornbeck on February 21 by the State Department's recorder, was a statement that: "On November 22, 1941 Hornbeck drafted a memorandum stating Japan would not attack this country. Just fifteen days later she did attack Pearl Harbor".

On February 27, Mr. Pearson made in his column of that day certain statements regarding Mr. Hornbeck. There, inter alia, he stated that: "...on November 22, 1941, just 15 days before Pearl Harbor, he wrote an important memorandum to the Secretary of State advising that Japan never would attack the United States."

Such charges warrant attention. What are the facts?

Mr. Hornbeck did not write on November 22, 1941 any memorandum of estimate or prediction. He did on November 27 write a memorandum giving an estimate of "probabilities". Knowledge of the existence of such a memorandum was at some time before the end of August 1942 imparted by someone who had knowledge thereof to some member or members of the press. There appeared in a Washington newspaper in August 1942 under the dateline "By United Press" an article purporting to compare the record of prophecy of Mr. Grew with that of Mr. Hornbeck--unfavorably to the latter. In the course of that article there was given an account of "Hornbeck's 5-1 odds", as follows:

"In contrast to that record [citations of occasions on which Mr. Grew had 'advised the United States to guard against a possible surprise attack'] was the viewpoint of the State Department adviser on political relations, Stanley Kuhl Hornbeck. Hornbeck was of the opinion, even after the truculent statements of Japan's two ambassadors, Kichisaburo Nomura and Sabusu Kurusu, that Japan was bluffing.

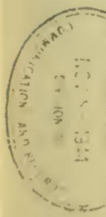
"Hornbeck's idea was that Japan would not dare attack the United States, that it was bogged down in China and that the most that need be feared was an intensified campaign against the Burma Road.

"In mid-November, Hornbeck told consultants that if the situation was viewed as a gambling proposition the odds should be 5 to 1 that the United States and Japan would still be at peace a month later. He said it was even money that the United States and Japan would not be at war some months later."

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The contents of that story indicate that there was a "leak", with apparently prejudicial purpose, somewhere and at some time antecedent to the moment of the publication of the UT article under reference. It may be presumed that Mr. Pearson had personal knowledge of that article or has been told by someone somewhere a story identical with or similar to the story on which the statements in that article were based.

Now what are the facts regarding the memorandum which Mr. Hornbeck is alleged to have written to the Secretary of State on November 23?

To begin with, Mr. Hornbeck did not write on November 23<sup>rd</sup> any memorandum of the type indicated. With regard to a memorandum which Mr. Hornbeck did write (on November 27), see infra.

Mr. Hornbeck had over the years frequently advanced the view that the United States and Japan were moving toward an armed collision and that, unless Japan changed her course or was deflected or brought to a standstill by an encounter with some other country, such a collision was bound some day to occur. During the "exploratory conversations" of the year 1941, Mr. Hornbeck took the position that the only "peaceful settlement" which Japan was seeking was a settlement on her own terms wherein she might have the assent of the United States to her program of conquest in the Far East. By August of 1941 the situation had become definitely threatening. Toward the end of that month, the British Government and the American Government served on Japan a strong warning against further extension of her courses of aggression. From then on it was generally recognized that Japan might embark on acts of force against Great Britain or the United States or both. Officers of the Department of State were in constant touch with officers of Military Intelligence and Naval Intelligence, exchanging factual data and discussing the possibilities of the situation.

On September 3, in the light of all information at that time available to him, Mr. Hornbeck expressed an opinion that Japan would not attack the United States within the next three months.

On November 3, Mr. Hornbeck advised that the last remaining United States landed armed forces in China be promptly withdrawn.

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On November 20, Messrs. Nomura and Kurusu presented to the Secretary of State the last of various proposals advanced by the Japanese Government or agents thereof during 1941 for an agreement between Japan and the United States. Six days later, on November 26, the Secretary of State gave to Messrs. Nomura and Kurusu papers which became the last of the statements of counter-proposal made by the American Government during the course of the "exploratory conversations" which had been going on for several months.

