

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

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INTERVIEW

My Year With Ambassador Joseph C. Grew
1941-1942 - A Personal Account

This is the story of one year of what has turned out to be a rather interesting life. Another such period was my year as special assistant to John Foster Dulles during his negotiation of the Japanese Peace Treaty. But with the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor and of the unsuccessful US-Japan negotiations that preceded it approaching in December, there is special reason to set out now my recollections of what I observed and participated in as a private secretary to our Ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, in Tokyo and in Washington from mid-1942 to mid-1942.

The story of those negotiations, referred to on the US side as “the Washington talks,” (Washington’s position was that the talks never reached the negotiation stage because of the two sides’ inability to agree on prior “fundamental and essential questions,” but, for simplicity’s sake, I will overlook the distinction and use the word negotiations herein.) is available in Mr. Grew’s Ten Years in Japan (1944), and Turbulent Era Vol. II (1952) and in the official records, published after twenty-five years, in The Foreign Relations of the United States. 1941. Japan. Fully set in those volumes are the arguments supporting Washington’s handling of the negotiations, on the one hand and on the other-- Ambassador Grew’s firmly held views that Washington’s stance was unimaginative and inflexible, that the Embassy’s carefully considered reports, analyses and recommendations centering on Prime Minister Konoye’s proposal that he and President Roosevelt meet face-to-face in Honolulu in a direct effort to achieve a settlement of all outstanding issues were given short shift, and that if the meeting had been allowed to take place, the Pacific War might have been avoided.

Ambassador Grew, whom I continued to see from time to time during the war, remarked several times that only history can judge the issue. We are now fifty years into history, and it is perhaps not amiss to pull the arguments together for another look. I am no historian, but at least I have the benefit of having assisted Grew in a small way in the preparation of his never published "failure of a mission" report during our post-Pearl Harbor internment in Tokyo, of discussing the issues with him at length during our two months long voyage home, and of accompanying him when he called on Secretary of State Cordell Hull and attempted to present the report. I thought then, and I think now, that Grew was right, that the meeting should have been held, and that if it had been held the Pacific War might in fact have been avoided, without sacrifice of any significant U.S. or Allied principle or interest. Over most of its length, however, what I will relate is of little or no historical interest consisting of events and anecdotes during our internment and the long voyage home via Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) and Rio de Janeiro aboard the "Asama Maru" and the "Gripsholm".

The story begins in April 1941 during the Easter vacation of my senior year at college. I was cutting the lawn at home in Long Island, New York, when a call came from James D. Regan, Senior Master at Groton School in Massachusetts, from which I had graduated in 1937. Did I recall Ambassador Grew's practice of asking Groton’s headmaster to nominate a Grotonian about to graduate from college to come out to Tokyo for two years as his private secretary? I said that I did indeed recall it, and remembered that Marshall

Green, of Groton's class of 1935, currently held the job. Regan said that Green's time would be up in June, that Rev. John Crocker, Groton's then headmaster, had received a letter from Ambassador Grew asking him to propose a successor, and that he wished to propose me.

Regan said that there was, of course, the problem of the draft--would I be prepared and able to obtain a deferment? I said that I thought my retinal detachment history would prevent me from serving in any, even home-front, military capacity; that the job with Grew interested me very much and that I would try to expedite determination of my draft status. He said that he would mail me a copy of Grew's letter to Crocker, which, as a demonstration of Grew's writing talents, devotion to Groton and the Foreign Service and sense of humor, I will attach to this account.

A month later, after being classified 4-F (excluded from any form of military service), I confirmed my acceptance of the position to Crocker. Soon afterward, I received a letter of welcome from Mr. Grew, and in June, Green returned home. We met in New York, where he removed any doubts I might have had that I made the right decision. "The Grews," he said, "were great, the Embassy group first class, the duties of the job not too arduous and Japan still a wonderful place, not withstanding the gathering of war clouds." In the course of a couple of days together, I offered Green an airplane ride, having at that time accumulated several hundred flying hours. He still talks of our bombing run a few feet above a tanker moving down Long Island Sound, with the captain running for cover on the bridge.

In those days, hard as it is to believe now, US Foreign Service Officers called personally on the Secretary or Under Secretary before departing for their posts. The number of FSOs was sufficiently small to permit this. I was not an FSO, but Grew had written to his old friend, Under Secretary Sumner Welles, another Grotonian, to ask him to oversee my departure arrangements and briefly receive me. I recall waiting in the anteroom between Secretary Hull's and Under Secretary Welles' offices, occupied by two secretaries, before Mr. Welles came out to usher me in. The two claimed to be their bosses entire secretarial support!

Driving my own Dodge car across the country, I read up on Japan, but comforted by Green's report that I would have almost no need for Japanese, I attempted to learn only a few phrases. At San Francisco, I boarded the *Kamakura Maru* and recall during the voyage tossing a ball in the ship's pool with Mamoru Shigemitsu, Japan's Ambassador to the U.K. who became Foreign Minister in 1943 and signed the surrender instruments for Japan on the *Missouri*. He had lost a leg from a terrorist bomb some years before in Shanghai, and swimming was accordingly his favorite sport. Afterward, we sometimes discussed the deterioration of US-Japan relations and what might still be done about it over tea on the deck.

Arriving in Yokohama, I was met by an Embassy driver, and with his help, I started the paperwork to have my car released by the port authorities. My amah (servant), Kanisan,

inherited from Green, met me with a bow and a giggle at the door of my government provided apartment in the Embassy compound in Tokyo. I had barely started to unpack when the phone rang - it was Ambassador Grew inviting me up the hill to his residence to get acquainted.

As I entered Grew's study, he turned from the old typewriter on which he had hunted and pecked his work at home for decades and greeted me warmly. We talked for about half an hour, during which he said that he had just received a letter about me from my maternal grandfather, Bishop William Lawrence, who had confirmed him at Groton years ago. Mrs. Grew came in to be introduced, lamenting the fact that unlike my predecessor, I did not play bridge. Grew said that he nevertheless had good reports on my golf, which was the important thing. Both could not have been nicer. I left feeling that all would be well.

The next day I met the Embassy staff, particularly Eugene H. Dooman, the Embassy Counselor--born in Japan, fluent in Japanese and Grew's right-hand man--Edward S. Crocker, First Secretary; Charles E. Bohlen, Second Secretary--recently arrived from Embassy Moscow and later President Roosevelt's Russian interpreter/advisor and Ambassador to the USSR, France and the Philippines--Captain Henri H. Smith-Hutton, Naval Attaché; Lt. Colonel Harry J. Creswell, Army Attaché; Frank S. Williams, Commercial Attaché and Marion Arnold, Mr. Grew's longtime secretary, with whom I shared his outer office.

I had known that one of my principle duties would be golf. Weekday afternoons, when permitted, Grew would quickly assemble a foursome from the Embassy golfers--most often Dooman, Bohlen, Crocker and myself--and away we would go to Koganei, Kasumegaseki or some other nearby course. Relations with Japan had reached a point where Grew's Japanese friends could no longer afford to be seen with him, including on the golf course. On the other hand, as I will bring out later, there were those, including Prime Minister Konoye, who found carefully arranged golf games and private dinners still feasible for meeting with Grew and Dooman at critically important junctures.

The Grew's favorite weekend retreat from the summer heat of Tokyo was in Karuizawa, about three hours drive up in the so-called Japanese Alps in central Honshu. There they stayed in the Mampei Hotel, and golf was the order of the day. I was frequently included in these excursions, sometimes going with them in their Embassy car and sometimes driving up on my own.

I was invited on such a trip the first weekend after I arrived and recall teeing up at the first hole for my first game of golf in Japan, with Grew, Chip Bohlen and Ned Crocker looking on. To my partner, Mr. Grew's and my delight, I hit one of the best drives of my life. Thereafter, my game reverted to form, but at least I never had to be concerned about failing to hold up my end with partner Grew. A tremendous golf enthusiast, he unfortunately seldom broke one hundred. His putting style was unique--between his legs with a croquet-type stroke--but unfortunately no better for the fact. Bohlen and I both

prided ourselves on the length of our drives; considerable sums passed between us on the issue, on top of the team bets.

As the weeks passed, I became aware that Grew and Dooman were heavily preoccupied with an undertaking which they believed could critically affect the prospects for averting war. Though the matter was closely held within the Embassy, I learned that it related to a proposal Grew had transmitted to Washington from Prime Minister Konoye that he and President Roosevelt meet fact-to-face in Honolulu in an effort to fundamentally turn US-Japan relations around before it was too late. Grew had told Washington that Konoye was convinced that he would be able to present terms for such a settlement at such a meeting which the US and its allies would be able to accept. Konoye had said that the terms had the backing of the Emperor and of Japan's highest military authorities and that senior military officers were prepared to accompany him to the meeting and put the weight of their approval behind the hoped-for agreement with the President on the mission's return to Japan. Grew and Dooman had strongly recommended that Washington agree to the meeting.

Returning to daily life at the Embassy, of the many incidents that stick in my mind, I will relate only two, both relating to the British Ambassador, Sir Robert Craigie, a distinguished but slightly stuffy representative of His Majesty's Diplomatic Service.

One of my duties as private secretary was to operate the movie projector when the Grews showed American movies after dinner parties at their residence. The machine was somewhat antiquated and occasionally broke down in the middle of a reel. This happened one evening when the Craigies were among the guests. Mrs. Craigie, sitting next to Mrs. Grew, remarked, "Isn't it unfortunate, my dear, that machine of yours is always breaking down."

To which Mrs. Grew, a formidable adversary in repartee, replied, "Yes, my dear, but isn't it fortunate that we have no important guests tonight."

