

JAPAN'S PRELUDE TO WAR

Pre-Pearl Harbor Messages which U.S. Decoded

Japanese diplomatic messages between Tokyo and Washington were being read by the Army, Navy and State Department almost as soon as they were being sent and received by Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu, according to evidence introduced before the Joint Congressional Committee to Investigate the Pearl Harbor Attack. With a time lag that varied from only a matter of hours in most instances to several weeks in certain cases, our military and diplomatic authorities were aware of the instructions that the Japanese Government was sending to its negotiators in Washington, and the reports that Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu were sending to Tokyo on the course of the negotiations. While the State Department was reading Japanese diplomatic messages, reports from Nipponese spies were being intercepted and decoded. From Hawaii, the Panama Canal, the Philippines, Southeast Asia and the West Coast of the United States, Japanese agents were keeping Tokyo informed of Allied fleet movements. Evidence introduced before the Committee indicated that, as early as Dec. 2, 1940, we were aware that Tokyo was receiving reports from Honolulu on the movements of the U. S. fleet in and out of Pearl Harbor.

On Dec. 24, 1940, Japanese agent Okuda in Honolulu cabled:

"It is reported that ships from battleships down returned to Pearl Harbor on Dec. 20 and will stay until Jan. 4 (5th or 6th) on Christmas leave."

On Jan. 6, 1941, the same agent gave a comprehensive report of the ships then in Pearl Harbor, adding such vital details, as:

"Key-shaped cranes, similar to those toward the stern of the *Idaho* class cruisers, are being constructed on the five light cruisers of the *Honolulu* class, on the extreme end of the afterdeck."

On November 19, decoders intercepted Tokyo's "wind message" which detailed plans for broadcasting false weather reports to Japanese agents as a tip-off to the time and place war might start. For example:

"In case of a Japan-U. S. relations in danger: Higashi no kazeame" (east wind, rain).

On November 28, Tokyo told its Ambassadors to expect a message soon that U. S.-Japan negotiations had "ruptured," but cautioned them against a premature break:

"With a report of the views of the Imperial Government on this American proposal which I will send you in two or three days, the negotiations will be de facto ruptured. . . . However, I do not wish you to give the impression that the negotiations are broken off."

Throughout 1941, the agent in Honolulu reported continually the arrivals and departures at Pearl Harbor. In a message sent from Tokyo on September 24 and decoded by the United States on October 10, the Japanese Navy divided Pearl Harbor into five subareas and requested the exact location of ships in this area. In a message sent November 15, Tokyo asked that, in view of the "most

of the other day, although no definite decision has been made yet, please be advised that effecting it will difficult.

KURUSU: Oh, it is difficult, huh? .

YAMAMOTO: Yes, it is.

KURUSU: Well, I guess there's nothing more that can be done then.

YAMAMOTO: Well, yes.

(Pause)

YAMAMOTO: The, today . . .

KURUSU: Today?

YAMAMOTO: The matrimonial question, that is, the matter pertaining to arranging a marriage—don't break them [negotiations] off.

KURUSU: Not break them? You mean talks.

(Helplessly:)

KURUSU: Oh, my.

(Pause, and then with a resigned laugh:)

KURUSU: Well, I'll do what I can.

(Continuing after a pause:)

KURUSU: Please read carefully what Miss Kimiko [Roosevelt] had to say as contained in today's telegram.

YAMAMOTO: From what time to what time were your talks today?

KURUSU: Oh, today's was from 2:30.

(Much repeating of the numeral 2)

KURUSU: Oh, you mean the duration? Oh, that was for about an hour.

YAMAMOTO: Regarding the matrimonial question. [negotiations.] I shall send you another message. However, please bear in mind that the matter of the other day is a very difficult one.

KURUSU: But without anything—they want to keep carrying on the matrimonial question [negotiations]. They do. In the meantime we're faced with the excitement of having a child born [crises]. On top of that Tokugawa [Army] is really championing at the bit, isn't he? Tokugawa is, isn't he?

(Laughter and pause.)

KURUSU: That's why I doubt if anything can be done.

YAMAMOTO: I don't think it's as bad as that.

YAMAMOTO: Well,—we can't sell a mountain. [We can't yield].

KURUSU: Oh, sure, I know that. That isn't even a debatable question any more.

YAMAMOTO: Well, then, although we can't yield, we'll give you some kind of a reply to that telegram.

