

Last Secrets of the Outbreak of War between Japan and the United States:

Developing Roosevelt's Final Telegram to the Emperor of Japan

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On December 6, 1941, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt instructed his secretary of state, Cordell Hull, to send a personal telegram to the emperor of Japan. Attached to the text of the message was a handwritten note which said: "Shoot this to Grew. I think it can go in gray code—saves time—I don't mind if it gets picked up."¹ Joseph Grew was the American ambassador to Japan, and had the right of direct access to the emperor. By sending the message through Grew, it would not be tossed aside or held up as might happen if it was sent through Japan's Foreign Ministry; in other words, it would be promptly delivered to the emperor. Furthermore, "gray code" was the least secure level of encryption, implying he didn't mind if the message was intercepted and decoded.

This personal telegram from President Roosevelt to Emperor Hirohito, in historical terms, has been seen as Roosevelt's final attempt to evade war between Japan and the United States, and that Roosevelt to the very end aimed for peace. However it should be obvious, after cursory examination, that this personal telegram to the emperor was not the simple message it appeared to be.

This article will expose and outline the as-yet unexplored circumstances surrounding President Roosevelt's telegram to the emperor, and the general ill-will towards Japan held by leaders in the American government of the time, including Roosevelt. My previous publication about the war between Japan and United States was published by UPA in 1997 in an English language version titled *Between Incompetence and*

Culpability: Assessing the Diplomacy of Japan's Foreign Ministry from Pearl Harbor to Potsdam, and it was my intention to provide a Western readership with the clearest and most accurate description, from a Japanese perspective, of the circumstances of the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States. This article "Last Secrets" is essentially a sequel to that publication, and I have brought together my thoughts on the issue of the telegram to the emperor to enlighten both Japanese and Western readers on new discoveries, materials and references that have come to light concerning the opinions of the American government leaders of the time.

I have asked Mr. Norman Hu, translator of *Between Incompetence and Culpability*, to translate this article into English. In both that book and this article, there were many facts and issues concerning the war between Japan and the United States which, although familiar to a Japanese audience, may have presented difficulties for a Western reader. In other words, notions which could be abbreviated for publication in Japan were expanded for the benefit of a foreign audience. Mr. Hu made helpful suggestions regarding the original draft which have been incorporated into the English language version. My thanks go to him for his assistance.

Ambassador Saburo Kuru's Written Submission to the Foreign Ministry

It is clear that the Japanese side actively contributed towards the creation of the final telegram sent by Roosevelt to the emperor on December 6th, 1941, and which became part of the historical record. It should be noted that the person at the center of these efforts was Ambassador Plenipotentiary Saburo Kuru.

As will be discussed in more detail later, Roosevelt exhibited a certain pattern of behavior when it seemed war was imminent and could no longer be avoided.

Roosevelt had a habit of sending a personal telegram to the leader of the opposing side. Even without Kurusu's efforts, it is likely that a telegram would have been sent to the emperor anyway.

Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, but just before this, Roosevelt sent a personal telegram to Hitler urging him to abort his military attack. Mussolini entered the war on Germany's side in June 1940, and Roosevelt then too sent a number of telegrams to persuade him to reconsider.²

Therefore, it seems very likely that Roosevelt himself would have come up with the idea of sending a personal message to the emperor when war with Japan seemed imminent, so Kurusu's efforts shouldn't be overstated. Nevertheless, it still may be useful to examine the timeline of events as they actually unfolded, starting with efforts made by Kurusu.

Kurusu assumed his post at the Japanese embassy in Washington on November 15, 1941, to assist the serving ambassador, Kichisaburo Nomura. The Japanese side felt cornered, and on November 20th delivered to Secretary of State Cordell Hull Proposal B, a Japanese *modus vivendi* to put off the imminent outbreak of hostilities. No favorable response though was received from the American side. On November 26th, Japan was presented with the so-called Hull Note. It was on this date that Kurusu sent a written submission to Japan's foreign minister Shigenori Togo, suggesting that the only way to resolve the deadlock in the Japan-U.S. negotiations was if President Roosevelt was asked to send a personal message to the emperor. From notations on Kurusu's cable, we can surmise that it was prepared before receiving the Hull Note. Kurusu's written submission was sent under Ambassador Nomura's name, but this was because Nomura wanted to share the responsibility for any adverse consequences that might have arisen from

this suggestion for the president to send a personal message to the emperor.³

In his memoirs *Homatsu no 35-nen: gaiko hisshi* [35 years of vain endeavor: a secret diplomatic history] (1948), Kurusu makes the following observations regarding the idea of the president sending a personal message to the emperor.⁴

"I had already heard talk on the American side, around the time of the dissolution of the third Konoe cabinet, of getting the president to send a message to His Majesty to prevent the resignation of the cabinet. Even after I arrived in Washington, I heard from the embassy's first secretary Terasaki [Hidenari] that a man with some influence in American Christian circles, Reverend Stanley Jones, had proposed that the president send a telegram to His Majesty to break the deadlock in negotiations between Japan and the United States, and that he had been tirelessly working towards this end. I had also heard from other sources that some American senators shared this view. However, as the deadline loomed closer, there seemed to be no prospect that the United States would accept our Proposal B, and our government was saying that if Proposal B was not accepted, 'Nothing could be done about the breakdown of negotiations.' Putting together all this information, I believed there was no way to resolve this deadlock except for an exchange of messages between the two heads of state, so on November 26 I [sent Tokyo] a "written submission regarding a personal message to the emperor'."

Despite some minor errors regarding the timeline, Kurusu's memoirs are largely accurate.

When we examine materials on the American side we see that, officially, some consideration went into sending a personal message to the emperor as early as October 16th that year, at the time of the fall of the third Konoe cabinet in Japan. However closer inspection reveals

that, because of actions to make it only seem as though a message would be sent, Roosevelt probably from the start had no intention of sending any such message. So it would be a mistake to view these efforts by the U.S. government as the true origins of the message actually sent to the Japanese emperor on December 6th.

The third Konoe cabinet collapsed when the possibility of realizing a Japan-U.S. summit meeting—a meeting which Roosevelt had given every appearance of accepting—was withdrawn due to an apparent change of heart on the American side.

However, in my book *Between Incompetence and Culpability*, I have argued that Roosevelt from the start never had any intention of participating in this summit. In August 1941, Roosevelt met in secret with British prime minister Winston Churchill at an Atlantic conference, and made a promise to send “a warning to Japan.”⁵ Nevertheless, why did Roosevelt go through the motions of considering Konoe’s suggestion for a Japan-U.S. summit?⁶

The main reason was as follows. Roosevelt returned from his secret Atlantic meeting with Churchill on August 17th. He was returning from a clandestine meeting with the leader of a nation (Britain) who was already at war with Germany. American public opinion at that time was strongly isolationist. Therefore, it was certain that serious questions would be raised in the U.S. as to whether a secret agreement had been made regarding the war. Roosevelt had already learned of Konoe’s suggestion for a Japan-U.S. summit meeting while still at sea, and decided to make use of this. Although July 17th was a Sunday, Roosevelt sent for Nomura and accepted the Konoe proposal. This was to demonstrate he had certainly not made any secret deal with Churchill at his conference on the Atlantic, but rather to make it appear as though he was taking active steps towards a peaceful settlement

between Japan and United States. Naturally, the Japanese side thought the summit meeting had been agreed to, and began to organize travel arrangements and personnel on the Japanese side; but Roosevelt made no preparations whatsoever. Even though extensive arrangements would have been necessary if this summit meeting between Japan and the United States was actually to take place, Roosevelt gave no instructions at all for any preparations. Whether or not Roosevelt actually said he would “baby” Japan along at the Atlantic Conference, in reality that is precisely what he did.⁷

In fact, no personal message to the emperor would have been realized at this particular time, if there had been the slightest of intentions to hold a summit meeting between Japan and the United States. There are a number of early drafts for such a message which date from around this time, including one written by the president himself, where he claimed: “I personally would have been happy even to travel thousands of miles to meet with your Prime Minister, if in advance one or two basic accords could have been realized so that the success of such a conference would have been assured.”⁸ In other words, Roosevelt had no intention of following through with a message to the emperor at this time, but only used the idea of sending a message to show that his agreement to Konoe’s proposal was not a ploy, and to leave a good record for the American government. If his agreement had been made in good faith, the idea of sending a personal message to the emperor would have been deliberately leaked to the American press, and subsequently picked up by the Japanese news agencies and promulgated throughout Japan. It was in Roosevelt’s interests to have the idea of a message to the emperor made known in Japan, and remove any suspicion from the start that he lacked the serious intent to participate in the summit. Furthermore, before Kurusu arrived to take up his post at the Japanese embassy, he would probably have heard extensively about the

idea for a personal message to the emperor while still in Japan. Therefore when Kurusu had the opportunity after arriving in the U.S. to pursue the idea of a personal message to the emperor, Roosevelt's toying with the idea at the time of the collapse of the Konoe cabinet in essence gave rise to the actual message arranged through Kurusu which remains in the historical record.

Let us examine Kurusu's written submission to Foreign Minister Togo to have the president send a personal message to the emperor. Signed with Nomura's name, Kurusu cabled the following: "In this telegram we are expressing the last personal opinions we will have to express, so will your excellency please be good enough at least to show it to the Minister of the Interior Kido, and we hope you'll wire us back immediately."⁹ However Togo expressed no interest at all. One can only imagine how much effort he had taken to prepare the so-called Proposals A and B for presenting to the United States. In his memoirs, Togo explained his frustration: "It should have been clear to our Ambassadors in Washington that the proposing of an impracticable plan which took no account of the determination of the other party, and which disregarded the extremity to which we were reduced, would serve no purpose." He despaired that they were like mummy hunters who returned mummified themselves.¹⁰

The military had not briefed Togo about any details regarding the strategy to attack Pearl Harbor, the starting point for war between Japan and the United States. However, although negotiations with the United States continued throughout the military's preparations for war, it was perhaps inevitable that the notion of a personal message to the emperor would be ruled out. On November 28th, Togo sent a telegram refusing their request. "I contacted the person you referred to previously, however his reply was your suggestions at this time are entirely unsuitable."¹¹

However, Kurusu was at the Japanese embassy in Washington conducting negotiations with the United States. He was completely unaware of the military's activities in Japan, and believed that war would break out if the negotiations failed, and that this war would ruin Japan. Kurusu felt he could spare no effort in avoiding the outbreak of war between Japan and the U.S., even if this meant clutching at straws. Coincidentally, Kurusu had been Japan's ambassador to Germany around the time when Roosevelt had sent his personal messages to both Hitler and Mussolini, so he probably thought that, if asked, Roosevelt might also send a message to the emperor too, and perhaps achieve something significant. In particular, Roosevelt's messages to Mussolini seemed quite earnest in trying to persuade Italy not to enter the war, so if similar earnestness could be mustered at this time perhaps the foundering negotiations between Japan and the United States could be saved in one fell swoop. Moreover, perhaps Kurusu had no choice now but to embrace the notion of Roosevelt sending a personal message to the emperor. He was unaware that the Japanese navy's Task Force was already headed towards Hawaii to carry out the attack on Pearl Harbor and launch the war between Japan and United States, nor was he able to divine what was on Roosevelt's mind. For Kurusu, even this impossible suggestion seemed somehow possible, and was something which had to be tried.