On the next day, November 27, Mr. Hornbeck wrote an informal memorandum entitled "Problem of Far Eastern Relations. Estimate of Situation and Certain Probabilities." That memorandum began with a statement, "The Japanese Government has made certain plans, some of which are absolute and some of which are conditional, for new military operations." He then stated that Mr. Kurusu's mission had had two principal objectives, and that Mr. Kurusu had achieved neither of those objectives. He then moved into the field of "forming conclusions as to what is probable". He stated that in his opinion, "The Japanese intend at this moment to persevere in and to intensify their operations toward 'bringing China to her knees'; he expressed the opinion that, "The Japanese Government does not desire or intend or expect to have forthwith armed conflict with the United States"; and he said that, "were it a matter of placing bets", he would give odds of 5 to 1 that the United States and Japan would not be at "war" on or before December 15, he would wager 3 to 1 that the United States and Japan would not be at "war" on or before the 15th of January, and he would wager even money that the United States and Japan would not be at "war" on or before March 1. "Stated briefly", he said, "the undersigned does not believe that this country is now on the immediate verge of 'war' in the Pacific." Continuing, he said: "The reasonable probability is that Japan's new military operations of the near future will be directed either toward gaining position in Thailand or operations against Hainan and the Burma Road or both." And, in conclusion, he said: "There is no warrant for any feeling on our part that the situation in the Pacific has been made worse, as regards the interests of the United States, by refusal on the part of the American Government to make a deal with Japan in terms of 'concessions' by us in return for 'pledges' (qualified and hedged around pledges) by Japan to keep the peace while continuing to make war and to prepare for more war. Japan has been at war in eastern Asia and the western Pacific for several years past. Japan has threatened to make war on each and every one of her near neighbors and even on the United States. No price that we might have paid to Japan would buy or produce peace in the Pacific or security for the United States (and/or Great Britain and/or China and/or Russia) in the Pacific. The

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question of more war or less war in the Pacific rests at this moment in the control of minds and hearts in Tokyo, not in the control of minds and hearts in Washington."

Examination of the whole content of the memorandum of November 27, 1941 shows that its author was offering not a long-range forecast but an estimate of situation in terms of short-range probabilities; that he nowhere suggested that Japan would not (or that she "could never") attack the United States; that, although he was of the opinion that the Japanese Government was not intending "to have armed conflict forthwith with the United States", he clearly perceived--and so indicated, as he had done many times before--that the situation was rapidly moving toward such conflict. In suggesting odds of 5-to-1 against "war" within the next three weeks, at 3-to-1 against "war" within the next seven weeks, and at 1-to-1 against "war" within the next fourteen weeks; in affirming that within that period "there may be some armed encounters similar to those to which we have been and are a part in the Atlantic"; and in refraining from even a tentative prognostication beyond that period, he implied that he considered that the sands were fast running out. In stating, in conclusion: "The question of more war or less war in the Pacific rests at this moment in the control of minds and hearts in Tokyo, not in the control of minds and hearts in Washington", he both admitted and affirmed that in the situation then prevailing in American-Japanese relations almost anything might before long happen.

All this is a far cry from the purport of the charge that "on November 22 (sic), 1941, just fifteen days before Pearl Harbor he [Kornbeck] wrote an important memorandum to the Secretary of State advising that Japan would never attack the United States."

Especially to be noted regarding this whole matter is the fact that Mr. Kornbeck's memorandum under reference was written not on November 22 (which was during the period while the question of reply to be made to the Japanese proposals of November 20 was under consideration) but on November 27 (which was after the American Government had reached its decision and the Secretary of State had--on November 26--made this Government's reply).

[Note: The memorandum of November 27, 1941 is in the confidential files of the Department of State under index number 711.94/2512.]

November 27, 1941.

Problem of Far Eastern relations.

Estimate of situation and certain probabilities.

The Japanese Government has made certain plans, some of which are absolute and some of which are conditional, for new military operations.

Mr. Kurusu's mission has had two principal objectives:

- (1) to obtain, if possible, from the United States, terms of agreement favorable to Japan;
- (2) to ascertain, if possible, what action, positive or negative, the United States might, may or will take in the event of certain moves by Japan.

The American Government has now given clear indication that it has no intention of making "concessions" to Japan which would be inconsistent with the declared principles and the general objectives of American foreign policy and that it does not intend to condone or give countenance to policies and practice, past and present and future, of aggression on Japan's part.

Mr. Kurusu has not achieved the first objective of his mission.

The Japanese Government has given, during the course of the "exploratory conversations", clear evidence that it is not that Government's intention at the present time to disassociate

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disassociate Japan from the Tripartite Alliance; or to give up its objective of conquering China, conquering other regions in the Far East, and establishing a "new order" and a "co-prosperity sphere" in eastern Asia and the western and southern Pacific. It has persevered in distribution and disposal of its armed forces on a pattern clearly designed for offensive rather than merely defensive operations. It has shown that it clearly intends to persevere in pursuit of its general and its particular objectives by the methods of threat of force or use of force--which means continuance of contribution to instability rather than stability of situation in the Pacific and eastern Asia.

The United States has not shown what action it will take on the positive side in the event of Japan's taking one or another of several possible steps. Mr. Kurusu may have gained certain impressions, but he cannot be sure. Mr. Kurusu has not achieved the second major objective of his mission.