KURUSU: In any event, Miss Kimiko [Roosevelt] is leaving town tomorrow, and will remain in the country until Wednesday.

YAMAMOTO: Will you please continue to do your best.

KURUSU: Oh, yes, I'll do my best. And Nomura's doing everything too.

YAMAMOTO: Oh, all right. In today's talks, there wasn't anything of special interest then?

KURUSU: No, nothing of particular interest, except that it is quite clear now that that southward—ah—the south, the south matter is having considerable effect.

YAMAMOTO: I see. Well, then, good bye.

KURUSU: Good bye.

On November 29 what may have been the deciding vote was sent from Berlin to Tokyo, reporting Germany's great confidence concerning the outcome of the war with Russia.

“By his request, I was supposed to have called on Foreign Minister Ribbentrop during the evening of yesterday, the 28th. Suddenly, however, he requested that the time be postponed and it was not until 10:30 at night that I finally saw him.

“This delay was occasioned by the fact that a long conference of the bigwigs of the Government and military, from Goering down, was being held at the official residence of the Fuehrer. The war against the Soviet Union has now taken

definite shape and the outcome can be unerringly foretold. Next year's campaigns were mapped at this conference, taking into consideration the points brought up at the conference of the various prime ministers and foreign ministers of Europe. It is an absolute certainty that Japan's moves were also given discussion at this conference.

"1. Ribbentrop opened our meeting by again inquiring whether I had received any reports regarding the Japanese-U.S. negotiations. I replied that I had received no official word.

"**Ribbentrop:** 'It is essential that Japan effect the New Order in East Asia without losing this opportunity. There never has been and probably never will be a time when closer co-operation under the Tripartite Pact is so important. If Japan hesitates at this time, and Germany goes ahead and establishes her European New Order, all the military might of Britain and the United States will be concentrated against Japan.

"'As Fuehrer Hitler said today, there are fundamental differences in the very right to exist between Germany and Japan, and the United States. We have received advice to the effect that there is practically no hope of the Japanese-U.S. negotiations being concluded successfully, because of the fact that the United States is putting up a stiff front.

"'If this is indeed the fact of the case, and if Japan reaches a decision to fight Britain and the United States, I am confident that that will not only be to the interest of Germany and Japan jointly, but would bring about favorable results for Japan herself.'

"**I:** 'I can make no definite statement as I am not aware of any concrete intentions of Japan. Is Your Excellency indicating that a state of actual war is to be established between Germany and the United States?'

"**Ribbentrop:** 'Roosevelt's a fanatic, so it is impossible to tell what he would do.'

"Concerning this point, in view of the fact that Ribbentrop has said in the past that the United States would undoubtedly try to avoid meeting German troops, and from the tone of Hitler's recent speech as well as that of Ribbentrop's, I feel that German attitude toward the United States is being considerably stiffened. There are indications at present that Germany would not refuse to fight the United States if necessary.

"2. I made inquiries as to the future of the war against the Soviet Union.

"**Ribbentrop:** 'The Fuehrer has stated that he is now determined to crush the Soviet Union to an even greater extent than he had planned at first. He is now bent on completely wiping out that state, and went on to announce that practically all of the main military objectives had been attained and that a greater part of the German troops would shortly be brought back to Germany.

"'Following up those campaigns, the Caucasus campaign will be launched in earnest. Next spring Germany will advance to and cross the Ural Mountains and chase Stalin deep into Siberia.'

"**I:** 'Approximately when do you expect that?'

"**Ribbentrop:** 'The campaign will be launched in about May of next year, according to present schedules.'

"**I:** 'According to what you say, Germany is apparently preparing to gamble quite a bit in her Russian campaign. We hope that air connections between Germany and Manchukuo can be established at an early time.'

"**Ribbentrop:** 'That is an item that Germany has been considering for some time. By summer of next year I do not believe that air connection from the Ural area to Manchukuo will be an impossibility.'

"3. I then asked him about the campaign against England proper to which he replied that before launching landing operations against England, Germany will probably completely wipe out Britain's influence in the Near East, Africa, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea. I got the impression that more emphasis is being placed on this area than heretofore. So I asked whether

Decoded Messages

it was Germany's intention to conclude the war without attempting to go through with a campaign against England.