Action by Langdon Warner and Kan'ichi Asakawa

In my book *Between Incompetence and Culpability*, I touched briefly on the activities of Stanley Jones and his involvement in Roosevelt's personal telegram to the emperor.

Although I will examine Jones's contributions to this message later in this article, there was another American whose activities preceded those of Jones. This figure was based elsewhere, and was the first to embrace the notion of a personal

message to the emperor. He devised an early draft for the telegram, and used his influence on those around Roosevelt. This person was Langdon Warner, curator of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University.

Let us introduce another figure here: a Japanese national, Kan'ichi Asakawa. Asakawa was born into a samurai family in Fukushima prefecture in 1873. In 1894, at the age of 21, he studied abroad at Dartmouth College, and went on to complete a degree in history at Yale University. Later, he was employed at both Yale and Dartmouth, and earned a solid reputation as a historian in the United States. In 1905, he participated at the Russo-Japanese peace conference as an observer for the Japanese side, and did his utmost to secure a favorable outcome for Japan. Asakawa became an extremely vocal critic of Japan, which quickly lost its timidity after defeating Russia. In his book *Nihon no Kaki* [Japan's Misfortune] (1909), he protested Japan's betrayal of its diplomatic ideals, which was surely an accurate warning for the future. Let us examine a passage from the book, to demonstrate Asakawa's insight.¹²

“Because China is arrogant, preposterous, and obstinate, it obviously offends our sensibilities, but if we respond with violence, a consensus will form whereby China garners sympathy and powerful Japan is roundly criticized; China will use this opportunity to be even more unreasonable. To counter this, we should use patience and persuasion, and see the benefits without expecting favor, or seeking obsolete concessions. If China is as unreasonable as a spoiled child or behaves as wily as a fox, we should respond with fairness and honesty, and only protest when we believe this can help China.”

Asakawa had an uncanny insight into events that followed. In 1939, Hitler proposed a temporary peace to Britain and France, who had just declared war in

response to Hitler's invasion of Poland. But even at this early stage Asakawa wondered whether Hitler would ultimately destroy himself, thereby foretelling Hitler's suicide.¹³

Langdon Warner was good friends with Asakawa. He urged Asakawa to devise a draft for a personal message to the emperor, to break the deadlock in the negotiations between Japan and the United States. On November 23rd, Asakawa finished writing a draft of the message. Although the negotiations had reached a standoff, it was still before the so-called Hull Note had been thrust upon Japan. His draft was to have an influence on succeeding drafts, and elements of it would remain in the final version which Roosevelt actually sent. In a sense, Asakawa's draft was a starting point for the final version, and therefore warrants our examination. This draft can be found in Yoshio Abe's *Saigo no Nihonjin* [The Last Japanese] (1983) (See Chapter 9: Attempts to Persuade the President to send a Message to the Emperor).¹⁴

“Now that the grave crisis confronting your great country, despite the continuous effort of Your Majesty's successive governments, has not been resolved in any essential respect, but is, on the contrary, becoming daily more menacing to the welfare of our two peoples and to the peace between nations, I deem that the time has come that I, as head of the nation that has maintained with your country for well-nigh a century relations unparalleled in history for their sincere cordiality, should address myself directly to Your Majesty, in order to convey to you and your people the earnest wishes that lie close to the hearts of the American nation and its government.

In doing so, I am following the precedents, also unique in character, set by past Presidents of the United States. I may cite two, among others. In 1905, my predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt, offered

his good offices to bring about the successful conclusion of an honorable treaty of peace between Japan and Russia, after your armed forces had achieved a brilliant series of victories on land and sea. A half century earlier, in 1852–3, another predecessor, Millard Fillmore, sent Commodore M. C. Perry with a personal message of goodwill addressed to Your Majesty's illustrious forefather, His Majesty, Emperor Komei. It is for us a constant source of gratification to recall that it was the auspicious issue of that mission that heralded the beginning of the happy relations between our two nations, and of the glorious career of your own in the new era.

Without the least desire on my part to interfere in any manner with your internal affairs, I may perhaps be permitted to remind Your Majesty how the advent of Commodore Perry just alluded to was followed by unexpected events that finally led to a serious crisis similar in many ways to the present one; and how your leaders surmounted it with undaunted courage and stupendous energy, enabling them in the ensuing years to carry your country, to the amazement of the world, in the broad path of enlightenment. During the still remoter past, also, your statesmen again and again, especially from the middle of the seventh century, demonstrated at critical moments a capacity frankly to recognize their past errors, and to institute in their place and to execute, swiftly and surely, exhaustive measures of needed reform which were at once idealistic and eminently practical. Few nations past or present placed in a similar position could have displayed a power so quickly and so completely to return to their consciences, to make so clean a sweep of the men and the policies that had brought them to an impasse, and to discover and carry out so clear-sighted, yet so practical principles of government that should promote their true interest and their historic missions in the world. Nay more, what is particularly moving is the candor and the whole-hearted loyalty with which your multitudes understood and supported the reformed policies initiated

by your honored predecessors; and the energetic common effort by which they, each time, brought these policies to successful fruition, and so turned a calamity into a glorious good fortune. Such happy union of catholicity and idealistic devotion, we should infer, must indeed be the ancient spirit and genius of your great nation and the secret of its unique history.

What the American nation observes in the Japan of today is, Your Majesty, a crisis of like magnitude to those of the past ages, fraught with even greater perils besetting her way; and what our nation with one accord prays is that Japan would again of her free will recoil to her noble self, and again spring forward with quick and sure leaps into the broad common life, this time, of the liberal world whose horizon is bound to widen immensely as soon as the present war is cleared. This should be easy of accomplishment for a nation so highly endowed by God as is yours with candor and perspicacity; and perhaps this time all the easier, in view of the plain fact that, on the one hand, the crisis is of but a recent origin, and consequently its roots are far shallower than those of the crisis either of the last century or of twelve hundred years before; and that, on the other, the general course of conduct was nobly and clearly indicated by your grandfather of blessed memory, His Majesty, Emperor Meiji, and wisely followed by your statesmen till only a decade ago.

I beg Your Majesty to understand that the measures that our government has taken in the last two years and the policy it has steadily followed, in regard to your country, are but natural expressions of our responsibility to our own political conscience, even as the noble policy pursued by your government during the sixty years after 1868 had been dictated by the conscience and moral convictions of your illustrious nation. We, the people and government of the United States, on our part, while being obliged to follow our policies seemingly unfavorable to your country, have never at any moment

renounced our traditional friendship with her, and have never ceased to pray for her resumption of the honorable career which had been the object of universal admiration and sympathy.

Believe me, Your Majesty, as I repeat that it is this prayer of our nation, added to my personal solicitude for your anxiety concerning the future of your beloved nation and precious heritage, that prompts me to take this unusual step of addressing myself to you.

On the other hand, we, Your Majesty, cannot help visualizing to ourselves what miraculous change of general atmosphere would result from Japan's return to the happy comity of nations. Your loyal people would be relieved of the crushing burden weighing upon their mind and body, for which they have hardly been responsible; and all the nations near and far would find themselves freed from the fears of continued and fresh calamities caused by what they cannot regard but as an unfortunate error. Every one would immediately comprehend and applaud so noble an act of complete self-conquest. It would be no vain prophecy to predict that many a foreign nation, the American not the least, would come to feel that it could hardly do too much to cooperate with the courageous Japan in her work of rehabilitation. And, in years to come, one and all would welcome and rejoice in her growing prosperity and her increasing contributions to the progress of the common civilization of mankind, achievements of which she by nature and talent is eminently capable.

Your Majesty, I am taking the liberty to publish this message at once, from my sincere wish that this public expression may resound to your people as a united voice of sympathy of the American nation."

This rather long text, as a political message, is verbose and unusable in this format. However from a historical

perspective, it clearly addressed all the right issues.

Let us look at certain portions of the text. Asakawa writes: "The measures that our government has taken in the last two years and the policy it has steadily followed, in regard to your country, are but natural expressions of our responsibility to our own political conscience." Although from a Japanese perspective such sentiments might naturally appear in any suggestion to an American president to send the emperor a personal message, it is clear to observers nowadays that these sentiments may not necessarily reflect reality. To protest the advance of Japanese troops into southern French Indochina in July 1941, Roosevelt implemented a total embargo on oil exports to Japan. Beforehand though, the United States and Britain used their direct influence to form a so-called ABCD encirclement of Japan, by America, Britain, China, and the Dutch. They made it impossible for Japan to successfully conclude negotiations over oil with the Dutch East Indies, and this led directly to the Japanese military's occupation of southern French Indochina. Also, while Roosevelt was taking issue with Japan over its occupation of southern French Indochina, in the Atlantic the U.S. stationed troops in Iceland in July despite not being a party to the war, and in November established a protectorate over Dutch Guinea in South America (present-day Surinam) to secure supplies of aluminum ore. Furthermore, in November Asakawa was unaware that Japan had presented its Proposals A and B during pressing negotiations, so in this respect his draft message was abstract and did not tackle the substantive issues. Nevertheless, he did point out that Japan's crisis with the United States was "of recent origin" and "shallow-rooted" which demonstrated his insight as an historian, and should have prompted some soul-searching amongst the participants.