A few weeks later, Sir Robert called on Grew in his office for a review of events. After he has departed, Grew called me in to say that in the course of conversation, Sir Robert had asked him if he was aware that his private secretary had been seen in the company of a half Swedish, half German young lady known to be close to the German community in Tokyo, including members of the German Embassy. Surely with the access which the private secretary undoubtedly had to sensitive materials, Mr. Grew would wish to ensure that the relationship was terminated. Grew said that he had told Sir Robert in no uncertain terms that he had every confidence in his private secretary and that if this were not the case, he would not restrict my contacts but would send me home. Grew doubted we would hear anymore of the matter, and we didn't.

Reverting to the Konoye proposal, although my knowledge of the cables back and forth was limited at the time, the records show that Washington's initial reaction to the proposal was not unfavorable. The idea caught the President's imagination. In a late

August session with Japanese Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura, Roosevelt “spoke of the difficulty of going as far as Hawaii and elaborated his reasons why it would be difficult to get away for twenty-one days. He turned to Juneau, Alaska as a meeting place, which would only require some fourteen or fifteen days, allowing for a three or four days conversation with the Japanese Prime Minister.” At the close of the meeting, he said, “that he would be keenly interested in having three or four days with Prince Konoye, and he again mentioned Juneau.: In his August 28 reply to Roosevelt through Nomura, Konoye said that “he would be assisted by a staff of about twenty persons, of whom five each would be from the Foreign Office, the Army, the Navy and the Japanese Embassy at Washington.” Nomura “thought that the inclusion of Army and Navy representatives would be especially beneficial in view of the responsibility which they would share for the settlement reached.” Konoye told Grew about this time that a destroyer with steam up awaited in Yokohama to carry him and his associates to the meeting place. An Embassy officer who lived in Yokohama confirmed this.

However, at a meeting with Nomura at the White House on September 3, the President read a message, prepared at State, from him to Konoye, which included the statement that “it would seem highly desirable that we take precautions toward ensuring that our proposed meeting shall prove a success by endeavoring to enter immediately upon preliminary discussions of the fundamental and essential questions on which we seek agreement. The questions which I have in mind for such preliminary discussions involve practical applications fundamental to achievement and maintenance of peace...” When Nomura asked whether the President was still favorable to a conference, “the President replied that he was but that it was very important to settle a number of these questions beforehand if the success of the conference was to be safeguarded...” He added that “it would be necessary for us to discuss the matter fully with the British, the Chinese and the Dutch, since there is no other way to effect a suitable peaceful settlement for the Pacific area.”

In succeeding meetings, Roosevelt and Hull reiterated these two themes--that the proposed meeting must be preceded by preliminary US-Japan discussions of (by which they clearly meant agreement on) “the fundamental and essential questions on which we seek agreement,” and by US consultation with our Chinese, British and Dutch allies. In a September fourth meeting with Nomura, Hull said that “this was especially necessary with the Chinese who might otherwise be apprehensive lest we betray them. He (Hull) felt that before we are in a position to go to the Chinese, the American and Japanese Governments should reach a clear understanding in principle on the various points to be discussed affecting China.” Concern for Chiang Kai-shek’s reactions was clearly a key factor in the Administration’s thinking.

Konoye, in his initial broaching of the meeting idea in the spring, had explained to Grew, and he to Washington, why it was necessary for him to meet personally with Roosevelt outside Japan and why he would be able to propose terms at such a meeting which he could never propose through diplomatic channels. If he had said he was to use such channels to provide the specific assurances Washington sought on the China question and

other issues, his Foreign Minister, Yosuke Matsuoka, who had led Japan into the Axis Pact with Germany and Italy and who, with the Germans and Italians, would do anything to prevent a Japanese accommodation with the US, would immediately leak those assurances to fanatical Japanese elements and to the German and Italian Embassies; he (Konoye) would be assassinated, and the whole effort would fail. A further risk of hostile leaks lay in the codes through which the Embassy and the State Department communicated. The Embassy hoped that one of its codes was still secure, but Konoye told Grew that he believed that Japanese cryptographers had broken all the others. The Embassy did not know that we had broken the Japanese codes and that Washington knew everything that passes by cable between Tokyo and the Japanese Embassy in Tokyo.

After Matsuoka was forced to resign as Foreign Minister following the German invasion of Russia in June, Konoye told Grew, and he Washington, that Matsuoka had left supporters behind in the Foreign Office who would equally leak the positive and forthcoming terms which he (Konoye) intended to propose to the President. On the other hand, Konoye maintained that if he, accompanied by senior representatives of the Army and Navy, could meet face-to-face with Roosevelt, propose those terms and have them accepted in principle, subject to Washington and Allied concurrence and the working out of detailed implementing arrangements, the reaction of relief and approval in Japan would be so strong that die-hard elements would be unable to prevail against it.

Grew and Dooman supported this reasoning. From the Emperor down, they told Washington, the Japanese knew that the China venture was not succeeding. Particularly after the July freezing of Japanese assets abroad and the embargo on oil and scrap shipments to Japan, the endless war in China was driving Japan into ruin. Every time a taxi went around the corner, Japan had less oil. There was solid reason to believe that the bulk of the Japanese people, except for the die-hards and fanatics, would sincerely welcome a face-saving settlement that would enable the country to pull back, on an agreed schedule, from China and Southeast Asia, even if not from Manchuria. Japan had now held Manchuria for nine years and successfully integrated its economy into the homeland economy, and its disposition presented special problems which would have to be worked out in agreement with Nationalist China. (Chiang Kai-shek reportedly declared in 1937 that China was determined to give up no more of its territory--a tacit admission that the return of Manchuria to China could not at that time be expected.) But the time was now--the opportunity had to be seized before Japan's economic situation and internal discontent reached so serious a level that the military felt obliged and entitled to take complete control and launch Japan on a suicidal war against the West.

Grew told Washington that because of the risks of hostile exposure, Konoye could not provide the clear and specific commitments concerning China, Indochina, the Axis Pact, non-discriminatory trade and other issues which Washington sought before the proposed meeting. On the other hand, he argued, there was strong reason to believe that Konoye would be able to provide those commitments at the proposed meeting and that with the Emperor's, the top military's and the people's support, they would be carried out. No one could guarantee this, but the alternative was almost certainly replacement of the Konoye

Government and a rapid descent toward war. A State Department paraphrase of an August eighteenth Grew cable to Hull concluded as follows:

“The Ambassador urges with all the force at his command for the sake of avoiding the obviously growing possibility of an utterly futile war between Japan and the United States that this Japanese proposal not be turned aside without very prayerful consideration. Not only is the proposal unprecedented in Japanese history, but it is an indication that Japanese intransigence is not crystallized completely, owing to the fact that the proposal has the approval of the Emperor and the highest authorities in the land. The good which may flow from a meeting between Prince Konoye and President Roosevelt is incalculable. The opportunity is here presented, the Ambassador ventures to believe, for an act of the highest statesmanship, such as the recent meeting of President Roosevelt with Prime Minister Churchill at sea, with the possible overcoming thereby of apparently insurmountable obstacles to peace hereafter in the Pacific.” (For a fuller exposition of Grew’s views in his own words, see the attached copy of his message of August nineteenth to the Secretary and Under Secretary.)

As the weeks passed and Washington still withheld approval of Konoye’s meeting proposal, he and Grew became increasingly discouraged. Konoye warned at their secret meetings that time was running out, that he would soon have no alternative but to resign and be succeeded by a prime minister and cabinet offering far less chance of determinedly seeking and being able to carry out a mutually acceptable US-Japan settlement. Again and again Grew urged Washington to accept the meeting as the last, best chance for a settlement. He urged that not only Konoye, but he and Dooman firmly believed the Emperor and Japan’s top military and civilian leaders wished to reverse Japan’s unsuccessful military course, if this could be accomplished without an appearance of abject surrender. Japan could not pull its forces out of China and Indochina overnight without such an appearance, but it could commit itself to a course of action which would accomplish that result in an acceptable period of time under effective safeguards.

Personalities can make an important difference in such situations. Secretary Hull’s principal Far Eastern advisor was a former professor named Stanley K. Hornbeck. Coming to the post with a China background, he was personally known by Grew and other Embassy Tokyo officers to have shown disdain and dislike for the Japanese. Word reached the Embassy that it was largely as a result of his influence and advice that Roosevelt’s and Hull’s initially favorable reaction to the meeting proposal had cooled. It was largely at his insistence that the policy of requiring Japan to provide clear and specific assurances on outstanding issues, particularly respecting China, before such a meeting could be held had been adopted. Hornbeck was quoted as saying that Grew had

been in Japan too long, that he was more Japanese than the Japanese and that all one had to do with the Japanese was to stand up to them, and they would cave. The Embassy heard that State's "Japan hands," led by Joseph W. Ballantine, tended to agree with its recommendations, but how strongly was not clear. What did seem clear was that Hornbeck had the upper hand and that his views were prevailing with Hull and Roosevelt.

On October 16, Konoye, having plead and waited in vain for US acceptance of his meeting proposal, resigned and was replaced by General Hideki Tojo. In a private conversation with Grew, Konoye put the best face he could on this development, recalling that Tijo, as War Minister in Konoye's cabinet, had personally supported the meeting proposal and had been prepared to put his personal weight behind the hoped-for agreement with the President. But Grew and Dooman now held little hope for peace, believing that the chance which Konoye had presented of a reversal, not at once, but by controlling stages, of Japan's aggressive course had been lost. The Washington talks continued, and Grew employed his talents to the full with his old friends, the new Foreign Minister, Admiral Teijiro Toyoda, and others to make them succeed. But he was privately frank to say that in his view, the die had been cast when Konoye gave up on the proposed meeting and resigned.

