HE.

Possibly for purposes I record it might be as well to send copies of these two minutes to the BO. I could do this in a private letter to Mr. Dewey if you agree.

[Signature]

29/11

[Signature]

29/11
When I saw Mr. Hornebeck this morning he himself raised the question of blame for the breakdown of the modus vivendi proposal. He said that the State Department did not accept that the Chinese were chiefly responsible for the breakdown any more than they accepted that the Dutch, Australians, British or themselves were chiefly responsible. The decision not to present the modus vivendi proposal was a joint responsibility to which all had contributed. He based these remarks on the fact that according to him it was being said that we had been extremely keen on the modus vivendi but that the Chinese had killed it - in fact that we were sheltering behind the Chinese. He made it clear that it was being suggested that we were responsible for these rumours. I said that we were nothing of the sort; that I heard also that we were credited with having hoped for a breakdown of the conversations and it seemed to me that somebody, probably the Japanese, were being pretty busy in spreading rumours and doubts. We agreed that any blame-casting or post mortems, especially in public, were highly undesirable and said that we should certainly have nothing to do with it unless we were ourselves erroneously accused in public. I reminded him that Lord Halifax had been told by Mr. Welles that Mr. Hull felt that it had been useless to go on with the idea of the modus vivendi because of our attitude.

We parted with the reiterated agreement/
The conversation was a long one but I do not think I need record the other remarks on this subject which he made, except that he was of the opinion between U.S. and Russia

It occurs to me that the rumour we have been saying that we were extremely keen on the modus vivendi may date from a period before the decision not to present it when if we had been asked we should have said that we fully supported the U.S. in the conduct of their conversations, but I have no knowledge that anybody did in fact say anything to this effect to pressmen or private individuals.

Unless we detect any attempts to fix the blame on us in the U.S. press or from anywhere else I think we should "duck" any question as to responsibility for the abandonment of the modus vivendi. If we detect any disposition to blame us then I think we should bring it to the attention of the J.B. before we react. There will no doubt be Japanese and perhaps other Axis attempts to use this matter in order to sow distrust and irritation between us and the United States.

H.E.
Mr. Childs

[RC 28/11]

agreement that attempts to cast blame were to be avoided and with the reiteration on his part of his statement recorded at the beginning of this minute.