What happened to Asakawa's draft? According to the book by Abe, cited previously, Langdon Warner showed this draft to officials all around Washington

from November 27th through 28th. Although Warner did not meet directly with Roosevelt or Hull, he did see many important figures in various government departments and showed them Asakawa's draft. Among them was Senator Elbert Thomas, referred to in the aforementioned Kurusu memoir.¹⁵ And there is a clear record that he showed the draft to Joseph F. Ballantine, a senior official in the State Department's Far East division and a Japan specialist, on November 27th.¹⁶

Warner also asked Frederick Moore, a Foreign Ministry employee who worked at the Washington embassy, about the pros and cons of the president sending a personal message to the emperor. While this meeting may have occurred before Asakawa wrote his draft, Moore recalled in his memoirs that Warner had posed this question to him in writing. Moore felt that matters had already gone too far, and he gave a pessimistic response. It is probably natural that Moore would respond in this way, because he had observed the actual developments in the negotiations between Japan and the United States at close range. Undaunted, Warner continued to go around Washington with the Asakawa draft clutched in his hands. When he approached Senator Thomas, the senator sent for Moore and requested that he sound out Ambassador Nomura as to the viability of sending a message to the emperor. Nomura, together with Kurusu, had already sent a submission to Foreign Minister Togo on the matter, so of course he was delighted to respond in the affirmative.¹⁷

And so it was that, on November 27th and 28th, Warner showed Asakawa's draft to a number of important officials in the U.S. government; the draft was later to influence subsequent versions, and parts of it even remained in the final version sent by Roosevelt. Asakawa had a definite influence on the message to the emperor, now part of the historical record, but despite his talents he never directly approached relevant parties on the

Japanese side to improve Japan's relations with the United States. While it is tempting to point out Asakawa's shortcomings, conversely one should take great issue with the Japanese embassy in Washington for not making use of a brilliant man like Asakawa in its organization, a man with such breadth of knowledge and such a broad base of contacts within the United States.

Actions Inside the U.S. Government On The Message to the Emperor

What sort of actions did key officials within the American government take regarding Roosevelt's personal message to the emperor? As a matter of historical record, the November 28th war council was directly connected to the development of the message sent on December 6th. This council comprised of President Roosevelt, and other key officials including Secretary of State Cordell Hull, War Secretary Henry Stimson, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, Navy Secretary Frank Knox, and Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark; they met regularly to discuss fundamental diplomatic and military policies for the United States. In practical terms, this council discussed the nation's most important policies. On November 26th the so-called Hull Note was presented to Japan, and the next day Roosevelt and Hull met with an anxious Nomura and Kurusu. It was decided Roosevelt would leave for Warm Springs, Georgia, a resort area, the following evening, the 28th. It was at noon on the 28th that this war council was convened.

Roosevelt abruptly advanced the idea of perhaps sending a personal telegram to the Japanese emperor. On the surface, such a telegram appeared to be a clear attempt to bring about peace with Japan, so naturally War Secretary Stimson and Secretary of State Hull adamantly opposed it. When Roosevelt proposed this idea, Hull must have recalled the events of May 1940 when a personal message was sent to the Italian leader

Mussolini. At this time war between Germany and the Soviet Union had yet to break out, and it was unknown exactly how much of a threat the German military posed. There were also grave concerns for what might happen if Italy joined forces with Germany, so Roosevelt's personal telegrams to Mussolini to try to keep him out of the war were sent in earnest. For Hull, it was clearly unacceptable to send a message to the Japanese emperor if it was meant seriously. And Stimson was of the same mind. Members of the war council, including Roosevelt, had only three days earlier at their November 25th meeting argued that the American side should not expose itself to excessive danger, and should allow the Japanese to fire the first shot, so they would have still held that position. Thus there was a definite contradiction between the U.S.'s fundamental policies and the idea of a personal message to the emperor.¹⁸ Nevertheless, in the end, Hull, Stimson and Knox between them drafted the personal message to the emperor, along with an address to Congress, at the president's direction.¹⁹

Why did Roosevelt suddenly, at this moment, put forward this idea of sending a personal telegram to the emperor? As previously mentioned, Roosevelt would send a personal message to the leader of a hostile nation when war seemed inevitable. And it appeared that the moment had now arrived. Ambassadors Kuru and Nomura had already sent a submission regarding the message to Foreign Minister Togo on November 26th. This telegram was intercepted and decoded by the Americans on November 28th.²⁰ It is conceivable that Langdon Warner's efforts had also been reported to Roosevelt. It is possible that either, or both, of these sources of information reminded him that the time to send his personal telegram to the emperor was approaching. Roosevelt, for whom steering Japan into starting the war was an immovable policy, was both confident and expectant after the Hull Note was presented that the time was fast

approaching when war with Japan was inevitable, and that Japan would make the first move. Therefore as the final stages of an impending war with Japan approached, Roosevelt reconsidered the political benefits of sending a personal telegram to the emperor, and made preparations to that end.

Let's take a closer look at the draft for the message to the emperor, which was produced on November 29th within the State Department at Roosevelt's direction.²¹

"Almost a century ago the President of the United States addressed to the Emperor of Japan a message extending an offer of friendship of the people of the United States to the people of Japan. That offer was accepted, and in the long period of unbroken peace and friendship which has followed, our respective nations, through the virtues of their peoples, the sound character of their respective and national structures, and the wisdom of their leaders and rulers—especially in Japan your illustrious grandfather the Emperor Meiji—have prospered and risen to a position of being able substantially to influence humanity.

Only in situations of extraordinary importance to our two countries need I address to Your Majesty messages on matters of state. I feel I should now so address you because of the deep and far-reaching emergency which appears to be in formation.

Developments are occurring in the Pacific area which threaten to deprive each of our nations and all humanity of the beneficial influence of the long peace between our two countries. These developments contain tragic possibilities.

The history of both our countries affords brilliant examples in which your and my predecessors have, at other times of great crisis, by their enlightened decisions and

acts, arrested trends and directed national policies along new and better courses—thereby bringing blessings to the peoples of both countries and to the peoples of other lands.

Feeling deeply concerned over the present trend of events, I address myself to Your Majesty at this moment in the fervent hope that Your Majesty may, as I am doing, give thought to ways of dispelling the dark clouds which loom over the relations between our two countries and of restoring and maintaining the traditional state of amity wherein both our peoples may contribute to lasting peace and security throughout the Pacific area.”

Hull gave this draft to Roosevelt, with the added remarks that sending this message would have “doubtful efficacy, except for the purpose of making a record.” And if it was to be sent at all, he proposed it be done through Ambassador Grew.²² It was only natural that Hull would not accord this message any more significance than merely to leave a record.

It is abundantly clear that the Asakawa draft examined previously had an influence on this version. State Department officials would have considered the circumstances at that time and, unaware of what Roosevelt really had in mind, would have taken the request to draft a personal message to the emperor at face value, and in their haste would have devised a message of this nature. It was probably correct that the key reference to the standoff between Japan and United States being “shallow-rooted” was dropped, however the introduction regarding the American offer of friendship to the Japanese emperor a century ago clearly demonstrates the influence of the Asakawa draft. These phrases certainly didn’t appear in the spurious draft prepared at the time of the fall of the Konoe cabinet.²³ This November 29th version contained no concrete proposals, and one might even

say it was a summary of the Asakawa draft.

This was how the initial State Department draft of the message came into existence, but it spares almost no thought to bringing about peace between Japan and the United States. Indeed, for Roosevelt who wanted to be drawn into war by provoking Japan into firing the first shot, it wasn’t even worth reading. It was, as Hull had observed, little more than something which would “leave a record.” Moreover, the right moment to send such a message still hadn’t arrived. As far as Roosevelt was concerned, for this sort of message to have the desired effect it had to be sent at the last possible moment, and the actual contents of the message would reflect the final circumstances. At this time, Hull’s draft message was barely worthy of Roosevelt’s attention.

Stanley Jones’s Efforts

Let us turn our attention to Stanley Jones who worked tirelessly on the proposed message to the emperor. Jones was a senior cleric in the American Methodist Church, and had a close association with Roosevelt. He was also a friend of Japan and even had personal contacts with Toyohiko Kagawa, a well-known Japanese Christian. Jones believed that war between Japan and the United States should not be allowed to happen, that it would be a pointless war, and that even peace between Japan and China was possible. He was in China during the Manchurian Incident and the China Incident, and was well-versed in Chinese affairs.

In June 1941, Jones met up with Kagawa in Wisconsin. Both were concerned about a possible conflict between Japan and the United States, and Kagawa suggested that Jones go to Washington and meet with Ambassador Nomura, a man of peace. So Jones visited the Japanese embassy in July, and spoke with Nomura. When Kurusu arrived to take up his post on November 15th, Jones spoke with him also.

Hidenari Terasaki, first secretary at the Japanese embassy, was in charge of information, propaganda, and espionage. He arrived for duty at the embassy in Washington on March 29th, 1941, and worked under Nomura and Kurusu.²⁴ Jones met with Terasaki before the delivery of the Hull Note. Terasaki had this to say to Jones.²⁵

“You see, we haven’t an unlimited amount of time to try for peace. Our war party is saying to us, ‘You see what is happening. We are bleeding to death with this oil embargo. America is getting stronger day by day. She is stringing out the negotiations. Time is playing into her hands. If we are going to strike, the sooner we strike the better.’ ”

Jones may not have been fully aware of how desperate the situation was in Japan, but he understood how seriously Nomura and Kurusu were working towards peace. He knew that the Japanese embassy was not involved in a double bluff to stall for time while preparations were made to attack the United States.

Terasaki continued to explain the psychological difficulty created for the Japanese by the oil embargo measures. Without oil their trucks, taxis and fishing boats could not operate. “This is our greatest wound. Bind it up first, and we will be in a frame of mind to talk peace.”

Jones posed the following question to Terasaki: “Suppose America would lift the oil embargo sufficiently to support your peace-time needs—enough for transportation but not enough to pile up. Suppose this were done with the understanding that you would go straight into a peace conference, with America offering her good offices to China and Japan to bring them together. Would Japan agree?”

Terasaki replied wholeheartedly: “Yes, we would accept it at once.”

During their meeting, the U.S. presented the Hull Note to Japan. Years later, Jones noted that a subsequent investigation would describe this as “the button that started the war.”²⁶

On November 27th, Terasaki went to see Jones around noon. He asked Jones to visit the president before 2:30 p.m. that day, and talk to him about the psychology of the Japanese people. Jones telephoned the president’s secretary Mr. McIntyre, who told Jones that the president’s schedule was completely full and a meeting would not be possible. However if he had a message, McIntyre could write it down and have it shown to the president before 2:30.²⁷

With Terasaki’s verification, Jones wrote out a memo paraphrasing Terasaki’s viewpoint.²⁸

“The Japanese say that since they have been fighting for four years they are in a war mentality. When one is in a war mentality he cannot think straight. The allies were in a war mentality when they made the peace at the close of the last war and they made a bad peace. You help us from a war mentality to a peace mentality. Don’t compel us to do things but make it possible for us to do them. If you treat us in this way we will reciprocate doubly. If you stretch out one hand we will stretch out two. And we can not only be friends, we can be Allies.”