Reflecting this view, Grew sent a number of cables during October and November, warning that the Japanese, finding themselves in a corner as a result of the freeze and embargo, not only might, but probably would, resort to an all-out, do-or-die attempt to render Japan invulnerable to foreign economic pressures, even if the effort were tantamount to national hara-kiri. In a message on November 3, he expressed the hope that the US would not become involved in war "because of any possible misconception of Japan's capacity to rush headlong into a suicidal struggle with the United States." He said that "the sands are running fast," and that "an armed conflict with the United States may come with dangerous and dramatic suddenness." Earlier in the year, he had reported that the Peruvian Ambassador in Tokyo had informed diplomatic colleagues that a Japanese Admiral in his cups had been heard to say that if war came, it would start with an attack on Pearl Harbor. The contrast between Grew's prescient warnings and Hornbeck's reported view that if one stood up to the Japanese, they would cave, could not be more stark. But "China-hand" Hornbeck's analysis prevailed over that of our Tokyo Embassy, not only with Hull and the President, but also apparently with our military authorities responsible for our Pacific defenses.

And so war came. It was Sunday in the US but Monday morning, December 8, when the news reached us in Tokyo. At about 8:00, I walked over from my apartment to the Embassy chancery--a distance of about forty feet. There, standing or lying around on the chancery lobby floor, were a collection of golf bags. It was the day for the "Tuffy's Cup" annual golf tournament, inaugurated some years before by the British Naval Attaché, Captain Tuffnel.

Chip Bohlen came down the stairs. Had I heard the news? The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and other points around the Western Pacific, and the Imperial Headquarters

had announced that a state of war existed between Japan and the US and its Allies. As I absorbed this intelligence, other Embassy officers arrived, most having heard the news from their drivers, who had heard it over their car radios.

The Ambassador had not yet come in, so I went up to his residence. He was relating to Ned Crocker how he had delivered a personal message from the President to the Emperor through Foreign Minister Togo at midnight and how he had been called over to Togo's office at 7:30 that morning to receive the Emperor's reply. Grew said that if Togo had known about the attack, he had given no sign of it on either occasion, though his manner had been even stiffer than usual that morning. That, however, could be accounted for by the fact that the Emperor's response to the President's message had broken off the year-long US-Japan negotiations. Grew later heard on good authority that Togo knew nothing of the attack until the news came over the radio early Monday morning.

I returned to the chancery, where people were talking in knots and scurrying about. I joined Bohlen, who was exchanging information with a British Embassy officer named Johnson who had driven over. We agreed that the Japanese appeared to have scored a major initial success. Walking back to my apartment, I comforted Kani-san, who was in tears, as best I could.

I then went down to the compound's front gate, which was closed tight with Japanese police standing all about. Outside, up the street, I heard a newsboy calling "*Gokkai, Gokkai,*" meaning "Extra, Extra" and waving copies of the English language "official" Japanese Government newspaper, *The Japan Times and Advertiser*, on which I could see gigantic headlines. It occurred to me that the paper would probably not only be informative on what happened, but would make a great souvenir. So I walked as inconspicuously as I could back along the eight-foot wall surrounding the compound to a corner where some small pine trees provided a little cover. There I scrambled over the wall, bought two copies of the paper, one to give to Grew and one to keep, and scrambled back. Fortunately, this somewhat foolhardy maneuver was not noticed by the police, who I knew had orders to allow no one in or out of the compound without express official permission.

Mr. Grew was delighted to receive his copy. He asked me to start collecting issues of the Japan Times Advertiser every day for him to take back to Washington as of possible value to US intelligence services and historians. My copy of the December 8 issue, with its massive headline, WAR IS ON, hangs framed on our basement room wall at home. Its probable value as a collector's item is enhanced by the fact that the Tojo Government, at about the time I went over the wall, ordered that paper's sale stopped and required everyone who had bought a copy to turn it in to the police for destruction. This was because the paper contained a fuller account of Konoye's efforts to avoid war than the government wanted known. The paper also contains the English version of the Imperial Rescript to the Japanese people on the outbreak of war. Probably drafted and translated by the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, Marquis Kido, who was fluent in English, it is a masterpiece of prose, almost Biblical in its majesty and sweep. A copy is attached.

Getting ahead of my story for a moment, I returned to Tokyo in early October, 1945 as Special Assistant to the Political Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander, General MacArthur. Thinking it would be nice to have a copy of the August 15, 1945 surrender issue of the same paper, which during the war had been renamed the *Nippon Times*, to go with my December 8, 1941 outbreak of war issue, I searched out a copy, and it hangs in our basement alongside the earlier one. The surrender headlines are understandable smaller than the outbreak of war ones, reading, "His Majesty Issues Rescript to Restore Peace." But as in 1941, the Rescript is a prose masterpiece, probably also written by Marquis Kido, and a copy of it is attached. Beside the two newspapers on our wall are two pages of a 1942 issue of *Life*, with pictures and captions portraying our life during the internment, along with other memorabilia of my time with Grew.

Returning to Pearl Harbor Day in Tokyo, at about 11:00 a.m., a car containing several Japanese officials drove into the compound, and a Mr. Ohno of the Foreign Office asked to see the Ambassador. Someone called the residence, and Mrs. Grew answered. On being informed that a Foreign Office official wished to see the Ambassador, she replied that he was busy, and couldn't Gene Dooman receive him? But Dooman was not there. Having earlier been denied entrance to the compound by an overly-zealous guard, he had gone off to the Foreign Office to protest. So Ohno asked to see the next ranking Embassy officer, who was First Secretary Crocker. By that time, I had realized what was up and slipped into Crocker's office with Ohno and his colleagues.

After a brief exchange of greetings, Ohno pulled a paper from his pocket and said, "I am instructed to hand to you, as representing the Embassy, the following document which I shall first read to you."

"No. 136 - Strictly Confidential/Investigation V."

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tokyo, December 8, 1941

"Excellency:

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that there has arisen a state of war between Your Excellency's country and Japan beginning today.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration."

Shigenori Togo
Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Joseph Clark Grew,

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
the United States of America at Tokyo.

After a brief silence, Crocker said, "This is a very tragic moment."

Ohno replied, "It is, and my duty is most disasterful."

Ohno then proceeded to read the following statement concerning the Embassy and its functions:

1. The functions of the Embassy and the Consulates will be suspended as of today.
2. Members of the Embassy and Consulates will be accorded protection and living facilities in accordance with international usages.
3. In order to secure protection and facilities aforementioned, it is recommended that all the members of the Embassy be congregated in the Embassy compound.
4. Communication with the outside, including telephone and telegraph, will be suspended. In the case anyone desires to go out, permission must be obtained from the Gaimusho through the officer who will be posted in front of the Embassy, liaison officer, Mr. Matsuo. He has come here with me.
5. As soon as a country representing your interests is nominated, contact between your Embassy and representatives of the said country will be allowed as is necessary for the purpose of representing your interests.
6. Due attention is being paid to protecting the citizens of the United States.
7. All wireless transmitting sets will be surrendered at once.
8. All shortwave, wireless receiving sets, private as well as official, the use of which will no more be acquiesced to be handed over.
9. En clair telegrams informing your government of having been notified of a state of war will be allowed through the liaison officer."

Ohno then asked that someone be assigned to take the police representatives of the Department of Communications around to each office and apartment to be shown every receiving and transmitting radio in the premises. After phoning Grew, who felt that we were not in a position to refuse the request, as it was a case of *force majeure*, Crocker agreed to this under protest.

Again demonstrating youthful indiscretion, I went back to my apartment and effectively hid a tiny pocket radio which a college housemate and amateur radio expert had made for me and which I had brought along to Japan. The radio was about five inches long, three inches wide and three-quarters of an inch thick and had what my friend had told me might be two of the smallest tubes ever made. I carried it inside the upper pocket of my jacket, with holes cut in the pocket so I could reach in to turn the control knobs. A thin wire ran up under the back of my coat to a small, almost invisible ear plug. With this device, I had been able, unbeknownst to anyone, to listen to the radio during classes at college and even when riding my motorcycle. In Japan, I had tried it out a few times and had no trouble receiving Japanese language stations. In our current predicament, I thought it might be a useful source of information, and in any case, I did not want to lose it. The

searchers never found it, and it did prove to be a moderately useful source of information until the tiny batteries wore out. I brought it back to the States on the repatriation ship.

Even before Ohno's arrival, a group of us under Bohlen's direction had started to burn the Embassy code books and classified files. The code books were numerous and bulky and the files extensive. Burning them effectively was no easy task, particularly in contrast with modern destruction techniques. The burning was carried on in metal waste baskets indoors and steel drums outdoors in the garage enclosure. From time to time, in spite of our best efforts, whole or partial pages of unburned code or text would float up and away over Tokyo.

Ohno and the agents searching for radios showed no interest in the destruction operation, saying that their orders were solely to find and remove radios, particularly, of course, transmitters, of which the Embassy had none. All our electronic message traffic was by coded text through the Japanese Postal and Telegraph Service. Ohno's lack of interest may have resulted from the fact, as Konoye had informed Grew a few months before, that Japanese cryptographers had broken all our codes except, Konoye thought, one.

In the days that followed, our group of sixty-five organized itself under Grew's and Dooman's direction into a smoothly running, not unpleasant routine. Fortunately, as one of my responsibilities, and with the possibility of war all too apparent, I had in August mailed into San Francisco a large grocery order, after obtaining from each American staff member a list of exactly what he or she wanted, paid in advance. The order arrived only a week or two before Pearl Harbor and proved to be a godsend.