“**Ribbentrop**: ‘Germany has, of course, made all necessary preparations for this campaign. However, Germany is in receipt of intelligences which would seem to indicate that all is not well within England herself. For example, we hear that there is a split within the ranks of the Conservatives; that Churchill's influence is on the wane; that Bevin, chief of the Labor Party, is advocating revolutionary measures. All of these are tending to make the preservation of order there increasingly difficult.

“ ‘Of course, I am not one to implicitly believe all of this. However, I am convinced that things are getting bad in England. Under these circumstances, it may be that Germany's various other campaigns may cause England to fall even without our going through with our landing operations against England herself.

“ ‘In any event, Germany has absolutely no intention of entering into any peace with England. We are determined to remove all British influence from Europe. Therefore, at the end of this war, England will have no influence whatsoever, in international affairs. The island empire of Britain may remain, but all of her other possessions throughout the world will probably be divided three ways by Germany, the United States, and Japan. In Africa, Germany will be satisfied with, roughly, those parts which were formerly German colonies. Italy will be given the greater share of the African colonies. Germany desires, above all else, to control European Russia.’

“4. In conclusion, I said: ‘I am fully aware of the fact that Germany's war campaign is progressing according to schedule smoothly. However, suppose that Germany is faced with the situation of having not only Great Britain as an actual enemy but also have all of those areas in which Britain has influence and those countries which have been aiding Britain as actual enemies as well. Under such circumstances, the war area will undergo considerable expansion, of course. What is your opinion of the outcome of the war under such an eventuality?’

“**Ribbentrop**: ‘We would like to end this war during next year. However, under certain circumstances, it is possible that it will have to be continued on into the following year.

“ ‘Should Japan become engaged in a war against the United States, Germany, of course, would join the war immediately. There is absolutely no possibility of Germany's entering into a separate peace with the United States under such circumstances. The Fuehrer is determined on that point.’

“In closing this conference, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop requested that the contents of our talks be kept a strict secret. Please, therefore, exercise particular caution in handling this message.”

Although he had once before notified Tokyo that it was difficult to bring pressure to bear on the Secretary of State, and that protocol demanded that, when he saw another Cabinet member, Mr. Hull be present, Nomura nevertheless did his best to influence the White House by unofficial methods. On December 6 he cabled Tokyo:

“In addition to carrying on frontal negotiations with the President and Hull, we also worked directly and indirectly through Cabinet members having close relations with the President and through individuals equally influential (because of its delicate bearing upon the State Department, please keep this point strictly secret).”

The messages that followed are now history. The Tokyo Government thanked its ambassadors for their services and expressed sympathy for their failure. The usual messages to destroy all codes went to the Japanese representatives throughout the world in the last week of November, and were decoded by our cryptographers in early December. And finally the famed message of December 7 was sent with specific orders for its delivery at 1 p. m. Unfortunately, the one message designating the day of attack was not decoded until December 8.

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critical" state of relations between Japan and the United States, reports of ships in the harbor be sent at least twice a week. This was not deciphered until December 3, but two days later the Navy succeeded in decoding a Japanese message of an even more sinister tone, which asked that the agent report when there were not ship movements as well as when there were.

From Panama, Japanese agents reported United States warships passing through the Canal, and from Manila agents reported on the defenses on Cavite, the condition of airfields in the Philippines and Army dispositions throughout the Islands. A top-secret cable from Premier Togo on Nov. 20, 1941, asked the agent in Manila to report immediately on the depth of the waters near Subic Bay, where the Japanese landed less than a month later.

In 1943, the Department of State made public the American record of the negotiations with Japan which finally broke down in the attack on Pearl Harbor. Now the Japanese side of these ill-fated proceedings is made known. Excerpts from the pertinent Japanese messages sent between July 2 and Dec. 8, 1941, follow.

On July 2, 1941, Foreign Minister Matsuoka wired to the Embassy in Washington the gist of what was to be the fundamental Japanese policy during the following months:

"As regards the Russo-German war, although the spirit of the Three-Power Axis shall be maintained, every preparation shall be made at the present and the situation shall be dealt with in our own way. In the meantime, diplomatic negotiations shall be carried on with extreme care. Although every means available shall be resorted to in order to prevent the United States from joining the war, if need be, Japan shall act in accordance with the Three-Power Pact and shall decide when and how force will be employed."

At the end of July, 1941, relations between the United States and Japan took a turn for the worse when the Japanese Government sent troops into Indo-China. In explaining the move to Ambassador Nomura in Washington, the Japanese Foreign office indicated that the move was "defensive" in nature:

"Our occupation of French Indo-China was unavoidable. This step had been decided upon by the Cabinet even before I assumed office. It is to be carried out peacefully for the purpose of jointly defending French Indo-China.