When Terasaki asked the Americans not to “compel” but to “make it possible for” the Japanese to do things, he was asking them to negotiate in a way that Japan would not lose face. The message was indeed seen by President Roosevelt, and apparently had some effect upon the 2:30 p.m. meeting which the president and Secretary Hull had with Nomura and Kurusu. According to the memoirs of Terasaki’s wife, Gwen, the main topic of conversation at this meeting was “The Japanese psychology in the crisis.”²⁹ Even Nomura recalled in his memoirs what the president said: “During the last

war Japan and the United States were on the same side, and Germany then was unable to grasp the psychology of other countries. It is very pleasing that Japan today has people who are working hard in many ways for the love of peace.”³⁰

If we casually examine this November 27th meeting Roosevelt and Hull had with Nomura and Kurusu, there would be sufficient grounds to assert that, by taking up the issue of Japan’s psychology, Roosevelt was being as cordial as ever, and was a friend to Japan. But if we examine this meeting from the perspective that, hour by hour, war between Japan and the United States was drawing nearer, what significance does this meeting take on?

On November 25th, the war council discussed how to entice Japan into firing the first shot, without exposing the American side to too much danger. It was under these circumstances that the president, in a display of anger, confronted Japan with the Hull Note on the 26th. So if we look at the president’s meeting with the Japanese ambassadors on the 27th, the American government had already made its official position clear by presenting the Hull Note, therefore a discussion of Japan’s psychology was now clearly irrelevant. There was no point discussing it at this late stage.

The U.S. ambassador to Japan, Joseph Grew, had frequently advised his government on the subject of Japan’s psychology. In particular, on November 3rd he produced what would become a very important report if, sadly, war broke out between Japan and United States: it was a summary of the psychology of the Japanese people. Grew explained forcefully that Japan was the sort of country which, under pressure, would be unable to back down. He also suggested that, under such pressure, Japan was likely to commit hara-kiri in a do-or-die effort. He emphasized that, if Japan lost face, Japanese sanity could not be measured by American standards of logic.

In summary, he ardently explained it was a grave mistake on the part of certain elements in the United States who believed that, even when faced with economic pressure, Japan could not be driven to commit an act of war.³¹

Conversely though, Roosevelt made good use of his grasp of Japan’s psychology, to bring about war between Japan and the United States. Roosevelt had developed an understanding of Japan’s psychology from the many reports sent by Ambassador Grew, and he turned this knowledge against Japan. He forced the Hull Note on Japan and pressed the button for war.

However, his meeting with the Japanese ambassadors was held the day after he had forced the Hull Note on Japan. How should he receive these two flustered men? He knew that, as president, he had to be cordial and friendly. If he treated them coldly or ignored them, Nomura, Kurusu, and the Japanese embassy would fall into despair. If Nomura and Kurusu felt there was no hope, it would be difficult to predict how they or the Japanese embassy would behave. Better to adopt a friendly and cordial attitude, and leave them with some prospect that the president could still be accommodated, and a peaceful resolution was still possible. The president even stressed: “I still have great hope that we can reach a peaceful compromise between Japan and United States.” The Japanese side would be somewhat relieved and remain hopeful, and waste time relying on the president’s good will. Roosevelt grasped this immediately, but what could they possibly talk about? While pondering the issue, Jones turned up with the subject of “Japan’s psychology.” It was perfect timing. If the president took up this topic of conversation, Nomura and Kurusu would be pleased, and a congenial atmosphere would be created; but above all he could waste more of Japan’s precious time on mere talk.³²

Nomura and Kurusu were completely unaware of the activities of the Japanese military. That is why they raised the abstract subject of “Japan’s psychology” at such a pressing time. The president had access to decrypted intercepts of Japanese cables, a firm grasp of Japan’s diplomatic intentions, and a fairly detailed awareness of Japan’s troop movements. Even without foreknowledge of the Japanese navy’s plans to attack Pearl Harbor, he had far more detailed knowledge of Japanese troop movements than Nomura and Kurusu. He sent a challenge to the Japanese by forcing the Hull Note on them. On top of this, he had to discuss the psychology of the Japanese with them. Roosevelt also clearly understood the circumstances Nomura and Kurusu found themselves in, and what was going on in their minds: they were in the dark about Japan’s military’s plans, and were more than happy to discuss “Japan’s psychology.” Indeed, Roosevelt probably found discussing “Japan’s psychology” with Nomura and Kurusu a pleasant review of the reports on that subject sent by Ambassador Grew.

The Japanese Embassy’s Approach to the Message to the Emperor

Kurusu returned to the embassy after meeting with the president. While Kurusu had the impression that the president had been cordial and friendly, he may also have been confident that anything was now possible. Kurusu sent for Terasaki and revealed his idea about the message to the emperor; he asked Terasaki to start working on it. When Kurusu and Nomura had sent a written submission on the matter on November 26th, he had probably yet to receive a reply from Foreign Minister Togo.³³ Terasaki may have seen the benefits of using Jones, so he quickly decided to ask Jones to assist with getting it done.

The next day, Sunday November 28th, Terasaki asked his wife Gwen to make a

reservation at the Purple Iris Tearoom for 1:00 p.m. where he met Jones and his colleague Dr. Robinson. Terasaki asked Jones to follow Roosevelt down to Warm Springs and ask the president, by word of mouth, if he would send a personal telegram to the emperor.

Jones, who had struggled to bring about peace between Japan and United States, immediately telephoned the president’s secretary to ask if he could fly down to Warm Springs and meet with the president. The secretary said this was not possible, but Dr. Robinson could bring over a written message which would be sealed, and delivered to the president.

Jones wrote out a letter for the president outlining the idea for a personal telegram to the emperor, and asked Robinson to deliver it to the president’s secretary. However, the president hurriedly returned to Washington on December 1st, so this letter was handed to the president at Washington’s Union Station, and he read it on the way to the White House.³⁴

The president’s secretary telephoned Jones with the president’s response on December 3rd. The president had been happy to receive the letter. Jones then said he had an urgent message which could only be delivered verbally, so with Roosevelt’s approval, he met secretly with the president on condition that no written record would be left.³⁵

At the meeting, Jones told the president that he wished to pass on a request from Ambassadors Nomura and Kurusu—their last attempt to maintain peace—for the president to send a personal message to the emperor.³⁶

Jones explained that this request had been transmitted to him by Hidenari Terasaki, a member of the embassy staff. Roosevelt said that he had himself been thinking about sending a message to the emperor, but had been hesitant to do so because he might have caused the ambassadors some embarrassment if he had gone over their heads.

To which Jones replied: “But I’ve come to tell you that the Japanese have asked me to request you to send it.”

“Then that wipes my slate clean,” said Roosevelt, “I can send it.”

Jones stressed that if the message was sent via the Japanese Foreign Ministry it might be held up, so it had to be delivered directly to the emperor. Roosevelt said he could send it through Ambassador Grew, who would be able to hand it directly to the emperor because ambassadors had the right of direct access. And he added:

“If I don’t get an answer in 24 hours I will give it to the newspapers and force a reply.”³⁷

According to Gwen Terasaki’s memoirs, at the conclusion of the meeting Jones asked Roosevelt not to disclose Terasaki’s name. Roosevelt replied: “You tell that young Japanese he is a brave man. No one will ever learn of his part in this from me. His secret is safe.”³⁸

Roosevelt knew he could make a direct appeal for avoiding war to the Japanese emperor in his message, but could not, under any circumstances, actually produce the peaceful outcome that would be spelled out in that message. He could, however, hope for a favorable political outcome, namely to give the impression that Roosevelt had worked until the last moment to avoid hostilities, even while manipulating the Japanese into launching war. Furthermore, if it seemed clear Japan was going to fire the first shot, he had to ensure that his message would not prevent the outbreak of war. So his talk about releasing the message to the press to force the situation if no response was received within 24 hours was clearly a bluff. Nevertheless, this comment would appear to be a gesture that the president was still working towards peace. It would also give the impression that he was unaware that war was imminent.

Ultimately, Roosevelt made good use of Jones. Earlier, when Nomura had just arrived to take up his post as ambassador, Roosevelt made it plain that he disliked negotiating with people who did not officially represent the Japanese government, and complained to Nomura that he would only negotiate directly with the ambassador.³⁹ However he was more than happy to make an exception in Jones’s case. For the American president to send a personal message to avoid war to the emperor of Japan, the head of state of a hostile nation, at a time when war was about to break out between their two countries, was quite unlike those messages he sent as a third party to Hitler and Mussolini. While he had innumerable substantive options available to him to evade war, he had to be especially careful because he was trying to achieve that goal by sending a personal telegram. He would make it appear quite natural that he was adopting a suggestion from the Japanese ambassadors to send that message. Jones’s suggestion to send a personal telegram to the emperor couldn’t have come at a more opportune moment.

Roosevelt’s description of Terasaki as a “brave” young man was also clearly part of the deception. Terasaki might not have wanted his name revealed because the message was not sanctioned by the Japanese government; but it may also have been because of a sense of honor peculiar to Japanese people of the time, who detested having their names revealed in any unofficial situation. If war with the United States had been avoided and Japan had been saved, he may not have minded if no-one ever learned of his involvement. This is the Terasaki of whom Roosevelt said “His secret is safe.”

FBI Wiretap Jones and Terasaki

The FBI monitored calls between Terasaki and Jones regarding their activities on the message to the emperor, which the two were doing at Kurusu’s behest. As Terasaki was in charge of intelligence at the embassy, he had been

under strict FBI surveillance since his arrival for duty in March. These surveillance logs, for the most part, have since been declassified in the United States. According to these materials, the FBI intercepted a phone conversation at 9:02 a.m. on November 28th, when Jones telephoned Terasaki at home.⁴⁰

Terasaki: Can we see each other at one o'clock?

Jones: Yes. Any word you can tell me before then?

Terasaki: No. I'll tell you everything at one o'clock. Think you can find the place?

Jones: Yes, I think we'll find the place.

Terasaki: Thank you for calling. I'll see you at 1:00 p.m.

Terasaki and Jones talked for about an hour at the Purple Iris Tearoom, and later spoke again on the phone at around 4:00 p.m.

Terasaki: What I have told you was 100% correct and the other was a mistake.

Jones: [Did that mean] that it would be offering good offices but would be practically mediation.

Terasaki : Not exactly.

They continued to talk about the message to the emperor in vague terms, but it is possible to surmise what they were discussing. Kurusu and Nomura had sent a written submission to Foreign Minister Togo in Tokyo on November 26th asking permission to proceed with the idea for a message to the emperor. Immediately thereafter the Hull Note was presented, and a meeting was then arranged with the president for November 27th. Before this meeting though, Jones was asked to brief the president on Japan's wartime psychology, and this seemed to have had an impact: there was a softening of the president's attitude. Kurusu soon began to believe that a personal message to the emperor was possible, and instructed Terasaki to follow this up.

After receiving his instructions, Terasaki spoke with Jones on November 28th, and

perhaps during those conversations they supposed the Japanese government might approve the message to the emperor. However the reply to the ambassadors' written submission had yet to arrive, and it was still unclear whether the Japanese government had given its approval.

