

(F 8703/3918/10).

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Extract from "Army Council Instructions  
for the General Officer Commanding the  
British Troops in China" dated December, 1938.  
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6. British Garrisons in China.

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(c) Shanghai.

The rôle of the garrison is, in co-operation with the forces of other interested Powers,<sup>2</sup> the defence of the International Settlement from outside aggression by Chinese forces, and the protection of foreign lives and property within the area covered by the tactical dispositions necessary for the security of the Settlement.

(d) Tientsin.

In addition to the duties for which the Boxer Protocol of 1901 provides (vide paragraph 4 above), the British Garrison in Tientsin has the further duty of protecting the British Concession.

(e) It must be realised that the primary object in the establishment of garrisons in Tientsin, Peking and Shanghai was the defence of British interests against the Chinese. It may not be militarily practicable or politically desirable to offer the same degree of resistance to encroachment on British interests by other Powers (e.g. Japan).

In the event of Japanese troops seeking to enter British Sectors of the defences of the International Settlement at Shanghai, they should be asked what are their /intentions

NOTE: \* Whilst the French are concerned primarily with their own Concession, the security of that concession is of considerable importance to that of the International Settlement and vice versa. Plans for the defence of the Settlement and of the French Concession therefore require co-ordination.

intentions. It should be pointed out that the British troops are responsible for the sectors which have been allotted to them. If the Japanese admit that their entry is with a view to further operations against Chinese, the British Commander should protest and state that he is referring home for instructions. No forcible opposition should be offered.

In Tientsin, although the status of the British Concession differs widely from that of the International Settlement in Shanghai, yet the fundamental principle of avoiding armed conflict is equally applicable. Opposition to any Japanese claim to enter the Concession must not be carried to a point where armed conflict is likely to result. In the last resort the Japanese should be permitted entry subject to strong protest and notification that the matter is being referred home for instructions.

Should any question of principle arise which is not covered by these instructions, reference should be made to the War Office, since any precipitate action may have far reaching international repercussions. In the last resort, however, force may always be employed against any Power in defence of British lives.

(f) Though in peace a political necessity, the maintenance of garrisons in Shanghai and Tientsin is strategically a liability. In the event of war, either in the Far East or elsewhere, it will probably be desirable to withdraw all or part of these garrisons if the military and political situation permits. Except, however, in case of grave and obvious emergency demanding immediate action, these garrisons are not to be withdrawn without reference to the War Office.

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