Helen Skouland, a file clerk who later married career Ambassador H. Freeman Mathews, set up a store in a chancery office of all the assembled goodies. She and I decided that in the circumstances, a Communist distribution and accounting system was indicated, based not on who had ordered what but on what the relative needs were, including those of the ten or so American businessmen who had sought refuge in the compound when the war broke out and who had not participated in the order. So we devised a system under which the original orders were nullified, and all items were essentially rationed, with payment recalculated on the basis of a combination of need and ability to pay. The arrangement was readily accepted, and the groceries were successfully strung out to last until our departure. Fresh produce was procured from the Tokyo markets through our Japanese servants, almost all of whom stayed loyally with us to the end.

As the youngest member of the group, except for the eight-year old daughter of the Naval Attaché and his wife, Cynthia Smith-Hutton, I was appointed Sports Director. This was not an insignificant assignment. Although most of the group busied themselves pretty well writing, reading, learning to type or whatever, there was inevitably a good deal of leisure time, and sports had a definite morale and fitness importance. So Bohlen, the Assistant Naval Attaché, Commander Mert Stone and I laid out a nine-hole golf course, totaling over 500 yards among and over the buildings; we set up a badminton court and ping pong table in the garage courtyard; and I organized a succession of hotly contested

tournaments in all three sports, with prizes. Some of the prizes, such as engraved silver cups and ashtrays, I ordered from outside, and some were sent in my friends of the Grews, particularly the Finnish Ambassador, Lars Tiltse and his wife.

Golf had always been Mr. Grew's favorite sport, and every morning he came down from the residence for a game. He still had misplaced confidence in my golfing skills and chose me as his partner for all the team contests. We won our share, and each of us brought back several trophies engraved "Greater East Asia Black Sulphur Springs Golf Club." "Black Sulphur Springs" was a reference to the plush resort where our counterparts, the Japanese diplomats in the US, were held. On other occasions, we used the title "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Golf Course."

To enliven our golf games, I organized a running sweepstakes under which, if you drew the name of the next person to break a window, you won the pot. Needless to say, with some of the holes going over three-story apartments houses into small, invisible to the driver greens, a great many balls ended up in the Tokyo streets. Fortunately, we had a lot of balls and never ran out. And every day, except Sunday, the Grews and four or five other avid poker players gathered for their marathon poker series., which continued on the repatriation ships almost to New York. The stakes were fairly high, and at one point, the indebtedness of an Assistant Army Attaché reached a level uncomfortable to the Grews and the rest of the group as it was to him. But happily in the end, he pulled up almost even. The bridge players, led by Mrs. Grew, were equally committed to their almost daily game.

Everyone at the outset did his or her own laundry in the sink or bathtub, as the sight of drying linens and apparel around the compound attested. One day, while playing hide-and-seek with my best friend and constant companion, Cynthia, We came upon an old washing machine in the Grew's attic. I managed to get it going, had it brought down to a room in the chancery basement and sent Cynthia to tell all and sundry that we were ready to take over their laundry chores, including delivery back to the apartments if they would bring their things down suitably bundled to us by 9:00 every morning. The next day, the pile waiting beside the machine was impressive, and it remained so for the rest of our stay. Cynthia performed all deliveries, including up the considerable climb to the residence. Our only misadventure was when Mrs. Grew sent down some of her best silk curtains, and I failed to see when I put them in the machine that a pair of Gene Dooman's black socks were still in it. I accompanied Cynthia on the delivery. Mrs. Grew, after recovering from the shock, was kind enough to say that grey had always been her favorite color.

Another of my duties was control of the Grew's wine cellar, located in the basement of the residence. Grew had earlier served in Germany--in fact, he had been Charge of our Embassy in Berlin when World War I broke out--and had brought a distinguished collection of German, French and other wines to Tokyo. Needless to say, he and the rest of us saw little point in leaving them for the Japanese to drink up after we had gone. So with the Grew's permission, I brought the supply down at an accelerated pace by

distribution to their and other messes around the compound. But there were still a good many bottles left when we departed.

On another occasion, my eyes started to itch and run. I mentioned it to Grew, who suggested to me that I see his eye man, Dr. Inouye. We were allowed out on police-escorted visits to doctors and dentists. On such occasions, I noticed that the sidewalks were as crowded with pedestrians as ever but that with the shortage of gasoline, the streets were almost barren of cars, even charcoal powered ones. And yet when the traffic light was against them, the crowds, without a car in sight in either direction, would pile up en masse on the sidewalk corners until the light turned green. Habits of conformity and discipline prevailed to an extent which would have been considered ridiculous in the West.

Dr. Inouye examined me carefully and announced that I had trachoma. He said that he would perform the necessary operation at once, consisting of scraping my upper and lower eyelids. Fortunately, I did not relish his description of the operation or the appearance of the scraping machine which he brought out, and I also remembered that trachoma was a serious and highly contagious disease quite common in the Far East but rarely caught by Westerners. I told Inouye that I thought I had better return for the operation the next day.

Back at the Embassy, I told Bohlen. Together we recognized that if I had indeed come down with trachoma, all the carefully negotiated repatriation plans, then nearing completion, could be disrupted. Bohlen went off to discuss the matter confidentially with one or two others. When he came back, he reported that another of our group, Consul General Slavens, had recently complained of the same symptoms. He had seen a doctor (not Inouye) who had diagnosed the problem as pink eye. He had largely recovered. Needless to say, I did not return to Dr. Inouye, but cured myself with some of Slavens medication. Bohlen and I mentioned the matter to no one.

In mid-April, I was playing golf on our private course with Major Stanton Babcock, the Assistant Army Attaché (believe it or not, another Grotonian!), when we heard explosions in the distance. We looked up and saw a rather large military aircraft slowly flying quite low over the Diet (Parliament) building with black anti-aircraft bursts visible behind and above. As we watched it disappear to the south, obviously untouched by the anti-aircraft fire, Babcock said that he was sure that it was an American bomber but that he had no idea how it could have got to Tokyo. The most likely way was from an aircraft carrier, but he had never heard of a plane of that size taking off from a carrier.

We dropped our clubs and ran up for a better view from the residence. There we encountered Grew with the Swiss Minister, Mr. Gorge. Grew said that he had been bidding the Minister farewell when they had seen and heard a number of large airplanes overhead. Shortly after, they had observed fires burning in different directions with lots of smoke. Sirens and gunfire could still be heard as we stood there, but the planes were no longer in view.

The papers that evening reported that nine enemy aircraft had been shot down over various parts of Japan, and several photos were shown to prove it. On examination, however, our military colleagues concluded that the photos were all of one downed plane, taken from different angles. Only later did we learn through Gorge that we had a ringside view of the Doolittle raid.

On arriving in Japan in July, I had got to know the former girlfriend, a diplomat's daughter, of an Embassy officer which had been reassigned some months before back to the States. The young lady had told me that the officer, on getting settled in his new job back home, would be calling for her and that they would be married. The last time I had seen her, in early November, she had told me that as far as she knew, this plan still held and that she hoped soon to depart.

I had tried to convince the young lady, whom I will call Jane, that these things do not always work out as planned, but without much success. After Pearl Harbor, with communications cut off and having learned that the young man had become engaged to someone else, it bothered me that Jane might spend the entire war in lingering hope that he would be waiting for her. Being at a romantic age, I felt that I should get word of the young man's engagement to Jane.

This was made difficult by the fact that she lived in Yokohama. To meet this problem, I managed to get word to a golfing friend in the German Embassy, who had once expressed interest in my clubs and who knew Jane, that I would be glad to sell the clubs to him if he could come in to close the deal. He came in, and while we bent over the clubs, I asked him if he would go to Yokohama and ask Jane to meet me at 8:00 p.m. two evenings later in a second story room in the home of Naval Attaché, Captain Smith-Hutton, just outside the compound wall. The window was only a few feet from the top of the wall in an only moderately exposed part of the compound. The nearest police box, or *koban*, was about twenty yards away, and it would be dark.

My German friend agreed to do this, and at the appointed time, I wandered out to that part of the compound. As I approached, the policeman emerged from his *koban* to walk his beat up and down the inside of the wall. I said, "*Samui desu nee*," (cold, isn't it), to which he replied, "*Hai, soo desu*" (it certainly is) and turned back on his beat toward the shelter of the *koban*.

Under the cover of the now rather complete dark, I jumped over the wall and through the window, which the Smith-Huttons, who were, of course, parties to the plot, had promised to leave open. There was Jane, to whom I gave the news. She took it stoically, but as we talked, it became clear how much she dreaded the prospect of life in wartime Japan for an indefinite number of years ahead. A bit carried away, I said that as my wife, she would be able to accompany us on the exchange ship to the US, where we would immediately have the marriage annulled. I said that I thought that Mrs. Grew, who knew Jane and her parents, might be prepared to serve as Jane's guardian for the undertaking, if Jane's

parents would agree. Jane said she would beg for their consent and would find some means of letting me know their answer.

I related the conversation to Mrs. Grew, who, as I expected, readily agreed to help get Jane settled in the US and to be responsible for her. But word came from Jane a few days later that her parents would have none of it. That was the end of the venture. Jane spent a difficult four years in Japan during the war, married a US serviceman during the occupation, and lives happily with him and their family in the US to this day.