When Terasaki returned to the embassy from his meeting with Jones at the Purple Iris, he found that the reply from Foreign Minister Togo had arrived, but failed to provide any support for the message to the emperor. Any hope that the Japanese government might give its approval was completely dashed. With this option ruled out, and if the message was to be sent at all, Jones's role would have to change from being a mediator delivering communications to Roosevelt about the message to the emperor, to that of a third party who would actively pursue the idea as his own. This is what Jones may have meant when he asked Terasaki whether it would be "mediation" rather than offering "good offices."

The expression "good offices" has a specific meaning in diplomacy: one should merely act as a go-between and facilitate proceedings, rather than intervene in a dispute between two countries. Mediation on the other hand means to intervene in that dispute, and be a third party to any proposal for resolution.

The Japanese embassy failed to get permission from its government, and could no longer be party to this message to the emperor, so if the idea was to be suggested to the president at all, Jones would formally have to appear to be acting on his own. However Terasaki and the others at the Japanese embassy, including Kurusu and Nomura, could not appear to give such instructions to Jones, so they had to impress upon Jones that everything was off the record and he would have to keep pushing the matter forward on his own. From this angle, the vague conversation overheard by the FBI alluded to above somehow makes more sense.

It is worth noting here that the Asakawa draft contains the expression “good offices” in the second paragraph. In the actual prosecution of diplomacy it is usually difficult to distinguish between “good offices” and “mediation,” but the legal distinction between them is quite clear.

The Message Actually Sent to the Emperor

Let us now turn our attention to the actual message which was sent to the emperor on December 6th, 1941, at 9:00 p.m. and which remains in the historical record.

According to Hull’s memoirs, the draft version he had prepared on November 29th came back with some changes and additions, so Hull and his assistants made a few technical corrections, and returned it to the president. The president made no further changes and returned it to Hull with the well-known handwritten instructions to send it immediately using “gray code.”⁴¹

Although there are certain problems with how events are portrayed in Hull’s memoirs, let us first go methodically through the actual version that was sent to the emperor and which remains in the historical record.⁴²

President Roosevelt to Emperor Hirohito of Japan

[WASHINGTON,] December 6, 1941

Almost a century ago the President of the United States addressed to the Emperor of Japan a message extending an offer of friendship of the people of the United States to the people of Japan. That offer was accepted, and in the long period of unbroken peace and friendship which has followed, our respective nations, through the virtues of their peoples and the wisdom of their rulers have prospered and have substantially helped humanity.

Only in situations of extraordinary importance to our two countries need I address to Your Majesty messages on matters of state. I feel I should now so address you because of the deep and far-reaching emergency which appears to be in formation.

Developments are occurring in the Pacific area which threaten to deprive each of our nations and all humanity of the beneficial influence of the long peace between our two countries. These developments contain tragic possibilities.

The people of the United States, believing in peace and in the right of nations to live and let live, have eagerly watched the conversations between our two Governments during these past months. We have hoped for a termination of the present conflict between Japan and China. We have hoped that a peace of the Pacific could be consummated in such a way that nationalities of many diverse peoples could exist side by side without fear of invasion; that unbearable burdens of armaments could be lifted for them all; and that all peoples would resume commerce without discrimination against or in favor of any nation.

I am certain that it will be clear to Your Majesty, as it is to me, that in seeking these great objectives both Japan and the United States should agree to eliminate any form of military threat. This seemed essential to the attainment of the high objectives.

More than a year ago Your Majesty’s Government concluded an agreement with the Vichy Government by which five or six thousand Japanese troops were permitted to enter into Northern French Indo-china for the protection of Japanese troops which were operating against China further north. And this Spring and Summer the Vichy Government permitted further Japanese military forces to enter into Southern French Indochina for the common defense of French Indochina. I think I am correct in saying that no attack

has been made upon Indochina, nor that any has been contemplated.

During the past few weeks it has become clear to the world that Japanese military, naval and air forces have been sent to Southern Indo-China in such large numbers as to create a reasonable doubt on the part of other nations that this continuing concentration in Indo-china is not defensive in its character.

Because these continuing concentrations in Indo-China have reached such large proportions and because they extend now to the southeast and the southwest corners of that Peninsula, it is only reasonable that the people of the Philippines, of the hundreds of Islands of the East Indies, of Malaya and of Thailand itself are asking themselves whether these forces of Japan are preparing or intending to make attack in one or more of these many directions.

I am sure that Your Majesty will understand that the fear of all these peoples is a legitimate fear in as much as it involves their peace and their national existence. I am sure that Your Majesty will understand why the people of the United States in such large numbers look askance at the establishment of military, naval and air bases manned and equipped so greatly as to constitute armed forces capable of measures of offense.

It is clear that a continuance of such a situation is unthinkable.

None of the peoples whom I have spoken of above can sit either indefinitely or permanently on a keg of dynamite.

There is absolutely no thought on the part of the United States of invading Indo-China if every Japanese soldier or sailor were to be withdrawn therefrom.

I think that we can obtain the same assurance from the Governments of the East Indies, the Governments of Malaya and the Government of Thailand. I would even undertake to ask for the same assurance on the part of the Government

of China. Thus a withdrawal of the Japanese forces from Indo-China would result in the assurance of peace throughout the whole of the South Pacific area.

I address myself to Your Majesty at this moment in the fervent hope that Your Majesty may, as I am doing, give thought in this definite emergency to ways of dispelling the dark clouds. I am confident that both of us, for the sake of the peoples not only of our own great countries but for the sake of humanity in neighboring territories, have a sacred duty to restore traditional amity and prevent further death and destruction in the world.

How should we assess the content of this message to the emperor which remains in the historical record?

The first paragraph has clearly been influenced by the Asakawa draft. As noted previously, the November 29th draft put together largely by the State Department, was greatly influenced by Asakawa's version; and it is only natural that the Asakawa draft would continue to exert some influence.

However in the middle of the message, attention is focused on the activities of the Japanese military in the vicinity of French Indochina, which appears in neither the Asakawa draft nor the November 29th draft. It was certainly true that these Japanese troops movements presented an enormous problem within the American government. It was widely reported in the American press on November 30th that Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo had given a vengeful speech, calling for the expulsion of American and British forces from Asia. Although this report was mistaken, and Tojo had not made any such speech, Roosevelt was apprised of it and hurriedly returned to Washington from Warm Springs, ahead of schedule. Roosevelt lodged a formal inquiry to the Japanese embassy on December 2nd, through Assistant Secretary of State

Sumner Welles, asking about Japanese troop movements in the vicinity of French Indochina. It was quite true the American government was rather concerned about this issue. However what we should focus on in Roosevelt's actual message to the emperor is that there were no concrete proposals for alleviating the current crisis. Although he proposed peace with the countries neighboring French Indochina, including China, there were no emergency measures to halt Japanese troop movements and stave off the outbreak of war. This is immediately apparent upon closer inspection.

The Asakawa draft had very few concrete proposals regarding the actual negotiations between Japan and the United States, because Asakawa was not aware of the details of those negotiations. However, he made a critical observation: the present conflict could be easily resolved because, in the context of the long history of amity between Japan and the United States, it was "shallow-rooted." In conclusion, he included a practical request for the emperor to make this message publicly known and turn Japanese public opinion around.

At the aforementioned war council of November 25th, Roosevelt and the others considered how to somehow entice Japan to fire the first shot without exposing the United States to excessive danger.⁴³ It is also clear that the November 28th proposed message to the emperor was, for Roosevelt, not intended for bringing about peace between Japan and the United States. The message was ostensibly meant to bring about peace, so naturally Secretary of State Hull and War Secretary Stimson opposed it. But Roosevelt took a loftier perspective: he had other uses for this message to emperor, and felt it was the right time to prepare a message draft.

As noted previously, if his message to the emperor was actually meant to bring about peace, Roosevelt as the leader of one the nations which would be involved in that war, should have considered a

number of other options that would have successfully avoided war, rather than sending a message like those he sent Hitler and Mussolini. If the Hull Note had been presented in anger, it could have been withdrawn. Or the modus vivendi prepared by the State Department could have been presented. Or any number of proposals containing emergency compromise measures could have been made to temporarily halt Japanese troop movements in the vicinity of French Indochina.

This author (Sugihara) believes that leaders in the American government, including Roosevelt, had foreknowledge of the Japanese navy's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The first governor of Hawaii, John Barnes, then a policeman in Honolulu who headed an intelligence office set up jointly with the FBI, claimed before he passed away he had been told by an FBI official sent to observe the movements of Japanese-Americans in Hawaii, that he had heard a week before the assault that the Japanese military would attack Pearl Harbor within a week.⁴⁴ Then-Labor Secretary Frances Perkins claimed that, at a December 5th cabinet meeting, Roosevelt stated he knew where the Japanese fleet was located.⁴⁵ No records were kept for the Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting held on the night of December 6th, and the strange behavior of those military leaders on the morning of December 7th reveals without a doubt these government leaders had foreknowledge of the Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor. From this perspective, the content of Roosevelt's message to the emperor becomes more insidious. By lecturing at length about the Japanese troop movements in the vicinity of French Indochina, he sent a false signal to the Japanese side that he was completely unaware of the imminent attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Message to the Emperor with the Modus Vivendi

If the president had intended his message to the emperor to bring about peace between Japan and the United States, he could have presented the modus vivendi prepared at the same time as the Hull Note. If this had been shown to the Japanese side sometime before the outbreak of hostilities, the war between Japan and United States could certainly have been avoided. In fact there is another message draft prepared by the State Department on December 6th on Hull's instructions, which contained in substance a modus vivendi. And Roosevelt even indicated he was prepared to seriously consider this draft.

Let us examine this alternative draft of the message to the emperor.⁴⁶

Message from the president to the emperor of Japan

December 6th, 1941

I feel I should address Your Majesty because of the deep and far-reaching emergency which appears to be in formation in relations between our two countries. Conversations have been in progress between representatives of our two governments for many months for the purpose of preventing any extension of armed conflict in the Pacific area. It has been my sincere hope that this would be achieved and I am sure that it has equally been the sincere hope of Your Majesty.

Developments are now occurring in the Pacific area which threaten to deprive each of our nations and humanity of the beneficial influence of the long and unbroken peace which has been maintained between our two countries for almost a century. Those developments are suggestive of tragic possibilities.

In these circumstances, where continuance of present trends imperil the now tenuous threads which still hold our two countries in amicable relationship, I feel that no possibility should be overlooked which might serve to relieve the immediate situation and thus enable our two Governments to work out in a calmer atmosphere a more permanent solution. I am sure Your Majesty will share my feelings in this regard.

The history of both our countries affords brilliant examples in which your and my predecessors have, at other times of great crisis, by wise decisions and enlightened acts, arrested harmful trends and directed national policies along new and farsighted courses—thereby bringing blessings to the peoples of both countries and to the peoples of other nations.