The business of prophesying involves a procedure of examining facts and, as among various developments conceived to be possible, forming conclusions as to what is probable.

The prophecy is an expression by an individual or a group of individuals of an opinion as to what is going to happen.

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In the opinion of the undersigned, the Japanese intend at this moment to persevere in and to intensify their operations toward "bringing China to her knees". They have hoped that out of the conversations with the American Government they would extract something which would facilitate their effort toward that objective. Even now, they have not entirely abandoned hope of getting from us either positive or negative action helpful to them in pursuit of that objective.

In the opinion of the undersigned, the Japanese Government does not desire or intend or expect to have forthwith armed conflict with the United States. The Japanese Government, while launching new offensive operations at some point or points in the Far East, will endeavor to avoid attacking or being attacked by the United States. It therefore will not order or encourage action by its agents (foremost among which are its armed forces) which, if taken, would lead toward use by the United States of armed force by way of retaliation or resistance. So far as relations directly between the United States and Japan are concerned there is less reason today than there was a week ago for the United States to be apprehensive lest Japan make "war" in this country. Were it a matter of placing bets, the undersigned would give odds of five to one that the United States



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States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before December 15 (the date by which General Gensh has affirmed that we would be 'in the clear' so far as consumption of certain disposals of our forces is concerned); would wager three to one that the United States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before the 15th of January (i.e., seven weeks from now); would wager even money that the United States and Japan will not be at "war" on or before March 1 (a date more than 90 days from now, and after the period during which it has been estimated by our strategists that it would be to our advantage for us to have "time" for further preparation and disposals). These ventures into the field of speculative prediction are posited on an assumption that our definition of "war" must be the same in reference to activities and events in the Pacific that it is in regard to activities and events in the Atlantic: the indicated wagers are offered on an assumption that, although there may be some armed encounters similar to those to which we have been and are a party in the Atlantic, there will not be a recognized "state of war" such as to disrupt substantially or put an end to the present program of our Army and Navy for disposal within the periods mentioned of equipment and men for "defensive" and general purposes. Stated briefly, the undersigned does not believe that this country is now on the  
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Committee report of "1937" in the Pacific.

Japan has her long tradition of expansion and might now be against Russia or some other far east power. Japan has her eyes against British or French power in the East. Japan has her eyes against China. But, a move against India would be a major operation involving very substantial resources and it would be a move from which, once begun, it would be hard for Japan to withdraw. A move by Japan against the Dutch East Indies would involve for Japan a risk of armed embroilment with Great Britain and possibly the United States; it would involve a risk of developing into a major operation.

A move by Japan now against Thailand would be a move which need not require great effort or involve great risk; if made, it would have a twofold objective, on the one hand an exploration of British and American reaction, and on the other hand a possible gaining of advantageous position in connection with and for operations against the Burma Road and therefore toward bringing closer to an end the "China incident". A move on Japan's part via Indochina into Yunnan and toward putting the Burma Road out of commission (especially by continuous air attack) would involve little risk of embroilment with Great Britain or the United States, would not necessarily involve a major effort, and could be halted or be withdrawn from at any time should developments

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in the general situation render such action advisable in the opinion of Japan's military leaders.

The reasonable probability is that Japan's new military operations of the near future will be directed either toward gaining position in Thailand or operations against Yunnan and the Burma Road or both.

If, when and as Japan makes either or both of those moves, Japan will ipso facto be further disclosing what are her political and military policies and will be further extending herself as regards military disposals and effort and as regards burden and draft upon her national capacity (economic, social, political and military); she will be weakening her position in the event of there coming, later, armed conflict between herself and the United States; she will be exposing herself to naval and air attack on flank and from rear, if and when, by the United States, and she will be adding to the number of her enemies and the weight of ~~her~~ a public opinion adverse to her in the United States and the British Empire.

There is no warrant for any feeling on our part that the situation in the Pacific has been made worse, as regards the interests of the United States by refusal on the part of the American Government to make a deal with Japan in terms of "concessions" by us in return for "pledges" (qualified  
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and hedged around pledges) by Japan to keep the peace while continuing to make war and to prepare for more war. Japan has been at war in eastern Asia and the western Pacific for several years past. Japan has threatened to make war on each and every one of her near neighbors and even on the United States. No price that we might have paid to Japan would buy or produce peace in the Pacific or security for the United States (and/or Great Britain and/or China and/or Russia) in the Pacific.

The question of more war or less war in the Pacific rests at this moment in the control of minds and hearts in Tokyo, not in the control of minds and hearts in Washington.

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