"It is my intention to continue to make an effort to decrease the friction between Japan and Britain-U. S.

"Should the U. S., however, take steps at this time which would unduly excite Japan (such as closing of—for all practical purposes and the freezing of assets), an exceedingly critical situation may be created. Please advise the United States of this fact, and attempt to bring about an improvement in the situation."

Ambassador Nomura lost little time in reporting to Tokyo the reaction of the State Department to the Indo-China move:

"Since Wakasugi had called on the Acting Secretary of State, I called on Welles myself this afternoon. I explained to him that our southern occupation was absolutely essential from the standpoint of national security and economic safety. I further pointed out the impossibility of Japan to pursue a 'do nothing'

Decoded Messages

policy in the face of the embargoes being clamped down against her by various countries, for such a policy would lead to national suicide.

"After carefully explaining the above situation, I said that according to press report the French Indo-China affair was apparently being carried out peacefully with the full approval of the Vichy Government. I added that in view of those circumstances, it was my hope that the Government of the United States would restrain itself from jumping to hasty conclusions and instead would watch the trend of further developments for a little while yet.

"I told him that I feared considerable repercussions among the general public, if measures such as an export embargo on oil is put into effect at a time such as this.

"The new Cabinet in Japan, I advised the Under Secretary, is as anxious to bring the U. S.-Japanese 'Understanding Pact' to a successful conclusion, as was the previous Cabinet.

"To the above, the Under Secretary replied that he would not reiterate his statements to Wakasugi. He would not, he said, reconcile the Japanese policy with regard to French Indo-China with the basic principles of the plans being discussed by Secretary Hull and myself. Neither Great Britain nor the United States had any intention of attacking French Indo-China, he said. The consensus here is, he said, that Vichy's submission came as a result of pressure from Hitler and that Japan intends to use French Indo-China as a base from which to make further southward moves."

There was no mistaking Tokyo's intentions in the message sent to all her diplomatic representatives on July 26, 1941:

"Depending upon how Japanese relations with England and the United States turn out, we may have to consider divesting England and the United States of all their interests in China. If and when things come to the worst, I want all areas concerned to co-operate in either destroying or seizing the considerable mining and other industrial equipment and ships of these countries. Be particularly sure to let nothing be taken away. I want you all to be ready at any moment to take this precautionary step of transferring the property of these two nations to our control."

Nor was there any doubt in the attitude that the U. S. took on the subject. Ambassador Nomura reported to Tokyo:

"Today I knew from the hard looks on their faces that they meant business and I could see that if we do not answer to suit them that they are going to take some drastic steps.

During my first conversation with Roosevelt after I took office the President, referring to the *Panay* incident, said that at the time he co-operated with the Secretary of State and succeeded in restraining popular opinion but that in case such a thing happened a second time, it would probably be quite impossible to again calm the storm. The latest incident brought all this back to me and I can see just how gravely they are regarding it. Think of it! Popular demand for the freezing of Japanese funds was subsiding and now this had to happen. I must tell you it certainly occurred at an inopportune moment.

"Things being as they are, need I point out to you gentlemen that in my opinion it is necessary to take without one moment's hesitation some appeasement measures. Please wire me back at the earliest possible moment."

When the negotiations with Admiral Nomura failed to make any progress, it was proposed that a conference be held between President Roosevelt and Premier Konoye. A story speculating on the conference caused repercussions in Tokyo, and the Government wired Nomura:

"Since the existence of the Premier's message was inadvertently made known to the public, that gang that has been suspecting that unofficial talks were taking place, has really begun to yell and wave the Tripartite Pact banner.

"In the midst of this confusion at home Fleisher's story in the *Herald-Tribune* relating the rumor of a proposed conference be-

tween the Premier and the President broke, which was unfortunate, to say the least, as you can well imagine.

"The Government is not afraid of the above-mentioned confusion; nor does it feel that that condition will destroy the fruits of the said conference. It is only that the Government wished to keep the matter a secret until the arrangements had been completed. I am sure that you are aware that such a policy is not limited to just this case.

"Because of the circumstances being what they are, we would like to make all arrangements for the meeting around the middle of September, with all possible speed, and issue a very simple statement to that effect as soon as possible. (If the middle of September is not convenient, any early date would meet with our approval.)