With the foregoing considerations in mind I propose now the conclusion of a temporary arrangement which would envisage cessation of hostilities for a period of ninety days between Japan and China and an undertaking by each of the Governments most concerned in the Pacific area to refrain from any movement or use of armed force against any of the other parties during the period of the temporary arrangement. If the Japanese Government is favorably disposed toward conclusion of such an arrangement I would be glad promptly to approach the other Governments concerned with a view to obtaining their assent and commitment.

In order to give those governments an incentive to enter into this arrangement, I further propose that, toward relieving existing apprehensions, Japan reduce her armed forces in French Indochina to the number which Japan had there on July 26, 1941, and that Japan agree not to send new contingents of armed forces or material to that area during the ninety-day period of the temporary arrangement.

If the commitments above envisaged can be obtained, I would undertake as a further part of the general arrangement to suggest to the Government of Japan and

to the Government of China that those Governments enter into direct negotiations looking to a peaceful settlement of the difficulties which exist between them. Such negotiations might take place in the Philippine Islands should the Japanese and Chinese Governments so desire.

In as much as the Chinese Government has been cut off from its principal industrial areas, I believe it equitable that during the temporary period of the proposed arrangement the United States should continue sending material aid to China. I may add that the amount of material which China is able under present conditions to obtain is small in comparison with the amount of material that Japan would save through discontinuance of operations for a period of three months.

It is my thought that while this temporary arrangement would be in effect our two Governments could continue their conversations looking to a peaceful settlement of the entire Pacific area. The kind of solution I have had and continue to have in mind is one in which Japan, on the basis of application of the principle of equality, would be provided through constructive and peaceful methods opportunity for the freer access to raw materials and markets and general exchange of goods, for the interchange of ideas, and for the development of the talents of her people, and would thus be enabled to achieve those national aspirations which Japan's leaders have often proclaimed.

In making this proposal, I express to Your Majesty the fervent hope that our two Governments may find ways of dispelling the dark clouds which loom over the relations between our two countries and of restoring and maintaining the traditional condition of amity wherein both our peoples may contribute to lasting peace and security throughout the Pacific area.

It is very clear this message draft proposed a practical ninety-day cease-fire and a possible modus vivendi. It made provision for a modus vivendi which would stop the "bleeding to death" Terasaki mentioned to Jones in connection with the American oil embargo, and it also included the idea of mediation towards a peaceful settlement with China. On November 26th, when the Hull Note was presented to the Japanese government—perhaps not entirely at Hull's instigation—a modus vivendi of this sort had already been scrapped. So why was the idea for a modus vivendi so clearly revived now in this manner? It certainly wasn't because a State Department official or even Hull himself had independently decided albeit reluctantly to present this to the president, to comply with the purported intent of preventing war. Even if formally it was an actual emergency proposal to avoid war, no State Department official could present this without the approval of the president who, on November 26th, had already scrapped the modus vivendi. In the memo Hull attached to this draft message, he proposed that the Chinese be informed of its outline beforehand because it included peace talks between themselves and Japan, but that they not be shown the actual draft at preliminary talks. The Chinese ambassador should also be instructed to use his "most secret code" when contacting his government. His memo shows that, when this draft was written, Hull fully intended to transmit this draft message.⁴⁷

In fact, Roosevelt had already demonstrated a particular interest in the Pearl Harbor issue after becoming president in 1933.⁴⁸ In 1936 he ordered then-Navy Chief of Staff William H. Stanley to look into a possible attack on Hawaii by the Japanese military; and that same year, he established a branch of the FBI in Hawaii.⁴⁹ On October 8, 1940, then-Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC) Admiral James O. Richardson advised Roosevelt of the disadvantages of retaining the Pacific

Fleet in Hawaii, but Roosevelt believed it would have a restraining effect upon Japan and rejected Richardson's advice. Roosevelt told Richardson that Japan was in a protracted war with China, and if its field of operations broadened, sooner or later it would make a mistake and start a war with the U.S.⁵⁰ Roosevelt didn't see eye-to-eye with Richardson, and replaced him as CINCPAC in January 1941 with Husband E. Kimmell. From May 10th through July 8, 1941, he authorized official (but covert) plans to use Chinese troops to attack Japan. However, material aid was urgently needed at the European front, so these plans were not executed, but they do demonstrate his consistent antipathy towards Japan.⁵¹

I examined extensively the reasons for presenting the Hull Note on November 26th in my book *Between Incompetence and Culpability*. The Japanese side had presented their so-called Proposals A and B, and it appeared as though Proposal B in particular might have convinced the cabinet to agree to a compromise solution to avoid war; so to gain time, the State Department was directed to produce two drafts: one for a permanent agreement and the other for a modus vivendi. Then, in a false show of rage Roosevelt ordered Hull to present only the permanent agreement, the so-called Hull Note, without its companion modus vivendi. Although two days earlier the State Department draft of the permanent agreement had called for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from China, this line in the agreement had been footnoted "with the exception of Manchuria" to prevent any misunderstanding on the Japanese side; but the footnote was later deleted to cause confusion as to whether Manchuria was included or not.⁵²

Why did Roosevelt, who maintained a steady antipathy towards Japan, prepare this modus vivendi moments before war between Japan and the United States broke out, and why did he prepare a version of a message to the emperor which might actually have avoided war? In

order to mislead the Japanese, Roosevelt consistently remained cordial towards those in the Japanese embassy, and made efforts to show even those Americans around him that he felt no malice towards Japan, so that this too would get back to the Japanese. In the end, he successfully provoked Japan to fire the first shot and brought the United States into the war. Why then at the last moment did he prepare a message to the emperor which may actually have helped prevent war? Roosevelt could read all Japan's diplomatic cables thanks to the code-breaking "Magic"—despite occasional errors in their translation—and he had lavish access to sources of Japanese military intelligence. One might even say that, qualitatively, he had as firm a grasp of Japan's political and military situation as Prime Minister Tojo. With all this intelligence at his fingertips, the president had to appear to be pushing for peace up until the last moment, while also covertly enticing the Japanese to fire the first shot. It took Roosevelt, with the American people and the Japanese government being none the wiser, more than a year after his meeting with Richardson to finally succeed in provoking Japan to fire the first shot. So why, at the last moment, did he prepare this message draft which apparently contradicted his intentions?

To answer this question, we must examine the situation Roosevelt and those around the president found themselves in a few days before the message was cabled to the emperor on December 6th. As mentioned in my book *Between Incompetence and Culpability*, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* published an exposé on Roosevelt's "war plans" on December 4th. AEF refers to the American Expeditionary Forces.

FDR'S War Plans

Goal Is 10 Million Armed Men;
Half To Fight In AEF
Proposes Land Drive By July 1, 1943, To
Smash Nazis.....

The next day, December 5th, it was the turn of the *Washington Times Herald* to publish a follow-up report.

War Plan Exposé Rocks Capital,
Perils Army Appropriation Bill;
London Hails Prospect of AEF

Quite frankly, this secret war plan broke the pledge Roosevelt made to renounce war, during the fall 1940 presidential campaign when he sought reelection to an unprecedented third term. He had made the following anti-war promise to win that third term: "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again. Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars."⁵³ These "war plans" clearly violated this pledge. They dealt a crushing blow to Roosevelt and government leaders around him. It could have brought down his administration. Since the American public was overwhelmingly against war, without this promise Roosevelt would not have won reelection for a third term. Secretary of War Stimson phoned the president on the morning of December 5th, and Roosevelt said he intended to "not answer any questions about it" at a press conference at ten o'clock that morning. He dodged the issue by announcing that he had "nothing to say but that the Secretary of War probably did."⁵⁴

This was the greatest crisis Roosevelt had faced since the beginning of his administration, and the only way out was to get a peaceful settlement between Japan and United States. Moreover, it had to be presented to the public on a grand scale. Until then, the negotiations in principle had been conducted "under the radar" and had been overly discreet. With China's involvement, the United States would try to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Japan and China. The Philippines would be a practical venue to hold these negotiations. Had this been announced, Japan would clearly have accepted it. It was a masterful performance to cover-up the media's leaking of the war plans. But how to do this, yet still manipulate the Japanese side to fire the first shot which, as Richardson observed, would take about a year. The fruits of those labors could not be left

merely to chance. Failure would fill Roosevelt with regret. Roosevelt had his own way of making all kinds of compromises when compromises were clearly needed.

According to Roosevelt's biographer, James MacGregor Burns: "Roosevelt was a practical man who proceeded now boldly, now cautiously," and his faith was more a set of attitudes than a firmly grounded moral code; he could easily clinch a compromise at a decisive moment.⁵⁵ The creation of the message to the emperor is surely a case in point.

The Pearl Harbor Connection

The draft of the message to the emperor which included a *modus vivendi*, is closely connected to the fact that the Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor became a "sneak attack" due to the "final memorandum"—which was to serve as a declaration of war—being delivered late.

This author (Sugihara) shares the view of journalist Tsutomu Konno who believes that American military leaders, including Roosevelt, knew in advance about the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Navy. In 1991 on the 50th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Konno examined the issue in great detail and found that intelligence the Japanese navy's Task Force was en route to Pearl Harbor, had reached Roosevelt sometime between the evening of December 2nd and noon the next day.⁵⁶ It was undoubtedly strange that Roosevelt, who had been interested in Pearl Harbor even before becoming president, failed to urge local Hawaiian naval and military commanders to reinforce their defenses. At the November 25th war council, Roosevelt argued that Japan was notorious for launching attacks without warning.⁵⁷ This was in fact what was going to happen at Pearl Harbor. If Roosevelt was to leave Pearl Harbor as an easy target, Japan would lay plans for an attack there. Pearl Harbor would become

the target of a warning-less assault. For Roosevelt, knowledge of this would have been quite gratifying and immensely satisfying.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt's secret war plans were leaked on December 4th. Until that moment the Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor could only be, at best, a matter for speculation. But after the war plans were leaked, that attack became vital to ensure the continued existence of the administration. Would the Japanese Navy actually attack Pearl Harbor? What if the attack was suspended? Leaking of Roosevelt's war plans might have led to the suspension of operations. Indeed, War Secretary Stimson pointed out that Soviet troops had commenced a new assault against Germany in Rostov on December 1st, and feared that Japan, with concerns over Germany, might decide against going to war.⁵⁸

However, since intelligence about the Japanese navy's plan to attack Pearl Harbor was top-secret, he could not allow his concerns to show. In public, he would have to direct all his energy, from December 4th through 5th, to dealing with the secret war plans leak. In this awkward climate, the cabinet was convened as scheduled on the afternoon of December 5th. High on the agenda was, naturally, the leaking of the war plans. There was an uneasy atmosphere. In an attempt to lighten the mood, Secretary Hull used some "very large and impressive blasphemy" to describe the Japanese. At that precise moment, Navy Secretary Knox revealed that they knew where the Japanese fleet was. The president nodded his head as if in agreement.⁵⁹

Covering up one secret soon led to the uncovering of another. The war plans had also been hidden from members of the cabinet. When this secret of secrets was revealed, some explanation had to be given. To smooth things over at this critical moment, Roosevelt casually dropped another bombshell. On this, the

military leaders, including Roosevelt, were likely to have been of one mind.

