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F.O. telegram No. 4770

I spoke to Mr. Hull accordingly.

According to him the President did not use orally the exact wording of the warning elaborated between the P.M. and the President at their meeting. Mr. Hull said he had advised strongly against this <sup>wording</sup> and in favour of couching the warning in less crude terms. He said that he did not think <sup>this</sup> had weakened it but perhaps, <sup>by</sup> being in fairly friendly, but not too friendly, language, had strengthened it. He had also urged instead of the warning occupying the single sheet agreed upon between the P.M. and the President that there should be added a list of the suggestions held out by Mr. Hull in the earlier conversations as to the nice things which Japan could expect to secure if she behaved well, and proved by her acts a change from a policy of aggression and force to one founded on the basic principles which the U.S. and indeed G.B. stood for.

Going over the earlier history of his Confidential conversations with Mr. Nomura and their interruption he said that before the President returned from the meeting with Mr. Churchill, the Japanese Ambassador had come and asked whether the conversations could not be resumed. Mr. Hull had answered that he could only do so if there was a basis for them and reiterated that he adhered strictly to the basic principles, e.g. <sup>help for China</sup> withdrawal of <sup>Japan</sup> troops from China, equal position for all in China and throughout/

throughout the Far East area, open door, etc. <sup>which he had always maintained</sup>. If the Japanese would accept this basis and would agree not to ~~disrupt~~ <sup>disturb</sup> it while the conversations proceeded, he would renew them. He said that twice the Japanese failed to accept them and twice he had rejected their request for resumption of conversations. They had then agreed to his conditions (this I took to have occurred in Nomura's last interview with the President) and therefore the conversations could go on. He hoped he could gain time like this. If they resulted in a peaceful settlement and ~~were~~ <sup>if Japan</sup> proved by Japan by her actions that she had abandoned the policy of force and aggression it would be all to the good. But he thought there was probably only one chance in 25 to 50 of this. However he might have gained very useful time. There was <sup>a</sup> ~~another~~ danger he was alive to <sup>viz</sup> that if the Japanese accepted all the demands and acted up to them for say six months and then broke their agreement, the effect on the morale of China's army and people might be bad. This and other dangers of his policy he had to consider.

At the moment the situation in Japan was extremely delicate as between Kenoye and the party in favour of peace and good sense, and the extremists. The slightest thing might make the extremists suddenly take matters into their own hands. This was an aspect of the matter which it would be well for H.M.G. to take into

careful/

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on next page ]

Incidentally Mr. Hall expressed regret over the ref<sup>n</sup> in the P.M.'s broadcast of Aug 24 to these ~~negot~~ conversations. It had not been intended that they sh<sup>d</sup> be known because of the risk of putting Po Kenoye out on a limb & imposing him to attack from the extremists.



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careful consideration in any action they decided upon vis-a-vis Japan. He suggested that in respect of any warning contemplated by us Sir Robert Craigie should be told to take this situation into careful account both in considering the wording and the timing of our warning. Perhaps he would think it worth while consulting on this aspect with Mr. Grew. In any case in Mr. Hull's opinion a warning should be oral and should not be made public.

In connection with the delicacy of the situation between Kenoye and those who thought like him and the extremists he said the situation was as follows:- There was first Mr. Roosevelt's warning; there was then Mr. Churchill's public warning which had brought a storm of fury from the Japanese press; thirdly there was the oil situation which had also aroused the Japanese press against the U.S. and there was the reception of the Chinese Ambassador by the President followed by the announcement of the despatch of the Magruder mission to China. All these were "jets of boiling water poured into the witch's cauldron seething in Japan" and might make the hot-tempered extremists lose their temper. Kenoye

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(how sincerely he <sup>Mr. Hull</sup> did not know, but still he begged)

begged that the U.S.G. should be very careful not to give the extremists a pretext for upsetting him by charging that he was sacrificing

the aims of the Japanese imperial policy. In this connection he thought it most unwise of Mr. Nomura to have published <sup>the fact that</sup> Prince Kenoye <sup>had</sup> ~~sent a~~ letter to the President.

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Insert marginal addition from preceding page.

Briefly/

Briefly Mr. Hull's argument was that we were on a knife edge and must calculate with the greatest care the effect of any move we made.

As regards our proposed use of the exact terms of the warning agreed between the P.M. and the President and as regards the linking of our warning with the U.S.G.'s warning, Mr. Hull said that he would at once hold a conference of his competent advisers and hoped to be able to give me an answer this afternoon. I left the alternative texts with him.

He had kept the President fully informed of the history of his conversations with the Japanese Ambassador and of the objects he was seeking to secure. I could therefore know that the President, when he himself spoke with the Japanese or others, would talk (at least he presumed this would be the case) along the same lines.

Mr. Hull promised that if the conversations produced any basis for serious negotiations he would inform H.M.G. and the Chinese Government and (I gathered *though I am not sure*) the Netherlands.

RE 30/9

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