"Will you please convey this wish of the Government to Hull and wire us the results. If an immediate reply is not forthcoming, we plan to issue a public statement describing our position in this matter. We feel that this should be done from the viewpoint of our domestic situation. Please advise the United States of this plan."

Messages concerning the talks were constantly exchanged with the Washington Embassy, and, on September 15, Ambassador Nomura felt called upon to explain to Tokyo the conduct of American foreign policy:

"(1) Whatever we tell to Secretary Hull you should understand will surely be passed on to the President if he is in Washington. It seems that the matter of preliminary conversations has been entrusted by the President to Secretary Hull; in fact he told me that if a matter could not be settled by me and Secretary Hull it would not be settled whoever conducted the conversations. Hull himself told me that during the past eight years he and the President had not differed on foreign policies once, and that they are as 'two in one.'

"(2) The expression 'Communitic and other subversive activity' would arouse their caution, and the words 'common defense in China' would give rise to questions, while 'agreement' would still leave a doubt as to just what it does mean in concrete terms.

"(3) The United States has intimated that it wants to be advised of the peace terms between Japan and China and has further indicated that she would refuse to act as intermediary in the peace negotiations unless the terms were fair and just. Under such circumstances, I feel certain that the United States will not agree to promoting the peace conference if we now avoid outlining our terms.

"(4) In view of the national characteristics of the United States and of the President's position, it will be next to impossible to leave the interpretation of the Tripartite Pact up to the 'leaders' at the conference, for them to settle from a political viewpoint. In other words, if opinions of both sides do not coincide at the preliminary conferences, there will be no 'leaders' conference.'

"(5) The United States has absolutely no objections to making these talks a Japanese-U. S. affair. Moreover, she has never even suggested the addition of a third power to it. The only thing they want to do is to arrange matters with Britain, China, Netherlands, etc., in advance, so that they will not get the impression that the United States is trading them off. However, I shall, of course convey the gist of your instructions to Hull.

"(6) I have been doing everything in my power, however insignificant my efforts may seem, to carry out your various instructions and suggestions concerning the proposed negotiations. I fear, however, that if I were to go ahead and make some disposition of the various points you are discussing in Tokyo, I may find myself going off at a tangent. I should like, therefore, to leave these points alone for the time being and watch developments."

On September 22 Ambassador Nomura sent Tokyo a lengthy report on the state of American public opinion.

Decoded Messages

“With regard to the question of the policy toward—, the people, as a general rule, are extremely happy-go-lucky. Should a war develop between Japan and the United States, ‘why worry, it’s inevitable,’ is their attitude. There is still a great deal of talk on the comparative merits of the navies of both countries, the gist of which can be summed up as follows: A war between Japan and the United States will be one within the scope of the Navy alone; Japan’s economic strength cannot stand a long war; the United States excels greatly in its ability to replace warships lost in battle; saying these things, they boast of their ability to win out in a short while. There are only a few who are at all conscious of the danger of a war with Japan. In the field of international diplomacy, they still maintain their age-old policy toward —. There are many who argue that to reach a compromise with Japan at the expense of China is fundamentally wrong. For example, according to the Hyde Park correspondent writing in the *New York Times*, Sunday edition, at the present time attempts to ameliorate the situation existing between Japan and the United States are deadlocked. Because Japan’s demand for the continued occupation of territory held by them in China is not in agreement with Hull’s categorical denial of the possibility of such continued occupation, Premier Konoye has requested a direct conference with the President.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding all that, since the German people’s will to fight is stronger than ever before, there are a greater number of people who feel that such a nonaggressive policy as outlined above cannot bring about a successful conclusion.

“Many feel that as a result of the discontent of people in occupied lands, Italy will withdraw herself from the line of battle. In addition, many feel that the unrest of people in occupied areas will continue to increase. There are others, too, who pin unfounded hopes that the power of endurance of the German people will crumble within a short space of time.

“If the war is to be a short one, one or two years will be required. If it is a long one, it will be protracted from five to ten years. The people generally here are maintaining an extremely happy-go-lucky frame of mind. There are practically none at all who think that as a result of this war the United States will be destroyed. With regard to their will to enter into the war, they feel that naval participation is sufficient. And, aside from the preparations being undertaken by military authorities, there are practically none who anticipate the dispatch of expeditionary forces on a large scale.

