

We are not expected to take any action on these suggestions from the Netherlands Government for the time being. But the F.O. telegram makes it clear that they are expecting to hear something from us regarding the reactions of the U.S.G. to the proposal that a joint declaration be made "by the U.S. and the British Empire that any attack on the Netherlands East Indies or on British possessions in the Far East will involve Japan in war immediately with both our countries". This suggestion was originally put forward by the Chiefs of Staff and in referring to it in their telegram to us No. 771 the F.O. merely said "a joint declaration on the lines recommended by the Chief of Staff is obviously most likely to achieve this end but such a declaration is I fear unrealisable in present circumstances". This showed fairly clearly that the F.O. hardly expected the U.S.G. to fall in with the suggestion, and in the communication which the Ambassador sent to Mr. Hull on February 11th, while it was said that "the joint declaration . . . . is obviously the course most likely to achieve this end" we added "it is realised, however, that such a proposal may present certain difficulties from the point of view of the U.S.". In none of the recent telegrams which we have sent to the F.O. ~~representing~~ representing the reactions of Mr. Hull or Mr. Welles to our suggestions that the U.S. should take some deterrent action has there been any reference to the possibility of the proposed joint declaration. Presumably, therefore, neither Mr. Hull nor Mr. Welles have ever mentioned the matter in their conversations, and if that is so, then the inference to be drawn is presumably that they do not care for the idea. Indeed, the President's statement on February 9th to the Ambassador that he "did not think the country would approve the U.S.G. declaring war on Japan if the Japanese only attacked the N.E.I. or the British possessions" is a pretty clear indication that the U.S.G. would not agree to make any such declaration. Unless, therefore, either Mr. Hull or Mr. Welles did say anything specific on the subject to the Ambassador, it might be enough to reply referring the F.O. to the President's remarks and saying that in the circumstances we do not think that there is any point in pressing the suggestion about the joint declaration further on the Americans, at all events at this stage.

*M*  
February 20th, 1941.

*Mr. Butler just*

*There is evidence of an important change for the good in Congress since the President's talk with H.E., but I feel sure that anyway until the Lend-Lease Bill has passed, the old feeling*

*against*

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