Japan's Foreign Ministry notified its embassy in Washington by cable on December 2nd to destroy its code machines, and the decrypted intercept of this message was delivered to Roosevelt on December 3rd. Here finally was proof that Japan had begun preparations to launch a war. Meanwhile, Hitler's assault on the Soviet Union had failed, and on learning this Japan might have aborted its attack on the United States. Without some turn of events, the war plans leak might have led to the downfall of the Roosevelt administration. Had Japan been more discerning, it would have considered the benefits of postponing war with United States.

At 3:00 p.m. on December 6th, Roosevelt learned from the decrypted intercept of the important pilot message for the "final memorandum" that Japan was about to send a final message to the American government.⁶⁰ This was a clear indication of Japan's decision to go to war. It was no longer likely Japan would suspend its war launch.

Roosevelt had been well briefed on the processes behind Japan's policy decisions by Ambassador Nomura.⁶¹ A conference would be convened in the emperor's presence when determining important policies, and these policies would be sanctioned with the emperor's approval. During these imperial conferences, the emperor would remain silent and rely entirely upon his ministers. Ministers could then be held responsible should any particular decision fail. This system meant important matters of state would take a long time to decide, and once a decision was made it was hard to amend that decision. Roosevelt would not have known the exact details of specific conferences, but the decision to launch a war against the United States was taken after proceedings at the Imperial Conference of December 1st. While the emperor hoped for peace, he remained completely silent. The Japanese navy's

Task Force had already left its staging point, Hitokappu Bay, on November 26th, and was en route to Pearl Harbor. Without the decision to go to war the Task Force would turn back, but if the decision was in the affirmative it would continue on its way.

Even if Roosevelt had no foreknowledge of the Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor, it was still possible to conclude that Japan intended to launch a war, based on known Japanese troop movements, and intercepted decrypts of the pilot message which advised that a "final memorandum" would be sent. It was inevitable that Japan would launch a war. By this stage no one, not even on the Japanese side, could have stopped it.

That being the case, it was completely unnecessary to transmit the State Department draft of the message to the emperor with the vexing *modus vivendi*. Everything would be resolved after Japan launched the war.

Roosevelt probably made some hurried amendments to the State Department message draft. And if he had foreknowledge of the attack on Pearl Harbor, he would focus on Japanese troop movements in the vicinity of French Indochina, an established bone of contention between Japan and the United States, to make it appear he was completely unaware of the imminent attack.

It is unknown whether this amended message draft was returned to Hull for further review. It seems likely there was no time for appropriate State Department officials to review the draft. This means that the draft he and his subordinates had made three or four technical corrections to before returning it to the president, and which Hull referred to in his memoirs, must have been the one with the *modus vivendi*. And this calls into question the veracity of Hull's statement that Roosevelt passed the draft back with instructions to make no further revisions and simply send it.

In any case, Roosevelt clearly did his utmost to the very end to carry out his original intentions. Thirty minutes after dispatching the final version of the message to the emperor, he read through decrypted intercepts of the first 13 of 14 parts for the "final memorandum" from Japan to the American government, and declared "this means war!"

The outbreak of war between Japan and United States which culminated in the dropping of the atomic bomb, was completely in Roosevelt's hands; Roosevelt was unconcerned from the start who knew it. In other words, it was up to Roosevelt whether there was to be war between Japan and the United States. With all manner of information at his fingertips, Roosevelt could freely decide whether or not to prosecute a war with Japan. This means that not only was the war not inevitable, it was also unnecessary. The existence of the message draft with the *modus vivendi* proves this. For example, it could be argued that, even if America's priority was to become a belligerent in the war so as to defeat Germany, the United States could have resolved the situation by simply providing war materiel aid to Britain and her allies, and did not need to entice Japan into firing the first shot at the U.S.

In *Between Incompetence and Culpability*, I examine the near-criminal incompetence of Japanese diplomacy which failed to see through Roosevelt's ulterior motives for the outbreak of war between Japan and United States. The war was, it could be argued, even a consequence of this incompetence.

Even from a military perspective, Japan's diplomatic efforts were feeble. CINCPAC Admiral Husband Kimmell, who was based in Hawaii, claimed in a radio interview on December 6th—the day before the attack on Pearl Harbor—that Japan would not launch a war because Germany's assault on the Soviet Union had failed.⁶² Although Japan had based

the decision on the date to launch war on a number of factors, such as the overall strategy for the Pacific theater, and weather conditions for the southern advance campaign,⁶³ they had not taken into account the changing status of hostilities between Germany and the Soviet Union. Putting aside all military considerations and considering purely diplomatic areas of responsibility, the Foreign Ministry never realized until the outbreak of war that all its cables were being intercepted, decoded, and read by the other side, and it also had no inkling of Roosevelt's ulterior motives. It was unable to take advantage of the serious crisis which unfolded when Roosevelt's war plans were leaked. In the greater scheme of things, Japanese diplomacy should seriously reflect upon all the mistakes that were made regarding the message to the emperor.

Conversely, Roosevelt was a gifted politician. He kept his deeply-held hostility towards Japan completely hidden from the Japanese side to the very end. He masterfully realized his deep-rooted plan to have Japan fire the first shot without putting the American side in too much danger, even though the sacrifice at Pearl Harbor was greater than anticipated. However if war was in fact not inevitable, Roosevelt may have plunged the American people into an unnecessary war. Indeed, if he had advance warning of the Japanese navy's attack on Pearl Harbor, the American public would surely condemn him as a criminal who sacrificed troops' lives in Hawaii, by allowing Japan to carry out the Pearl Harbor attack and thereby launch the war between Japan and United States.

Final Moves on the Japanese Side

Let us conclude this discussion of the message to the emperor by examining the Japanese side's involvement in the version that was actually sent.

Frederick Moore, the Foreign Ministry employee who worked at the Japanese

embassy in Washington, went to the embassy on the afternoon of December 6th. When Moore learned that the all-important message to the emperor was about to be sent, Ambassador Nomura wearily shook his head as if to say: "No, it has come too late." Nomura naturally realized that, after Japan had sent its "final memorandum," the message to the emperor would be ineffective.⁶⁴

What about Hidenari Terasaki, who had worked so hard to produce the message to the emperor? Terasaki was responsible for the flow of information at the embassy, in other words he was the intelligence officer. This explains why the FBI had maintained a continuous wiretap on his phone. Like his bosses Nomura and Kurusu, Terasaki didn't see through Roosevelt's ulterior motives, but he should probably be given due credit for his tireless efforts towards producing the message to the emperor. Terasaki received transfer orders around this time, either because he was a valued intelligence officer, or to give the appearance of routine peace-time operations at the embassy. A farewell dinner was therefore held for Terasaki at the Chinese Lantern Restaurant on the evening of December 6th. Terasaki arrived late, and announced that "something really important had happened," namely that Roosevelt had sent a message to the emperor. First Secretary Koto Matsudaira said: "Then it means war." Roosevelt had sent a personal telegram to Hitler before Germany invaded Poland, and to Mussolini before Italy entered the war, Matsudaira explained, so these personal telegrams were an indication of imminent war.⁶⁵

It is unclear whether Terasaki made his announcement out of excitement because he thought Roosevelt's message would prevent the outbreak of war; or if, like Ambassador Nomura, he believed it had come too late and would be sent in vain. However Terasaki must certainly have felt that Roosevelt had been extremely gracious and had shown much

understanding. Hadn't Roosevelt praised him for his "bravery"? Wouldn't the message from Roosevelt actually turn things around for the better? However, it was too late. Matsudaira's comment that the president's personal messages signaled war was worrying. In any case, Terasaki's actions the following morning show that, even if he believed war would break out, he didn't think it would be so soon. He had just received his transfer orders, and December 7th, a Sunday, was his day off so he took his family for a drive. However a nagging concern made him abandon the drive, and return to the embassy. He witnessed the panic in the embassy while the "final memorandum" was being prepared, and learned that afternoon from radio broadcasts that the Japanese navy had attacked Pearl Harbor.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, in Japan the Foreign Ministry learned from American radio broadcasts that Roosevelt was to send a personal message to the emperor. Where was Roosevelt's message? Arrangements had been made for Ambassador Grew's audience with the emperor where he would personally hand over the message to His Majesty, but the cable did not show up at the American embassy. The cable itself had arrived in Japan around noon on December 7th (local time), but its delivery to the American embassy was deliberately delayed in accordance with the Japanese army's standing policy. It was not delivered to Grew until half past ten that evening. By the time it was hurriedly decoded and arrived at Foreign Minister Togo's official residence, it was already a quarter past midnight on December 8th.⁶⁷ It was 3:00 a.m. before it was finally delivered directly to Emperor Hirohito. Although the attack on Pearl Harbor had yet to begin, by coincidence a Japanese submarine which was part of the attack had been detected and sunk by the U.S. navy.⁶⁸ The emperor was informed of this, but upon advice from Togo it was decided not to send an official reply to Roosevelt's message. Although the contents of the message laid out

Roosevelt's concerns, there was nothing in it which required an immediate response from the Japanese side. However the emperor, ever scrupulous, ensured that a brief message was later conveyed verbally to Ambassador Grew, thanking the president for his personal message, and addressing the contentious issue of troop concentrations in French Indochina.⁶⁹

In any case, the army's deliberate delay of the cable's delivery to the American embassy did not cause any direct harm.

Why did the army take such seemingly foolish and anomalous behavior to delay the cable's delivery? There was an explanation for this. Every precaution had to be taken, if war was imminent, to prevent intelligence about war preparations leaking abroad. Therefore even if foreign spies obtained important intelligence and tried to transmit it abroad, it was better to delay the cable's arrival and thereby lower its intelligence value. This was why foreign cables were routinely delayed by several hours, and those addressed to Ambassador Grew were delayed for approximately ten hours, much longer than ordinary telegrams.⁷⁰

For the sake of argument, what would have happened if the message sent by Roosevelt had indeed been the alternative version with the *modus vivendi*? Although Japan would have eagerly accepted this *modus vivendi*, it was not in fact sent to the Japanese government and the tragic war between Japan and the United States was allowed to unfold. Dwelling on historical "what if's" is frowned upon, but matters may have escalated ridiculously out of hand if the Japanese navy had carried out its attack and precipitated the war, despite Roosevelt sending a message which could potentially have brought about peace.