“However, most recently there has been a sharp decline in the isolationist opinion expressed in the houses of Congress. One group is already going over to the majority group who back up the Government’s foreign policy.

“Nevertheless, the President is a person who unceasingly confers with Hull. Today the greater portion of the American Navy is being kept in the Pacific. Japan, in the event of the Russian downfall, might move either to the south or to the north. In such a case there is some fear that a frontal clash might occur at the same time in the Atlantic and the Pacific as well. The President is giving the utmost consideration to this matter.

“As for Japan’s peace terms, rumors are being circulated that in addition to Japan demanding the treaty ports and the four southern provinces in China, she might go so far as to demand other points of military importance.

“Finally, though the United States Government does not wish to compromise with Japan at the expense of China, should Japan give up forceful aggressions, Japanese-American trade relations could be restored, and the United States would even go so far as to render economic assistance to Japan.

“The above are the critical observations concerning the trend of opinion in the United States made by Kuratukuhon, and I think he hit the nail on the head.”

On October 10, Admiral Toyada indicated the feeling in Tokyo, and expressed distrust of his representatives in Washington:

"1. Slowly but surely the question of these negotiations has reached the decisive stage. I am doing my utmost to bring about a decision on them and the situation does not permit of this senseless procrastination. The difficult points must be clarified now. My No. 637 and related messages were sent you for that reason. What I wish of you now is to find out as soon as possible the opinions of the United States concerning the matters mentioned in those messages. (Otherwise, as I have told you two or three times, it will be impossible for me to decide upon our policy.) Yes, I know you have told me your opinions quite sufficiently in a number of messages, but what I want is the opinions of the American officials and none other.

"2. In your caption message you do not tell me whether or not we have a chance to proceed with these parleys. You do not tell me how Hull answers. You do not tell me anything else I need to know for my future consideration. You must wire me in detail and immediately the minutes of these conversations, what they say and the prospect for negotiations. Hereafter, when you interview Hull or the President of the United States, please take Wakasugi or Iguchi with you and please send me without delay the complete minutes of what transpires."

Ambassador Nomura wired Tokyo on October 16 the gist of a conversation with a source close to the Commander in Chief of the American fleet, indicating the distrust of the Japanese Cabinet felt in the United States:

"On the evening of the 15th Terasaki was invited to the home of Admiral Turner, who, as you know, is a most trusted friend of Admiral Stark. In the course of their conversation Turner said:

"(A) 'If Hitler gains control over Europe, it will constitute a direct threat to Central and South America, and America must certainly fight this. Therefore, it is the present policy of the United States to prevent the enfeeblement of Great Britain's national resources (including the Far East) by assisting her in stopping Germany.

"(B) 'It is said that the present Japanese Cabinet is a strong one; however, it is doubtful whether it has the support of the Army, and if the military finds itself at variance with the opinions of the Cabinet, the Cabinet might be overthrown at any time. Therefore, the United States cannot help feeling a little trepidation in broaching any negotiations with the Japanese Government under these circumstances.

"(C) 'It is urgent that a formula be drawn up on the basis of a fifty-fifty compromise between Tokyo and Washington.' (Turner does not think that we are compromising.)"

On November 4, Ambassador Nomura was informed that Tokyo was sending a second plenipotentiary to carry on negotiations with the United States. As revealed in the following message, Kurusu allegedly carried no additional instructions, other than those being cabled Nomura:

"In view of the gravity of the present negotiations and in view of your request on instructions from me, Ambassador Kurusu is leaving—on the 7th by clipper to assist you. He will be your righthand man in these parleys. He is carrying with him no additional instructions, so in order to prepare him for the talks, will you please tell him all, and I hope that you can, by all means, arrange for an interview between him and President Roosevelt.

"By the way, will you please be sure to keep Ambassador Kurusu's activities strictly secret."

Ambassador Nomura on November 10 reported to Tokyo that the American Government meant business.

"1. I sent Moore (Frederick Moore—legal adviser to the Japanese Embassy in Washington) to contact Senator Thomas of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Hull. His report reads as follows:

“The United States is not bluffing. If Japan invades again, the United States will fight with Japan. Psychologically the American people are ready. The Navy is prepared and ready for action.’

“2. Yesterday evening, Sunday, a certain Cabinet member, discarding all quibbling, began by saying to me:

“You are indeed a dear friend of mine and I tell this to you alone.’ Then he continued: ‘The American Government is receiving a number of reliable reports that Japan will be on the move soon. The American Government does not believe that your visit on Monday to the President or the coming of Mr. Kurusu will have any effect on the general situation.’