Midway through the internment, in late March, Grew, whose fondness for golf was well known to Japanese officialdom, was informed by the Foreign Office that he, Dooman and one or two other Embassy officers would be permitted to play a game of golf, maybe two, at one of the Tokyo courses. The offer was tempting, as the Japanese knew it would be, but after soul-searching deliberation, Grew informed Dooman and the rest of us that he had decided to decline. There would, however, be no objection if we wished to go, not as sport or entertainment, but because we felt the need for reasons of physical or mental health. His undoubtedly well-justified concern regarding his own acceptance of the invitation was that the Japanese would photograph him on the course, and he had no desire to see himself so pictured in the world press at that point. He knew that a number of Allied diplomats had accepted the offer but that the British Ambassador had not. Needless to say, the rest of us followed Grew's lead and did not go out either.

In late December, as I recall, Grew mentioned that he had started work on a report to Secretary Hull and the President, presenting his frank, carefully considered views on what he believed had been Washington's mishandling of the pre-Pearl Harbor negotiations. After devoting ten years of his life to the cause of American-Japanese friendship and seeing it end in the holocaust at Pearl Harbor, he did not feel that he could in good conscience fail to present to his superiors in Washington and to history his honest assessment of the 1941 negotiations as viewed from the Embassy. It would be his own, personal report for which he alone would be responsible, but he hoped to benefit from Dooman's comments and suggestions in its preparation and later from those of a few others in the Embassy, notably, Crocker and Bohlen. The report would, of course, be entirely confidential, for Hull's and the President's eyes only, unless they wished to open it to others.

Every morning Grew worked on the report in his study in the residence, progressively bringing Dooman and the Crocker and Bohlen into the task. Marion Arnold did all the typing. One morning in March, he handed me a copy and asked me to take it to my apartment, study it and give him my thoughts and suggestions, all the way from major policy considerations to drafting points. I was to show the draft to no one and was to bring it back myself to him with my comments.

I spent two days at the task and was rewarded by Grew's apparently sincere thanks for what I produced. As I will soon explain, to the best of my knowledge, no copy of the

paper exists today. Accordingly, I can rely only on memory in attempting to relate what it contained.

Essentially, Mr. Grew, a master of the English language, recapitulated in clear, concise, often eloquent terms that case for the Konoye-Roosevelt meeting which he had earlier advanced in his cables. From the moment he had arrived in Tokyo as a Hoover appointee in 1932, he recalled, he had devoted himself unremittingly to the cause of the US-Japan friendship. Instead he had seen the relations steadily worsen as Japan's aggressive course took it into Manchuria, then China and then Indochina and the Malay Peninsula.

Finally, Grew wrote, in the summer and fall of 1941, an opportunity had presented itself under Prime Minister Konoye to reverse that course. Again and again, in carefully reasoned messages and with the benefit of intimate knowledge of the evolution of Japanese policy, of conditions and attitudes in Japan and of the leading personalities involved, including Prime Minister Konoye, the Embassy had argued that the opportunity was a real one which should be seized. It had clearly explained why Konoye could not present his far-reaching proposals, representing a fundamental shift in Japanese policy, through diplomatic channels because of the virtual certainty of hostile leaks, of Konoye's resulting assassination and of the failure of the enterprise. Konoye was prepared, with the Emperor's and the military's backing, to pull Japanese forces out of China and Indochina. But this had to be done by controlled stages over a specified, limited period of time and not so as to appear to be an abject surrender.

Washington had initially shown interest in the proposal. But this soon waned and was replaced by sweeping and inflexible demands on Japan, which ignored the real situation in which Japan, as a result of its own misguided policies, had placed itself. The US in effect said to Japan, agree to withdraw completely from China and Indochina, to in effect renounce the Axis Pact and to subscribe to open and non-discriminatory trade practices, and then we will negotiate with you. The Embassy had explained that Konoye sought many of the same goals that the US did but that he had to reach them by stages, which took account of the hard facts that Japanese forces were by that time stationed widely over China and Indochina, that the nation had undergone heavy sacrifices in pursuit of its misguided policies and that a reasonable period of time was required to turn the ship of state around. The Embassy's advice that reasonable confidence should be placed in the good faith of Konoye and his supporters to implement the steps which were so clearly in Japan's interest was apparently disbelieved and rejected.

Grew, in his report, set forth more specifically than he had in his cables or than he later did in his books the terms which Konoye had told him he intended to present to the President. They were, as I recall:

(1) Japan would effectively commit itself not to take hostile action against the US under the Tripartite Pact in case of war between Germany and the US;

(2) Japan would commit itself to withdraw its forces from China lock, stock and barrel within eighteen months from the date of finalization of the US-Japan settlement agreement;

(3) The US and its allies, in return for these commitments and for evidence of the beginning of the withdrawal of Japan's forces from Indochina and China, would (a) partially lift the freezing of Japanese assets and the embargo on the shipment of strategic materials to Japan, and (b) commence negotiations for new treaties of commerce and navigation with Japan on the clear understanding that signature and ratification would depend on Japan's full compliance with its obligations under the agreement;

(4) Japan would complete the withdrawal of its forces from Indochina and the Malay Peninsula;

(5) The US and its allies, on the completion of the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China, would completely terminate the freezing and embargo and effectuate the new treaties of commerce and navigation;

(6) The disposition of Manchuria would be left to be determined after the war in Europe was over--Konoye intended to point out to the President that if the Allies prevailed in Europe, they would clearly be able to compel Japan's withdrawal from Manchuria; if, on the other hand, the Axis prevailed, Japan would equally clearly be able to remain in control of Manchuria.

I also recall Grew's relating in his report an aspect of Konoye's plan which I have not seen set forth anywhere else. Because of Konoye's concern about the danger of leaks of what he and the President would hopefully agree at their meeting, Grew said that he (Konoye) had told him that he planned, with the President's cooperation, to keep the terms of their agreement secret until he had returned to Japan. Immediately on his return, he intended to meet with the Emperor, obtain his approval of the agreement terms and of an Imperial Rescript so stating, and then at once go on the radio to announce the terms, bearing the Emperor's and the highest military authorities' support, to the people. As earlier noted, Konoye believed that the people's response to the agreement would be so positive that extremist elements would not be able to prevail against it.

Although it took fifty years since I studied and made suggestions on Grew's internment report, and I kept no notes, I believe the above is an accurate rendition of what I read. The reciprocally controlled, step-by-step (*pari passu*) nature of the arrangement is particularly clear in my mind because of Grew's emphasis on it in our discussions on the "Gripsholm." The first steps, he stressed, would be required of Japan; The US and its allies would not be obliged to start to lift the freezing and embargo or take any other action involving cost or risk until they were convinced that Japan was faithfully fulfilling its prior commitments, including those relating to the withdrawal of its forces from Indochina and China. The US and its allies thus stood to gain much--the avoidance of war

in the Pacific without sacrifice of any essential Allied principle or objective--while risking nothing.

Why Konoye's intended terms were not presented in the above detail in Grew's cables from Tokyo may be explained by Konoye's reluctance to go into such detail before the meeting or by Konoye's and the Embassy's lack of confidence in the security of the US codes. Why he did not present them in this detail later on in his books I do not know. The specifics of the arrangement, clearly enabling the Allies to maintain control of the implementation of the settlement, would seem to add to the strength of Grew's case that the Konoye-Roosevelt meeting should have been held.

Returning to the story of our internment, the arrangements through the Swiss and Spanish Governments for our exchange with Japanese diplomats, businessmen and others held in the US finally fell into place, with June 18 as our scheduled sailing date. We would travel aboard the *Asama Maru* via Hong Kong, Saigon and Singapore, through the Sunda Straights and across the Indian Ocean to Lourenco Marques (now Maputo), the capital of Mozambique. There we would meet the Swedish cruise ship, *Gripsholm*, which would have brought the Japanese repatriates from New York. They would board the *Asama Maru* for Tokyo while we proceeded to the *Gripsholm* via Rio to New York.

As June 18 approached, Grew pondered how he could most safely carry out his report. While our persons and effects should, under diplomatic usage, not be searched, we had no assurance that the Japanese would respect that rule, as they had not respected many other rules of diplomatic privilege during the internment.

After discussing the problem with Dooman and others, he decided to make seven copies of the sixty-page, legal size document to be carried, one copy each, on his own, Dooman's, Crocker's, Bohlen's, my and a couple of other Embassy officers' persons on the theory that the Japanese would be less likely to search us than our baggage. The problem, it became apparent when the seven copies were ready, was that it did not fold very well, producing a noticeable bulge in our pockets. So someone, I forgot who, conceived the idea of making two holes at the top of each of the copies and hanging them down our backs inside our shirts, suspended by concealed strings around our necks. On our arrival aboard the ship, we would all repair to the Grew's cabin to hand our respective copies over to him, to be kept in a locked box throughout the voyage.

The early morning of June 17 we were taken in a line of police-escorted taxis to the Tokyo Railroad Station. We walked in between lines of police to a large waiting room. There had been collected several score American and other diplomats, missionaries, businessmen, newsmen and others who had been held at various points around Tokyo. The newsmen, who the Japanese assumed were all spies, had been held in closed confinement or prison, often in solitary, constantly interrogated and in many cases, tortured. (Later, on the ship, some of them demonstrated the "water cure" torture to which they had been subjected--some many times.) There was much handshaking as friends met after six months of separation and exchanged experiences.

After an hour or so, we boarded a special train and rode by a roundabout route through Kawasaki directly to the ship. There were no searches or inspections of any kind on the train or as we boarded the *Asama Maru*, a fairly large liner. Aboard the ship, we were joined by many more American and other repatriates collected from all over Japan.