It is conceivable though that, in Roosevelt's capable hands, such a thing would never have happened. If Japan was unwilling to reverse its decision to launch

war, the Japanese military would of course behave as it did. As a skillful tactician, Roosevelt would never have sent a message to the emperor containing a modus vivendi, without first confirming Japan's troop movements.

Roosevelt bided his time, and waited until the very last moment before the outbreak of war to send his message to the emperor, when he was confident that war was inevitable, and that he would not jeopardize its timing. He successfully deceived people all over the world that he had struggled until the last moment for peace.

Footnotes:

1. U.S. Congress, Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, *Pearl Harbor Attack: Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 39 parts (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1946), part 14, exhibit no. 20, p. 1238 (hereafter cited as PHA).
2. U.S. Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington D.C.: U.S. G.P.O., 1943), pp. 476-7, 536-8.
3. Kurusu, Saburo, *Homatsu no sanjugo-nen: gaiko hisshi* [Thirty-five years of vain endeavor: A secret diplomatic history] (Tokyo: Bunka Shoin, 1948), p. 117.
4. *ibid.*, p. 116.
5. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O.) (hereafter cited as FRUS), 1941, vol. 1, p. 359.
6. Sugihara, Seishiro, *Between Incompetence And Culpability: Assessing the Diplomacy Of Japan's Foreign Ministry From Pearl Harbor to Potsdam* (trans. Norman Hu) (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997), pp. 28-34 (hereafter cited as BI&C).
7. Sugihara, Seishiro, *Between Incompetence And Culpability: Assessing the Diplomacy Of*

Japan's Foreign Ministry From Pearl Harbor to Potsdam (trans. Norman Hu) (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997), pp. 28-34 (hereafter cited as BI&C).

8. FRUS, 1941, vol. 4, pp. 513-4.
9. Japan Foreign Ministry, *Gaiko shiryō: Nichi-Bei koshō kiroku no bu* [Source materials on Japanese foreign relations: Negotiations between Japan and the United States, documents volume] (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1946), pp. 842-3 (hereafter cited as NBKK); PHA, part 12, exhibit no. 1, pp. 180-1. (Cable no. 1180.)
10. Togo, Shigenori, *The Cause of Japan* (trans. Fumihiko Togo and Ben Bruce Blakeney) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 166.
11. NBKK, pp. 505-6; PHA, part 12, exhibit no. 1, p. 195. (Cable no. 844.)
12. Asakawa, Kan'ichi, *Nihon no Kaki* [Japan's Misfortune] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1987), p. 139. Originally published by Jitsugyo no Nihonsha in 1909.
13. Abe, Yoshio, *Saigo no Nihonjin* [The Last Japanese] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), p. 192. First edition published by Iwanami Shoten in 1983.
14. Asakawa Kan'ichi Shokan Henshu Inkaï, *Maboroshi no Beikoku Daitoryo Shinsho* [Editorial committee for the Asakawa Kan'ichi materials, "Illusory message from the American president"] (Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan, 1989), pp. 40-3.
15. Abe, *Saigo no Nihonjin*, pp. 222-37.
16. *ibid.*, p. 237.
17. Moore, Frederick, *With Japan's Leaders* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 269.
18. Stimson, Henry, *The Diaries of Henry Lewis Stimson* (Yale University Library, New Haven, 1973), November 25, 1941.
19. Stimson, *Diaries*, November 28, 1941.
20. PHA, part 12, exhibit no. 1, pp. 180-1. (Cable no. 1180.) Although there are some well-known mistranslations in this decoded

intercept, the ambassadors' submission for a message to the emperor is accurately recorded.

21. PHA, part 14, exhibit no. 19, pp. 1224-5.

22. *ibid.*, pp. 1202-3.

23. PHA, part 15, exhibit no. 73, pp. 1727-34.

24. Saito, Michinori, *Kaisen tsukoku wa naze okureta ka* [Why was the declaration of war delayed] (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2004), pp. 100-5.

25. Jones, Stanley E., "An Adventure in Failure," *Asia and the Americas* (December 1945), p. 613.

26. *ibid.*

27. *ibid.* Jones incorrectly recalls the date of Terasaki's visit as November 28th. The 2:30 p.m. deadline refers to Roosevelt's meeting with the two Japanese ambassadors held on November 27th.

28. *ibid.*, p. 614.

29. Terasaki, Gwen, *Bridge To The Sun* (Chapel Hill: U. North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 66.

30. Nomura, Kichisaburo, *Beikoku ni tsukaishite: Nichi-Bei kosho no kaiko* [On a mission to the United States: Reflections on negotiations between Japan and the United States] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1946), p. 159.

31. FRUS, *Japan: 1931-1941*, vol. 2, pp. 701-4.

32. NBKK, pp. 502-4; PHA, part 12, exhibit no. 1, pp. 192-4. (Cable no. 1206.)

33. Terasaki, *Bridge*, p. 66. According to Gwen Terasaki, when Kurusu revealed his idea to Hidenari Terasaki for the president to send a personal message to the emperor, he purportedly said the Japanese prime minister, Hideki Tojo, had already rejected it. However, it is probably right to assume that Foreign Minister Togo's telegram rejecting the idea had not yet actually arrived, since it was sent two days later on November 28th, and also in light of further developments. It should be noted that Gwen's memoirs may occasionally contain inaccuracies, since they are her recollections and not her husband's.

34. Jones, "Adventure," p. 614.

35. *ibid.*

36. *ibid.*

37. *ibid.*

38. Terasaki, *Bridge*, p. 68.

39. Nomura, *Beikoku ni tsukaishite*, p. 45.

40. U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation Archives, "Hidenari Terasaki," "File 65-37232-48," surveillance log "X9."

41. Hull, Cordell, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, 2 vols., (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1948), vol. 1, pp. 1093-4.

42. FRUS, *Japan: 1931-1941*, vol. 2, pp. 284-6.

43. Stimson, *Diaries*, November 25, 1941.

44. Konno, Tsutomu, *Shinjuwan kishu: Ruzuberuto wa shitte ita ka* [The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor: Did Roosevelt know?] (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shimbunsha, 1991), pp. 200-5. Konno produced a television program on this subject, and used materials from Burns's oral history archive at the University of Hawaii. See Sugihara, Seishiro, *Japanese Perspectives on Pearl Harbor: A Critical Review of Japanese Reports on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Pearl Harbor Attack* (trans. Theodore McNelly) (H.K.: Asian Research Service, 1995), p. 75 (hereafter cited as Sugihara/McNelly).

45. Konno, *Shinjuwan kishu*, pp. 341-5. Perkins's testimony was part of the Columbia University Oral History Project, see Sugihara/McNelly, pp. 78-9.

46. PHA, part 14, exhibit no. 20, pp. 1232-5.

47. *ibid.*, p. 1231.

48. Konno, *Shinjuwan kishu*, pp. 240-2.

49. *ibid.*, pp. 242-3.

50. PHA, part 1, pp. 264-6.

51. *Sankei Shimbun*, July 15, 1999. On Nov. 24, 1991, *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that

the American television network ABC had aired an episode of “20/20” on this subject on Nov. 22, 1991. The secret bombing plans bore the designation JB 355. See Sugihara/McNelly, p. 21.

52. FRUS, 1941, vol. 4, pp. 637-40 (Nov. 22 draft); pp. 637-8, 645-6, 664-5 (Nov. 25); FRUS, *Japan: 1931-1941*, vol. 2, pp. 768-70 (Nov. 26).

53. Roosevelt, Franklin D., “Campaign Address at Boston, Massachusetts: We Are Going Full Speed Ahead!” (October 30, 1940), in *Public Papers and Addresses*, vol. 9 (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 517.

54. Stimson, *Diaries*, December 5, 1941.

55. Burns, James MacGregor, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom, 1940-1945* (New York: Harcourt Brace Yovanovich, 1970), pp. 549-50.

56. Konno, *Shinjuwan kishu*, pp. 330-1.

57. Stimson, *Diaries*, November 25, 1941.

58. Stimson, *Diaries*, December 1-2, 1941.

59. Konno, *Shinjuwan kishu*, pp. 341-5; Sugihara/McNelly, pp. 78-9.

60. Lash, Joseph P., *Roosevelt and Churchill, 1939-1941: The Partnership That Saved the West* (New York: Norton & Co., 1976), p. 486; Hata, Ikuhiko, *Showa-shi no nazo wo ou (jo)* [Solving riddles from the Showa era, vol. 1] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1993), p. 252.

61. Nomura, *Beikoku ni tsukaishite*, p. 45. According to Nomura: “The president asked a number of questions about Japan’s cabinet and system [of government], so I explained to him that ‘in general, important affairs are a matter of common responsibility. Important diplomatic questions are usually subject to collective responsibility.’ ”

62. Toland, John, *Infamy: Pearl Harbor and Its Aftermath* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), p. 313.

63. Japan National Defense Agency, *Senshi soshu: Hawaii sakusen* [War history series: Operation Hawaii] (Tokyo: Asagumo Shimbunsha, 1967), pp. 212-3.

64. Moore, *With Japan’s Leaders*, p. 284.

65. Fujiyama, Naraichi, “Nichi-Bei kaisen zen’ya no Washinton taishikan” [The Washington embassy on the night before the outbreak of the Japanese-American war], in *Shinjuwan moeru (jo)* [Pearl Harbor is burning, vol. 1] (ed. Hata Ikuhiko) (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1991), pp. 159-60; Sugihara/McNelly, p. 137.

66. Yanagida, Kunio, *Mariko* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1983), pp. 104-9.

67. Grew, Joseph, *Ten Years in Japan* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), pp. 486-93; Togo, *The Cause of Japan*, p. 219-20. Togo states that Grew called on him at 12:30 a.m., December 8th.

68. Japan National Defense Agency, *Hawai sakusen*, p. 400.

69. Terasaki, Hidenari and Mariko Terasaki-Miller, eds., *Showa Tenno Dokuhaku-roku: Terasaki Hidenari, goyogakari nikki* [The Showa emperor monologues: Diaries of his chamberlain Hidenari Terasaki] (Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1991), pp. 77-9; Togo, *The Cause of Japan*, pp. 221-2; NBKK, pp. 557-8.

The verbal communication to Grew was, at the American ambassador’s request, later sent in written form to the American embassy, and this document remains in the record under the title “Shinden ni taisuru oboshimeshi” [Our view on the president’s message]. However, the Japanese translation of the original English-language version deleted the portion containing the emperor’s expression of thanks.

70. Sudo, Shinji, *Shinjuwan ‘kishu’ ronso* [The Pearl Harbor ‘attack’ controversy] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2004), pp. 214-20.