

Japan: U.S. Relations: 6204/129<sup>A/4</sup>

**SECRET**

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

December 1, 1941

*Shank - H*

*We have had this  
direct Sec - 1/22*

My dear Lord Halifax:

I am transmitting herewith for your confidential  
information a secret message which the Prime Minister  
sent to the President under date of November 30.

Believe me

Yours very sincerely,

*W. H. Wells*

*Wells*

Enc.

His Excellency  
The Right Honorable  
The Viscount Halifax,  
British Ambassador.

SECRET

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM: American Embassy, London

DATED: November 30, 1941

There is one important method remaining unused, it seems to me, in averting war between Japan and our two countries, namely, a plain declaration, either public or secret - whichever is thought more desirable, that the gravest consequences will result from any further aggressive act by Japan. Your constitutional difficulties are fully understood but it would be tragic should Japan drift into war by encroachment without having the dire character of a further act of aggression squarely and fairly before her. Will you not consider whether, at the moment which you judge propitious, which may be very near, you should not say that any further aggressive act by Japan would compel you to place the gravest issues before Congress. Great Britain would of course make a similar declaration or share in a joint declaration, and in any case arrangements are being made so that our action and yours will be simultaneous. Will you forgive me for pressing such a course upon you? It is my conviction, however, that it might make all the difference and might avert an extension of the combat.

Memorandum to Mrs. Lull: 6204/129/41

April

1 sheet of notes ...

return to ...

4/1/41, politely ...

by ...

In ...

Telegram from the Foreign Office, London,  
to the British Embassy, Washington,  
dated December 1st, 1941.

We agree with the view expressed in paragraph 4. But since we do not wish to lay ourselves open to the charge of having been unwilling at difficult stage of negotiations to give any help in our power you should inform the Secretary of State before definitely refusing to see Japanese representative.

2. You might say that our feeling was against your seeing the Japanese in order that there should be no opening for them to create trouble by representing that there was any lack of unity among the A B C D powers. If, however, the Secretary of State has any messages he would like you to convey to them, you are fully authorized to meet his wishes.

3. If Secretary of State agrees that it would be better for you not to see the Japanese, you should use some polite pretext or another but in last resort you may state that you are not authorized to intervene in any way in the negotiations.