Soon word spread that a hitch had developed and that our departure would be delayed. The ship moved out to anchor beyond the breakwater, and the next day, it moved again to another anchorage further out in the bay. For a week, we sat there, with launches full of Foreign Office and other officials and police coming and going and with constant rumors of our imminent departure or our return to shore. Our newsman, Max Hill of AP, who had spent almost his entire internment in solitary under torture, said that if we did not depart, he would commit suicide. He clearly meant it and in fact did commit suicide some years later, perhaps due in part to what he had suffered in confinement.

About midnight of June 24, I went on deck. a large group of crewmen were debarking from a launch, a nearby gunboat was frantically signaling with lights and further down the deck, I heard policemen saying goodbye. I woke some Embassy colleagues up in time to see the Foreign Office launch leave for the last time. The anchor came up, and the ship began to move. And then, just as we were being ordered off the decks, presumably to prevent our carrying back military secrets of the harbor, the great white cross, perhaps forty feet wide and tall, high up at the front of the ship, lit up. Our lives would depend on its safe-conduct message being seen and respected by enemy and friendly surface warships and submarines as we made our way through active war zones around Asia and across the Indian Ocean to Africa.

This is perhaps a fit point to repeat a story Chip Bohlen told me years later. He had attended a party in Moscow where the company included several Soviet naval officers. Someone brought up the diplomatic exchanges early in the war, and Bohlen, fluent in Russian, mentioned that he had been on the *Asama Maru*. One of the former naval officers looked at him and said that he (Bohlen) was lucky to be alive. He told how he had been a submarine skipper in the Indian Ocean, and one very dark and foggy night, he had seen a large ship about to cross his path. Knowing of no Allied vessels of that size in the area, he had assumed it to be an enemy ship. He had ordered torpedoes into the tubes and was just about to give the order to fire when the fog cleared, and he saw a great, lighted cross. He and Bohlen toasted fate and each other with vodka.

On June 27, we passed between the mountainous west coast of Taiwan and two small green islands. Two Japanese submarines surfaced and traveled alongside us for a while. Two days later, we anchored (back of) Hong Kong in Repulse Bay. US Consul General Southard was one of the first to come on board. He had lost fifty-four pounds in confinement, and his clothes hung on him like sacks. About 100 repatriates were added to our number, including Joe Alsop. That brought us to about 800 souls, with another 150 due to come on in Saigon. Knowing Alsop (still another Grotonian), and being in charge of billeting, I invited him to join the five of us in my cabin. He told us harrowing stories of

the fall of Hong Kong, and we endured the clacking of his portable typewriter to all hours all the way to Rio, as he prepared to file them on our arrival there.

On July 2, we sailed all day along the Indochina coast, moving slowly to allow another repatriation ship, the *Conte Verdi* (which years later burned in a famous accident at sea), to catch up with us at Singapore. The next day we started up the Saigon River, anchoring ten miles short of the city. Annamese swarmed around the ship in their little boats, yelling, diving for coins and selling all kinds of fruit, the first many of our company had seen in a long time. We dropped money down in waste baskets as the end of ropes and pulled up our purchases. Some of us fell for an impressive “cognac” in impressively labeled bottles, which turned out to be a mixture of alcohol, vanilla extract and river water. I kept my bottle in the attic for thirty years and then poured it down the toilet.

On July 4th, we sailed back down the Saigon River and after some complicated maneuvers, set off for Singapore. Approaching shore two days later by a guided zig-zag course to avoid mines, we anchored near the just arrived *Conte Verdi*. We at first thought we were at Singapore, but it turned out to be an anchorage about fifty miles up the east coast of Malaya. About 150 additional repatriates came on board, with more tales to tell. We were not allowed off, and on July 11th, headed for the Sunda Straights. At one point, we could have slung a stone in one direction onto Java and in the other, onto Sumatra. Looking out a porthole, I saw us pass within twenty feet of the upright masts of a sunken freighter. On entering the Indian Ocean, we soon felt “monsoon swells,” and a fair number were seasick that night.

At about 11:00 the night of July 13th, our rudder failed, and we took a ninety-degree turn toward the *Conte Verdi*, which was running parallel to us and a little behind. Passing to her rear, we took another ninety-degree turn and almost hit her again. We then came to a complete stop as the *Verdi* circled us and half an hour later started up again at half speed. The next morning we were still at half speed, with the *Verdi* just in sight on the horizon.

I will hear quote from a diary I kept of this part of the trip:

“July 22nd. Up at 7:00, in sight of coast of Africa. Strong wind, very cold (winter down here, of course). About 8:00 *Verdi*, leading then, picked up pilot while still moving and proceeded across bay toward Lourenco Marques, twenty miles off. a few minutes later we did the same. Nothing has so brought home to me the distance we have traveled as the sight of the four coal black Negroes who rowed the Portuguese pilot alongside. From the same rail, we had seen the same operation performed at Tokyo, Hong Kong, Saigon and Singapore. It seemed no time at all ago that we had been buying papayas from chattering, red-lipped (betel nut) Annamese down below--and now from African Negroes. We followed *Verdi*, caught up and passed her,

drew near promontory behind which lay L-M, passed around point and right by tanker flying American flag, blowing its whistle to beat the band. British ships on other side doing same. Much cheering and shouting back and fourth. Mrs. Grew and I standing on top deck had been trying to decide whether a large white ship up ahead was the *Gripsholm* or not. Now we could make out the name in big black letters on the side. Ambassador joined us to say the Port Captain now on board had seen him and been most agreeable, even saying we might go ashore as soon as we landed if he wished. We had been speculating for days whether we would be allowed ashore. Now it appears we will.

“We berthed in front of *Gripsholm*, with *Verdi* behind her. L-M dock is a long (half mile) siding--ships berth sideways is single file. Port facilities--cranes, warehouses, etc.--excellent. During afternoon, I handled distribution of first class mail brought aboard by State Department man from *Gripsholm*. Much pleased to find good sized packet for myself. Informed that exchange of our group of about 800 with the Japanese would begin tomorrow at 9:00 a.m., and we would go ashore afterwards.”

“July 23rd. Next morning people started to line up at 8:00 to exchange. I arranged with Muir (other State Department representative) to get Ambassador and Mrs Grew off without meeting Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu. We four marched off the boat first, I carrying Bohlen’s hat box (containing Grew’s report) as I had from Tokyo to Yokohama and onto *Gripsholm*. a long line of Japanese coming off *Gripsholm* and going up the pier to get on *Asama* was beginning to form. Aboard *Gripsholm*, we waited in smoking room until Grews’ cabin cleaned and ready, then all up to eat fabulous buffet lunch, buy escudos (L-M currency). Spent most of day with press boys Hill, Bellarie, Tolischus and Alsop.”

“July 24th. Arrived back at gangplank with Moran 9:00 a.m. from Polona Hotel to find Ambassador, Williams and Crocker itching to get out on the golf course. Took taxi to American Consulate, picked up Preston (Consul), who took us to Polona Golf Club. Fine club house. Crocker and I played Ambassador and Williams. Fairways terrible, greens fine. None of us expected to even touch the first ball, not

having held a driver for eight months. I drove first, and just as my first drive in Japan, hit one right down the middle 250 yards and then soon reverted to type. Had a fifty. We only played nine. Funny sort of hard-shelled oranges all over the eighth hole.”

“Back to ship for lunch. During afternoon, Clara Hamasaki deposited baby with husband Jimmy, and we saw the town. Same in evening, starting with movie “Dive Bomber” and ending at casino. Am working to get them better cabin. Got Wills up to first class from fifth and have helped others. Terrible *yakamashii* about cabin allotment. People sleeping all over lounges and decks as night before.”

“July 25th. Went shopping with Jane and Cynthia in Preston’s car all morning. Afternoon, played tennis with Benninghoff on private court with girl we met at casino night before. Evening, dance at Yacht Club with same.”

“July 26th. Took Cynthia with me while I bought toothpaste, etc. and then out to zoo. Taxi trip out there of twenty-five minutes gave some idea of African country, natives carrying bundles on head, poverty. Mozambique produces almost nothing, lives by levying head tax on its Swazi natives sent (gladly) to South African mines. Fine zoo, lions, leopards, baby elephants, pythons, etc. spread over about thirty acres, finely landscaped, loud speaker playing jazz all the time. Cynthia wandered away from me for a second, and when I looked up, she was patting what looked like a two-ton lion on the head through the bars.”

“When we got back at 1:00, the *Asama* had pulled out a hundred yards into the harbor and *Verdi* was just dropping her ropes. Japanese on shore (diplomatic transferees) and on ship were waving flags, shouting *banzai*. *Asama* and *Verdi* sailed slowly out together. I was probably the only American in the whole town who felt anything like mixed emotions as we watched them go. Cynthia felt no emotion, informing me that she felt the call, so we went back on board *Gripsholm*, and thence to lunch. Mr. Dooman saw me on deck and asked if I would like to sit with Mr. and Mrs. Stanton (Hong Kong), mother of Fearon (St. Marks), Mrs. Shields, Lois Fearon and him at meals, so there I will be for the voyage. In the afternoon, back on shore and more shopping with Cynthia, and in the evening, a drive and a

movie with Preston Jr., son of American Consul. Preston Sr. was Consul in Norway when Germans came in. Preston Jr. works in Jo'burg and is just back from flight training in Scotland.”

“July 27. Sightseeing with Jane and Cynthia until 1:00 p.m. when we all had to be on the ship. Sail tomorrow 7:00 a.m.”

“July 27. Sailed 3:00 p.m.”

One incident which I neglected to include in my diary is of some interest. Grew had worried as we approached Lourenco Marques what he should do if he met Japanese Ambassador to the US, Admiral Kichisaburu Nomura, in the street. They were longtime friends, and he would normally have been glad to greet him, but now Nomura was an Ambassador of a country with which the US was at war. Grew had no desire to have a photograph of Nomura and him chattering together shown all over the Free World. He decided that if they met, he would bow stiffly and pass on without pausing.

