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WELLES STRESSES U.S. RIGHTS IN CHINA

Meets Tokyo Assertion of Shift With Reaffirmation of Our Policy on China

SAYS NOTES GAVE VIEWS

Washington Shows No Sign of Preparing to Protect British Interests in the Far East

By BERTRAM D. HULEN

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.
WASHINGTON, Nov. 17—The assertion of Yukihiro Suma, the Japanese Foreign Office spokesman, in Shanghai yesterday that the United States Government in official communications to Tokyo had admitted that America was not blind to new realities in East Asia was met today with a reaffirmation of American rights in China by Sumner Welles, Acting Secretary of State.

Mr. Welles discussed the subject briefly in response to questions at his press conference. He pointed out that the position of the United States concerning developments in East Asia in recent years had been set forth in three communications to the Japanese Foreign Office, all of which had been published. There is nothing, he declared, that in any way varies from the point of view enunciated in those communications. Beyond that he had nothing to say for the present in commenting on Mr. Suma's statement.

Secretary Welles had reference first, to the note of April 29, 1934, which expressed the opinion that "treaties can lawfully be modified or be terminated, but only by processes prescribed or recognized or agreed upon by parties to them."

The second note, of Oct. 6, 1938, insisted upon observance of American rights and interests in China.

Third Note in December, 1938

The third note, of Dec. 31, 1938, Mr. Welles had particularly in mind in his comment. In that communication the United States reserved all rights in China and declared that international arrangements could be altered only by orderly processes of negotiation and agreement among the interested parties, but announced a readiness to consider any proposals Japan might make in discussions with representatives of the other powers whose rights and interests were involved.

The reaffirmation of the American position was obviously calculated not to interfere with the discussions that Joseph C. Grew, the United States Ambassador to Japan, is having with the Foreign Office in Tokyo, looking to an improvement in relations, but it was interpreted as meaning that the United States was not retreating from its position. It is believed that this held particular significance at a time when, according to reports, Great Britain through discussions with the Japanese may be preparing the way for a partial retreat from her position in China.

On the other hand there is nothing that is said in authoritative circles that would confirm some impressions that with Britain involved in a European war the United States was contemplating protecting British interests in the Far East.

Nor does there appear to be warrant at this time, from what is said in official circles, for any belief that President Roosevelt will follow the lead of Senator Key Pittman, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and encourage Congress to vote an economic embargo against Japan if relations are unsatisfactory after next January when the 1913 commercial treaty expires through denunciation of the United States.

Course Depends on Talks

Whether that treaty will be replaced by another accord presumably will depend much upon the character of the conversations Ambassador Grew is now conducting. No details concerning those conversations have been revealed here, other than they they are being pursued frankly and patiently.

It is doubted that the attitude of the United States will result in an intensification of Japan's campaign in China, if for no other reason than that for a long time Tokyo has seemed to have been exerting a maximum military effort. It is also doubted that our attitude will force Japan into the arms of Russia. Obviously Mr. Grew's tact and diplomatic skill, as well as firmness, are counted upon to minimize any such possibility.

Moreover, while it is realized that Japan and Russia may reach understandings over fishery and other natural resources at Sakhalin Island and perhaps make other local arrangements, such as the recent truce on the Mongolian border, it is not believed, in view of basic factors, that they will enter into an alliance, at least in any circumstances now envisaged.

Keep with Mr. WS
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