

1787/13
Booky

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY METCALF REGARDING THE
EXCLUSION OF JAPANESE CHILDREN FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE BOYCOTTING
OF JAPANESE RESTAURANTS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

-0-

1. The Japanese are a proud, sensitive and warlike people. Owing to their recent admission to recognized equality with the other civilized nations, they are particularly sensitive about everything which questions that equality; one-tenth of the insults which have been visited upon China by the people of the United States would lead to immediate war.
2. Japan is probably the most effective equipment and personnel now existing in the world.
3. We are not ready for war and we could not be ready to meet Japan on anything like equal terms for a long period; the loss of the Philippines, Hawaii, and probably the Pacific Coast, with the complete destruction of our commerce on the Pacific, would occur before we were ready for a real fight. It is difficult to estimate the National humiliation and loss which would result. While we would ultimately drive them out of our own country, there is little or no prospect of our ever being able to inflict any effective reprisals upon Japan, and the loss suffered by us would probably be permanent and irreparable.

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY HATFIELD
REGARDING THE
EXCLUSION OF JAPANESE CHILDREN FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE BOYCOTTING
OF JAPANESE RESTAURANTS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

-2-

1. The Japanese are a proud, sensitive and warlike people. Owing to their recent education in recognition of the other civilized nations, they are particularly sensitive about everything which questions their equality and honor. The incidents which have been visited upon China by the people of Japan would lead to immediate war. Japan is probably the most effective equipment and personnel in the world.

2. We are not ready for war and we could not be ready to meet Japan on anything like equal terms for a long period; the loss of the Philippines, Hawaii, and probably the Pacific Coast, with the complete destruction of our commerce on the Pacific, would occur before we were ready for a real fight. It is difficult to estimate the National humiliation and loss which would result. While we would ultimately drive them out of our own country, there is little or no prospect of our ever being able to inflict any effective reprisals upon Japan, and the loss suffered by us would probably be permanent and irreparable.

4. The Japanese tendency to war is greatly increased by the fact that the mass of the Japanese people were filled with rage at being checked in what they considered a career of certain conquest of Russia. While the Japanese Government greatly desired peace and this country was doing them a good turn in bringing about the peace with Russia, the Japanese people have never looked upon it in that light and they hold a grudge against America for snatching Russia out of their grasp.

5. The Japanese Government always conducts its affairs like a military commander planning a campaign and it has extraordinary capacity for prompt and sudden action. If they see that the tendency of events is going to lead to war, they will not hesitate an instant to bring it on at the time most favorable to them, and that will be, first, before we can have made adequate preparations, second, before the Panama Canal is finished so that we can get our navy into the Pacific in time to save our Asiatic Squadron. The subject is not one of some far distant, possible evil, but it is an immediate and present danger to be considered and averted now, to-day.

6. The position of Japan in China and Manchuria is commanding; many thousands of young Chinese have recently been partly educated in Japanese schools; there are 9,000 of them now in these schools; there are tens of thousands of Japanese all over China; Japan holds the gateway to Manchuria; the Japanese understand the language of the Chinese and understand their customs and ways of thinking and acting. A condition of hostile feeling against us on the part of Japan, even without war, would result in

The Japanese tendency to be greatly increased by the fact that the mass of the Japanese people were filled with rage at being checked in what they considered a career of certain conquest of Russia. While the Japanese Government greatly desired peace and this country was being given a good turn in bringing about the peace with Russia, the Japanese people have never looked upon it in that light and they hold a grudge against America for snatching Russia out of their grasp.

5. The Japanese Government always conducts its military commander planning a campaign and it has extraordinary energy and prompt and sudden action. It they see that the tendency of over-coming to lead to war, they will not hesitate to bring it on at the time most favorable to them. That will be, first, before we can have made adequate preparation, and second, before the Panama Canal is finished so that we can carry into the Pacific in time to save our Asiatic expedition. The subject is not one of some far distant possible evil, but it is an immediate and present danger to be considered and averted now, to-day.

6. The position of Japan in China and Manchuria is commanding; many thousands of young Chinese have recently been partly educated in Japanese schools; there are 9,000 of them now in those schools; there are tens of thousands of Japanese all over China; Japan holds the gateway to Manchuria; the Japanese understand the language of the Chinese and understand their customs and ways of thinking and acting. A condition of hostility existing against us on the part of Japan, even without war, would result

enormous injury, if not the entire destruction of our trade in the Orient, the other side of the Pacific would be closed to America. What will be the effect upon the trade and the prosperity of San Francisco and the Pacific Coast?

7. In any controversy that arises we shall be not only in an attitude absolutely without justification as between us and Japan, but without justification in the eyes of the civilized world, because the things that have been done in San Francisco - the exclusion of Japanese children from the schools and the boycotting of the Japanese restaurants upon the sole ground that they are Japanese - constitute a clear violation of our treaty with Japan; we will then be in a controversy in which Japan is justified and we are discredited by the moral sense of the world.

8. Even if it were not a violation of a treaty and even if no such consequences as have been mentioned were to follow, the attitude taken towards the Japanese is basically unfair and indefensible: the Japanese are far superior to a very large part of the immigrants who are coming into our Atlantic ports from Eastern Europe; they rank high among people of the world in civilization and the domestic virtues and the qualities of good citizenship; they associate and always will associate upon equal terms with the best and most highly cultivated and the ablest of mankind. The San Francisco attitude towards them is an exhibition of the same provincial and uninstructed narrowness and prejudice which the Japanese abandoned when Commodore Perry convinced them of its folly, and which made Korea the Hermit Kingdom, and which China is gradually abandoning; it is totally opposed to the principles and the practice of the American

injury, it is not the exclusion of our trade in the
Pacific Coast. It is not the exclusion of our trade in the
Pacific Coast. It is not the exclusion of our trade in the

the effect upon the trade and the prosperity of San Francisco and the

Pacific Coast.

V. In any controversy that arises we shall be not only in an

attitude absolutely without justification as between us and Japan, but

without justification in the eyes of the civilized world, because in things

that have been done in San Francisco - the exclusion of Japanese

from the schools and the possession of the Japanese restaurants -

the ground that they are Japanese constitutes a clear violation of

every treaty with Japan; we will not have a controversy in which Japan is

justified and we are dishonored in the eyes of the world.

B. Even if Japan were justified in a treaty and even if no

such correspondence as have been made follow, the attitude

taken towards the Japanese in this case is entirely and absolutely

unjustified. The Japanese are far superior to a large part of the immigrants who are

coming into our Atlantic ports from Eastern Europe; they rank high among

people of the world in civilization and the Japanese and the

possessors of good citizenship; they associate and always will associate

upon equal terms with the best and most highly civilized and the spirit of

kindness. The San Francisco attitude towards them is an exhibition of the

most provincial and unimproved narrowness and prejudice which the

Japanese abandoned when Commodore Perry convinced them of its folly, and

which made Korea the Korean Kingdom, and which China is gradually abandoning

it is totally opposed to the principles and the practice of the

it finds no justification in the exclusion of the coolie labor of
China; it stands upon an entirely different and indefensible ground.

9. The Government of the United States can not and will not

submit to being forced into an unjust quarrel and subjected to national

humiliation and disaster by the action of a few ignorant, narrowminded and

prejudiced men who wish to monopolize for themselves the labor market of

San Francisco. The entire power of the Federal Government within the

limits of the Constitution will be used and used promptly and vigorously

to enforce observance of treaties which under the Constitution are the

supreme law of the land, and to secure decent treatment for the people of a

great and friendly power within the territory of the United States.

Oct 27. 1906

W. Winthrop