And meet they did, in the main street. Nomura was accompanied by Ambassador Saburo Kurusu, who had been sent to Washington a month or so before the outbreak of war to assist Nomura. I happened to be with Grew. Nomura smiled broadly at Grew and started over with his hand outstretched, trailed by Kurusu. Grew never slackened his pace. Bowing coldly, he ignored the outstretched hand and passed on. The incident long rankled with him, but he never doubted that he had done the right thing.

The voyage across the South Atlantic was uneventful. Life aboard the *Gripsholm* was in every respect in happy contrast with what it had been on the *Asama Maru*--outdoor games, swimming pool, movies, excellent food. Most of those who were thirty, forty, or even fifty pounds underweight and/or suffering from nutritional diseases made a good start on their recovery. I will resort again to my diary for the highlights of our stopover in Rio.

“August 11th. Up at six to watch entrance into Rio de Janeiro harbor, supposed to be most beautiful in world. Fine day. Docked 10:00 a.m. Elsie Lyons, Ambassador's youngest daughter, had flown from Chile, where her husband is the Minister, came on board. We got off about 11:00. As at Lourenco, I carried Bohlen's hatbox containing “the dynamite.” Dowling from the Rio Embassy and others met us (Ambassador Caffery in US). Pictures right and left as we walked to car, drove to Embassy. There we deposited hatbox in coderoom vault and departed for Copacabana Hotel where Mrs. Grew had gone. Lunch with Grews, then out shopping with Newton. No laundry since

Tokyo so bought shirts, etc. Saw a lot of the city. Half hour swim at Copacabana beach. Back to ship 5:30, dressed, headed for Simond's (Consular of Embassy) house for cocktails for all Foreign Service personnel. Went from there with Cooper and Cabot Colville (Tokyo man now doing checking on suspicious Japanese in S.A.) To party given by Mrs. Caffery where cream of Rio society, quantities of champagne, Brazil nuts, smart talk. Left there about 8:00 for third cocktail party at Jack White's house, First Secretary, Embassy in suburbs, and from there about ten of us to the Urca for dinner. Urca and the Copacabana are the two best night clubs in Rio. Three wonderful orchestras, floor show 11:00-1:00. Mostly S.A. type of music. Never saw people who enjoyed dancing so much or were so good at it, or orchestras which so genuinely enjoyed playing. Atmosphere entirely different and indefinitely superior to N.Y. night clubs. Left about 3:30 a.m. Half way back to ship when Natalie Boyd and I decided to visit Copacabana. Stayed there an hour."

"August 12th. Up at 7:30, took taxi with Charlie Cooper out to Sugar Loaf. Five miles. Took us to top in cable car. Marvelous view of city, harbor. Down about 11:00 and decided to go up to the other high point of the city, Corpus Christi, with great big white statue of Christ. About 100 feet below statue we stopped at hotel for lunch and then went up. Even higher and better view than Sugar Loaf; about 2,000 feet straight up. Drove back to ship. Saw Benninghoff and Allison sitting at one of the sidewalk cafes on Avenida Rio Branca, Rio's Broadway, so stopped for a beer and then walked to ship."

"Sailed 4 p.m. Stood with Jane and Cynthia on deck as Harry, flying back to US, faded into distance. He may be assigned to a ship and at sea before we get back. Mrs. Grew stayed behind as planned. Ambassador had asked me before we reached Rio if I would like to move in with him. Moved in that night, Cabin 1A, no less"

The trip from Rio to New York was another two-week pleasure cruise aboard the Gripsholm. Rooming with Grew provided me further opportunity to discuss his report. He told me that on our arrival in New York, he planned to go at once by train to Washington. He wanted me to go with him, unless some problem arose in New York that necessitated my staying a few hours or overnight. He spoke again of wanting to introduce me to Assistant Secretary of State Howland Shaw to discuss job possibilities, adding that if an

appropriate position was not available at State, he wanted to introduce me to the President, “who should be able to open a few doors.” He had been kind enough to read and compliment me on a paper I had written during our internment, in which I set forth my ideas for the post-war world, and said he wished to give copies to Shaw and the President.

We docked in New York on August 25th. The ship was immediately flooded with State Department and other officials and newsmen, almost all of whom headed for Grew. After he had met with the press and dealt with the most pressing arrival problems, the two of us were taken by limousine to the station and entrained for Washington.

Then we were met by Grew’s own car and driver and driven to his home at 2840 Woodland Drive. He unpacked, read some mail and made some phone calls. And then, as we were finishing an early dinner, the doorbell began to ring. One after another, a half dozen old friends, including James Forrestall and Harry Hopkins, came in to welcome Grew home and hear his account of events before and after Pearl Harbor. Grew kindly introduced me to all the great men and called on me a few times to enlarge on his replies to their questions.

The next morning, armed with the original copy of his report, he and I climbed into his car and drove to the southwest corner of the State Department, where Secretary Hull’s office was located. Perhaps a dozen reporters and cameramen awaited, peppering Grew with questions and flashes as we worked our way through to Hull’s outer office. Under Secretary Welles was away. After a few moments wait, Grew was ushered into Hull’s office. I sat outside and tried to answer his and Welles secretaries’ questions about our experiences.

About twenty-five minutes later the Secretary’s raised and clearly irate Tennessee accent penetrated the oaken door. I could not make out what he was saying, but it was obvious that the meeting was not going well. Soon the door opened, and Grew emerged looking somewhat shaken, with Hull nowhere in sight. Though it was still only mid-morning, Grew suggested that we walk two blocks up the street to the Metropolitan Club for lunch.

When we were settled there, I asked him what had happened. He replied that he had presented his report to the Secretary, explaining that although it had benefitted from the comments and suggestions of the principal members of the Embassy staff, who concurred in it, it was his personal report for which he alone was responsible. As the Secretary knew, he had continued, the Embassy’s assessment of the situation in Japan during the latter part of 1941 and its views and recommendations on the course the US should pursue had not been accepted in Washington. There may, of course, been factors known to Washington but not in Tokyo which would account for this, but no such factors had been communicated to the Embassy, most of whose messages, in fact, received no reply at all (In his diary, Grew likened his messages to Washington to throwing pebbles into a pool on a dark night.). Nevertheless, during the internment, he had felt it his duty to review the record as it was available in Tokyo and to draw up for the Secretary, the

President and Department's classified files his frank appraisal of the course of the negotiations in the months before Pearl Harbor. It was his honest, confidential report--he had provided copies to no one and would not without the Secretary's express approval.

Grew said that the Secretary started to leaf through the report. As he did so, he face hardened and flushed. After a time, he half threw the report back across the desk toward Grew and said, "Mr. Ambassador, either you promise to destroy this report and every copy you may possess or we will publish it and leave it to the American people to decide who was right and who was wrong." Taken aback, Grew said that he had replied that this was his honest, confidential report to his superiors in Washington and that he could not in good conscience agree to destroy it. Neither could he be party to its publication and a public controversy in time of war when national unity was essential. Subject to the Secretary's approval, he had decided that what he could most usefully do would be to undertake an extensive speaking tour around the country to inform the American people about Japan's military strength and the need to prepare for a long, though in the end inevitably victorious, Pacific war. The Secretary's response had been, "Mr. Ambassador, come back at 10:00 tomorrow morning, and give me your answer to the alternatives I have presented."

I told Grew that I did not see how he could have given any other reply than the one he had. In the course of lunch, he asked if I was a member of the Metropolitan Club. I said, "No, I had only just graduated from college."

"But you want to be a member, don't you?"

"Yes, I guess so."

Looking around, he said, "There's my old friend, Howland Shaw, who I think is a member of the Board of Governors."

He beckoned Shaw over, introduced me and told him that I want to join the Club. a few days later, I received a note from Shaw welcoming me into the Club and saying that I was free to use it pending my election. a bill for \$20 was enclosed. I was formally elected in January, 1944, paying an initiation fee of \$100. These days, one waits four to five years for election, and the initiation fee is \$10,000.

The next morning, Grew and I climbed into his car again and headed down Rock Creek Parkway to Hull's office. This time there were no reporters or cameramen, and Grew was promptly escorted into Hull's office. No sounds penetrated the oaken door, and after about thirty minutes, the two emerged together smiling and obviously on friendly terms.

Again Grew suggested that we walk up to the Metropolitan Club. During lunch, since he had not volunteered any information, I asked him what had happened concerning his report. He said that the Secretary had not mentioned it but that he expressed strong

support for his (and Grew's) planned nationwide speaking tour. The rest of the time had been spent in a discussion of the war in Europe and other topics.

Shortly afterward, with Grew's help, I went to work for Leo Pasvolsky, whom the Secretary had put in charge of the State Department's post-war planning work. I spent the war as a member of a small unit under George Blakeslee and High Borton, preparing research/policy papers which, after approval by the Far East Area Committee and the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), were issued in 1945 and 1946 as directives to the Supreme Allied Commander, General MacArthur, in occupied Japan. During that time, I continued to see Mr. Grew occasionally and one or twice to draw him out on what had happened to his report, since an exhaustive search of the Department's files had failed to reveal it. He never seemed to want to discuss the matter, nor did Gene Dooman, whom I also ran into from time to time and who, toward the end of the war, served as the State member of SWNCC.

