

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

September 13, 1941

MMH

The attached paper, drafted in the first instance by me and expanded after discussion with others, contains views which are entertained by Jones, Schuler, Davies, Tenney, Fales and me. We feel that the presentation of these views to the higher officers of the Department is of some importance, and we would, if it is possible, appreciate your sending forward the paper, with of course any covering comments which you might deem necessary.

FE:Coville:LJH

Handwritten note by Max Hamilton: Substance communicated orally to the Secretary [of State] Sept. 15. 1941 [initialed:] MMH

September 13, 1941

It is reported in the press that there is about to be concluded an accord between the United States and Japan embodying an understanding on important questions of international relations.

Without knowing whether any such accord is in fact contemplated, certain officers of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs wish to place on record their view that it would be undesirable for the United States to enter into any accord with Japan which would tend either (1) to weaken Chinese resistance to Japan or (2) to relieve Japan from her present difficulties and thereby give her opportunity to gather her strength. Those officers entertain the view that the proposed accord as reported in the press, or any accord which does not provide for an immediate cessation of hostilities in China and effective guarantees for the early evacuation of China by Japanese armed forces, would constitute a betrayal of China which would undermine our position in China for many decades, would likely cause a surge of anti-American feeling throughout China and southeastern Asia, would seriously weaken throughout the world and in the United States the morale of those fighting and opposing aggression, and would be ineffective in achieving the end which presumably it would be designed to achieve, namely

namely the protection of our Pacific flank while we turn our attention to the Atlantic. Those officers are of the belief that the Japanese Government is not in position to agree to the evacuation of China by Japanese armed forces; that any guarantees which might be given by the Japanese Government in this regard or in regard to further expansion southward, short of immediate withdrawal of troops, would not be effective as a real protection of our interests; that any accord at the present time would constitute an attempt at appeasement, with all of the current implications of the term, and would, with costly consequence, fail.