“I took pains to explain in detail how impatient the Japanese have grown since the freezing; how they are eager for a quick understanding; how both the Government and the people do not desire a Japanese-American war; and how we will hope for peace until the end.

“He replied, however:

“Well, our boss, the President, believes those reports and so does the Secretary of State.’ ”

On November 13, Tokyo once again evidenced distrust in the reports that its representatives were sending:

“1. Through the U. S. Ambassador’s courtesy, I was, in conference, shown the record of your conversations with Secretary Hull of the 7th. According to this record, the Secretary asked you, point blank, in connection with the so-called self-defense rights for a ‘concrete statement of Japan’s relations with the Axis Powers.’

“You made no mention of this in your message. Will you please give us a detailed report of this.

“2. Judging from the tone of these talks, the United States is apparently still assuming that they are of a preliminary nature. We pleaded with the U. S. Ambassador again on the 12th to try and see the seriousness of the situation. Will you, too, do everything in your power to make them realize this in accordance with the lines contained in my various instructions on this subject.

“3. Since the record of your conversations with Hull were shown to me only through the personal courtesy of the Ambassador, please maintain strict secrecy regarding it.”

On November 14, two messages foreshadowed the end of the negotiations and war. The first of these went from Tokyo to the Japanese representative in Hong Kong:

“Though the Imperial Government hopes for great things from the Japan-American negotiations, they do not permit optimism for the future. Should the negotiations collapse, the international situation in which the Empire will find herself will be one of tremendous crisis. Accompanying this, the Empire’s foreign policy as it has been decided by the Cabinet, insofar as it pertains to China is:

“A. We will completely destroy British and American power in China.

“B. We will take over all enemy concessions and enemy important rights and interests (customs and minerals, etc.) in China.

“C. We will take over all rights and interests owned by enemy powers, even though they might have connections with the new Chinese Government, should it become necessary.

“In realizing these steps in China, we will avoid, insofar as possible, exhausting our veteran troops. Thus we will cope with a world war on a long-time scale. Should our reserves for total war and our future military strength wane, we have decided to reinforce them from the whole Far Eastern area. This has become the whole fundamental policy of the Empire. Therefore, in consideration of the desirability to lighten our personal and material load, we will encourage the activities of important Chinese in their efforts in the occupied territories insofar as is possible. Japan and China, working in co-operation, will take over military bases. Thus operating wherever possible, we will realize peace throughout the entire Far East. At the

same time, we place great importance upon the acquisition of materials (especially from unoccupied areas). In order to do this, all in the Cabinet have concurred, in view of the necessity, in a reasonable relaxation of the various restrictions now in force (after you have duly realized the critical situation which has brought the above decisions into being you will, of course, wait for instructions from home before carrying them out).

"In connection with the above, we have the precedent of the freezing legislation. We are wiring you this particularly for your information alone. Please keep absolutely quiet the existence of these decisions and the fact that they have been transmitted to you."

The second of these vital messages went to Tokyo from Nomura in Washington:

"I am telling Your Excellency this for your own information only.

"I believe that I will win out in the long run in these negotiations, and I will fight to the end. I will do my very best with infinite patience and then leave the outcome up to God Almighty. However, I must tell you the following:

"1. As I told you in a number of messages, the policy of the American Government in the Pacific is to stop any further moves on our part either southward or northward. With every economic weapon at their command, they have attempted to achieve this objective, and now they are contriving by every possible means to prepare for actual warfare.

"2. In short, they are making every military and every other kind of preparation to prevent us from a thrust northward or a thrust southward; they are conspiring most actively with the nations concerned and rather than yield on this fundamental political policy of theirs in which they believe so firmly, they would not hesitate, I am sure, to fight us. It is not their intention, I know, to repeat such a thing as the Munich Conference which took place several years ago and which turned out to be such a failure. Already I think the apex of German victories has been passed. Soviet resistance persists, and the possibility of a separate peace has receded, and hereafter this trend will be more and more in evidence.

"3. The United States is sealing ever-friendlier relations with China, and insofar as possible she is assisting Chiang. For the sake of peace in the Pacific the United States would not favor us at the sacrifice of China. Therefore, the China problem might become the stumbling block to the pacification of the Pacific and as a result the possibility of the United States and Japan ever making up might vanish.