Years later, during the '70s and '80s, after I had been assigned back to Washington, I made a determined effort to find a copy of the report. It seemed a shame for students of the pre-Pearl Harbor negotiations to be denied access to the personal assessment of those negotiations written right after Pearl Harbor during the internment by our Ambassador on the spot. This seemed particularly true considering that he and Washington differed sharply on the proposed Konoye-Roosevelt meeting. The essential reasoning of each side--Washington's and the Embassy's--had long been in the public record, but I had never seen the Embassy's case set forth as eloquently and persuasively as in Grew's internment report. Having earlier confirmed that the report was not in the collection of Grew papers at Harvard, I sought for clues from Mrs. Marion Johnston, Grew's long-time secretary, and from members of his family but to no avail. The family told me that at one of his last meetings with them, Mrs. Grew (who died in 1965) had said that everything he wished to say to history was in his books. With this clear statement of Grew's wishes, and convinced in any case that no copy remains, I abandoned the search.

In Chapter XXXIV, "Pearl Harbor: From the Perspective of Ten Years," of his 1952 Turbulent Era - Volume II, Grew reaffirms in 131 pages the themes of his internment report. He then cites the contrary views of Herbert Feis, the noted historian, in his 1952 book, The Road to Pearl Harbor.

"If Konoye was ready and able--as Grew had thought--to give Roosevelt trustworthy and satisfactory promises of a new sort, he does not tell of them in his 'Memoirs.' Nor has any other record available to me disclosed them. He was a prisoner, willing or unwilling, in the terms precisely prescribed in conferences over which he presided. The latest of these were minimum demands specified by the Imperial Conference of September 6, just reviewed. It is unlikely that he could have got around them or that he

would have in some desperate act discarded them. The whole of his political career speaks to the contrary. . .”

Grew, as I have described, believed that face-to-face with Roosevelt, Konoye intended, and would have been able, to “get around” the minimum demands specified by the Imperial Conference of September 6th and earlier conferences.

Grew concludes his Turbulent Era account with the following:

“I may as well close this Postscript with a single sentence from Mr. Feis’s book, taken out of context it is true, but in my ex-parte view, it is the crux of the whole story. ‘It will always be possible,’ he writes, ‘to think that Grew was correct; that the authorities in Washington were too close to their texts and too soaked in their disbelief to perceive what he saw.’”

If, as one can only conclude from reading Chapter XXXIV in Turbulent Era, Grew in 1952 still firmly held to the views he had expressed in his report to Hull and Roosevelt, why did he not insist on the report’s being accepted by Hull in 1942, incorporated in the Department’s classified files and made available to historian twenty-five years later in The Relations of the United States, 1941, Japan? Why did he apparently destroy every copy?

I do not know, but my best guess is that he decided that pressing the report on a resistant Hull would serve no useful purpose and would on the contrary cut him (Grew) off from Hull and the Department and the support he needed from them to do what he felt was much more important at that point--to tour the country to awaken the people to Japan’s military strength and the prospect of a long war. He may also have been looking ahead to the end of the war, wishing to do nothing which would jeopardize the possibility of his being able to influence the terms the Allies offered to Japan, particularly concerning the disposition of the Emperor. As for his obligations to history, he may have concluded that he could tell his story later in articles or books, when doing so would no longer have the above-cited disadvantages.

Supporting this hypothesis is the fact that, with his report removed as an obstacle, Grew was able to carry out his speaking tour in 1942-43, and in 1944-45, he was able to exert important influence on Allied occupation policies, especially concerning the Emperor. He was also able to publish his view of the 1941 negotiations in his books--a limited account in his Ten Years in Japan in 1944 and a fuller account in Turbulent Era in 1952, after he had retired from the Government.

Having reviewed the arguments *pro* and *con* Konoye’s proposed meeting with the President from the vantage point of fifty years later, what should one conclude? My own views are as follows:

1) The US should have agreed to the meeting. There was certainly some basis for believing that an acceptable settlement could have been achieved at the meeting and that it could have been implemented over an eighteen to twenty-four month period. Washington's contention that if the meeting were held and failed, the situation would be worse than if it had not been held at all is hard to accept. How could the aftermath of a failed meeting have been worse than what actually happened--a terrible, four-years war?

2) The odds, I believe, are that if the meeting had been held, it would have produced an agreement. But if I had to bet a large sum, I would have to come down on the side that the agreement would not have been effectively accepted and implemented in Japan. Persuasive as Konoye's and Grew's arguments were, Japan in 1941 was probably too much under military domination and too committed to the goal of Japanese hegemony in East Asia to reverse course, except as a consequence of defeat by superior military force. One has to suspect also that Konoye and Foreign Minister Toyoda, in their conversations with Grew, overstated General Tojo's and other Japanese military authorities' support of the meeting proposal and their commitment to implementation of the settlement terms Konoye hoped to bring back from the meeting. (The Memoirs of Prince Fumimaro Konoye, published in 1946, tend to support this suspicion, particularly Konoye's accounts therein of General Togo's statements at critical meetings.)

3) Grew's analysis, views and recommendations submitted to Washington during the summer and fall of 1941 were wholly sound. He strongly urged that the meeting be held, for all the reasons brought out above, but he always acknowledged that it might not succeed. He rightly did not accept Washington's contention that if it failed, the situation would be worse than if had not been held. His reporting of the situation in Japan, his analysis of Japanese psychology and his warnings of the imminence of war if the meeting opportunity was let pass could not have been more perceptive and accurate.

Looking back to the critical months in the late summer and early fall of 1941, a further possibility should be noted. One has to wonder whether Roosevelt may not have welcomed Hornbeck's anti-meeting arguments not for their own merit but because he (FDR) had by that time concluded that the U.S. had to declare war against Germany before Great Britain succumbed. While not wanting war with Japan, Germany's Axis ally, he may have seen the meeting with Konoye as antiethical to the requirements for full U.S. involvement in World War II if it was to be won.

This ends the story of my year with Grew, but the Konoye elements of the story prompt a brief postscript.

One of the papers I prepared toward the end of my post-war planning work at State concerned "The Apprehension, Trial and Punishment of Japanese War Criminals." When I left for Japan in early October, 1945, to serve as Special Assistant to Ambassador George Atcheson, the Political Advisor to General MacArthur, I took a copy of this not

yet finally approved paper with me and gave it, along with other such papers, to Acheson for his information,

In mid-November, Acheson called me into his office to say that he had just had a call from General MacArthur complaining that although a number of major, or “Class a,” German war criminals had been arrested and were in jail, none had been apprehended in Japan. He said that he wanted a list of such Japanese “Class a” war criminals on his desk within, as I recall, twenty-four hours, so that he could immediately order them arrested.

Acheson said that since I had drafted the not yet officially received war criminals directives, I was the logical one to compile the requested list. I said that my work had concerned the arrest, trial and punishment of Japanese war criminals of all the various “Classes” but that it had not extended to which Individual Japanese were guilty of war crimes. Nevertheless, I said that I thought I could obtain the help I needed to compile the requested list.

I thereupon called Herbert Norman, a Canadian, a leading Japan scholar and a friend from pre-war days, who was attached to General MacArthur’s headquarters in an intelligence capacity. With his long experience in Japan and language fluency, I knew that Norman would be able to add much to my knowledge of who the major Japanese war criminals were. Together that evening at Dai Ichi Hotel, where we were both billeted, we drew up a proposed list, with a brief statement of our reasons for each name. I handed it to Acheson in the morning. He had it delivered to General MacArthur, and banner headlined a day or two later announced that all had been arrested.

Some time later, MacArthur called Acheson to say that he was sure there were more Japanese major war criminals and that he wanted a second list. I met again with Norman, who this time argued strongly that Konoye should be included because of the positions of highest responsibility which he had occupied over most of the pre-Pearl Harbor decade, including when Japan attacked China in 1937. In compiling the first list, I had resisted Norman’s view that Konoye should be included, arguing that he had never been an active protagonist of Japan’s aggressive course but rather, as an inherently somewhat weak and indecisive man, had allowed himself to be used by aggressive elements. And he had seen the light in 1941 and done his utmost, at the risk of his life, to reverse Japan’s military course through his plan for the meeting with President Roosevelt. Norman said the he appreciated these points but that we could not omit from our list someone who had held the positions which Konoye had held and who possessed the intimate knowledge of the Japanese pre-war decision process and if critical top-level prewar meetings which he did. His status would be less that of a major war crimes suspect than of a material witness.

And so we agreed to include Konoye in the second list. But we also agreed that if he were arrested, we would get word to him of the special circumstances attending his arrest. With his far more extensive Japanese contacts than mine, Norman undertook to find someone who would convey this message.

Konoye was notified of his arrest on December 6th, and ten days later, in the early morning of the day he was to report to Sugamo Prison, he committed suicide. Norman told me that he had arranged for a Konoye confidante to pass our message to him, but we never learned whether it got through. If it did, it probably had little influence. The word that reached us from the Konoye circle of intimates was that as a two-time Prime Minister and long time advisor to the Emperor, and with his noble lineage extending back a thousand years, his pride could not endure the humiliation of standing in court as a suspected war criminal. In his Konoe Fumimaro--a Political Biography, 1983, Yoshitake Ota relates how a few hours before his death, Konoye asked his son, Michitake, for a pen and paper and wrote the following:

“I have made many political blunders beginning with the China War, and I feel my responsibility for them deeply. I find it intolerable, however, to stand in an American court as a so-called war criminal. The very fact that I did feel responsible for the China War made the task of effecting a settlement all the more crucial to me. Concluding that the only remaining chance to achieve a settlement of the war in China was to reach an understanding with the United States, I did everything in my power to make the negotiations with the United States a success. It is regrettable that I am now suspected by the same United States of being a war criminal.”

End of interview