WELLES STRESSES
U.S. RIGHTS IN CHINA
Meets Tokyo Assertion of Shift
With Restatement of Our
Policy on China

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17—The assertion of Takakiro Sums, 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 I 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, 1938, which expressed the viewpoint 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.

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.