"4. There is also the question of whether the officials of the Japanese Government are tying up very intimately with the Axis or not. We are regarded as having a very flexible policy, ready, nevertheless, in any case, to stab the U.S. right in the back. Lately the newspapers are writing in a manner to show how gradually we are tying up closer and closer with the Axis.

"5. If we carry out a venture southward for the sake of our existence and our lives, it naturally follows that we will have to fight England and the United States, and chances are also great that the Soviet will participate. Furthermore, among the neutral nations, those of Central America are already the puppets of the United States, and as for those of South America, whether they like it or not, they are dependent for their economic existence on the United States and must maintain a neutrality partial thereto.

"6. It is inevitable that this war will be long, and this little victory or that little victory, or this little defeat or that little defeat do not amount to much, and it is not hard to see that whoever can hold out till the end will be the victor.

"7. It is true that the United States is gradually getting in deeper and deeper in the Atlantic, but this is merely a sort of convoy warfare, and as things now stand she might at any moment transfer her main strength to the Pacific."

By November 27, the time set by Tokyo for having the

United States agree to the Japanese terms had expired. Urgency in reaching a settlement forced the Japanese to resort to the telephone, rather than rely on code messages. To keep the American monitors from following the conversation, Tokyo sent to Washington a system of double talk to be used, substituting the word "matrimony" for "negotiations," apparently hoping to wed the United States to their plans to dominate Asia. Nevertheless, 24 hours after the following conversation between Kurusu and Yamamoto took place, its exact meaning was known to the United States Government.

KURUSU: Hello, Hello. This is Kurusu.

YAMAMOTO: This is Yamamoto.

KURUSU: Yes, Hello, Hello.

(Unable to get Yamamoto for about six or eight seconds, Kurusu said aside, to himself, or to someone near him:

"Oh, I see. they're making a record of this, huh?")

(It is believed he meant that the six-second interruption was made so that a record could be started in Tokyo. Interceptor's machine had been started several minutes earlier.)

KURUSU: Hello. Sorry to trouble you so often.

YAMAMOTO: How did the matrimonial [negotiations] question get along today?

KURUSU: Oh, haven't you got our telegram yet? It was sent—let me see—at about six—no, seven o'clock. Seven o'clock. About three hours ago. There wasn't much that was different from what Miss Umeko [Hull] said yesterday.

YAMAMOTO: Oh, there wasn't much difference?

KURUSU: No, there wasn't. As before, that southward matter—that south, SOUTH—southward matter, is having considerable effect. You know, southward matter.

YAMAMOTO: (Obviously trying to indicate the serious effect that Japanese concentrations, etc., in French Indo-China were having on the conversations in Washington. He tries to do this without getting away from the "Miss Umeko childbirth, marriage" character of the voice code.)

YAMAMOTO: Oh, the south matter? It's effective?

KURUSU: Yes, and at one time, the matrimonial question seemed as if it would be settled. [As if an agreement would be reached.]

KURUSU: But—well, of course, there are other matters involved too, but—that was it—that was the monkeywrench. Details are included in the telegram which should arrive very shortly. It is not very long and you'll be able to read it quickly.

YAMAMOTO: Oh, yes, quite a while ago. At about 7 o'clock.

KURUSU: How do things look there? Does it seem as if a child might be born? [As if a crisis is at hand].

YAMAMOTO (in a very definite tone): Yes, the birth of a child seems imminent. [A crisis does appear imminent.]

KURUSU (in a somewhat surprised tone, repeating Yamamoto's statement): It does seem as if the birth is going to take place?

(Pause)

KURUSU: In which direction . . .

(Stopped himself very abruptly at this slip which went outside the character of the voice code. After a slight pause, he quickly recovered, then, to cover up the slip, continued:)

KURUSU: Is it to be a boy or a girl?

(YAMAMOTO hesitated, then laughing at his hesitation, took up Kurusu's cue to re-establish the voice-code character of the talk. The "boy, girl, healthy" by-play has no other significance):

YAMAMOTO: It seems as if it will be a strong healthy boy.

KURUSU: Oh, it's to be a strong healthy boy?

(Rather long pause.)

YAMAMOTO: Yes. Did you make any statement (to the newspapers) regarding your talk with Miss Kimiko [Roosevelt] today?

KURUSU: No, nothing. Nothing except the mere fact that we met.

YAMAMOTO: Regarding the matter contained in the telegram