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*Mémorandum du conseiller<sup>1</sup> au sous-secrétaire d'État par intérim  
aux Affaires extérieures*

*Memorandum from Counsellor<sup>1</sup> to Acting Under-Secretary of State  
for External Affairs*

[Ottawa,] June 23, 1941

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE RUSSO-GERMAN CONFLICT ON THE  
POLICY OF JAPAN

1. Under its present irresponsible national leadership it is always difficult to speak with assurance about Japanese foreign policy. The German attack upon Russia opens so many possibilities of variation in the direction and velocity of that policy that it is particularly difficult to do more than indicate possible lines of development.

2. The first thing to recognize in assessing the present position is that Japan is not required under the terms of the Tripartite Pact to join Germany in the war against Russia, although she may do so if she desires by the simple expedient of declaring that Russia attacked Germany and not vice versa. It would seem to be unlikely that Japan will join Hitler in his attack at the moment as Germany has not in fact claimed very loudly or very insistently that Russia initiated the war. It would be difficult for Japan to use an excuse that Germany herself has not employed with any conviction or with any apparent hope of being believed.

3. Nevertheless Japan may decide that the German attack in the West provides her with the long awaited opportunity to drive Russia from Kamchatka, from Vladivostok, from the Maritime Province and the Amur region. Vladivostok, that "Russian dagger pointed at the heart of Japan" might be forever stricken from the alien grasp by decisive action in this crisis. Many other advantages would accrue to a successful Japan. The fisheries problem would be definitively settled, the oil fields of Kamchatka would supply Japanese deficiencies, Manchukuo would be freed from the Russian menace to the North and East, Mongolia would become a Japanese appanage. On the other hand the Russian Far Eastern Army is said to be the best of the Soviet military organizations, it is self-sufficient and has large reserves of men and supplies. Moreover the Russians are reputed to have put together a considerable fleet of submarines at Vladivostok and to have a strong force of bombers available for attack upon the terribly vulnerable wood and paper cities of Japan. Moreover the Japanese army is not the fresh, efficient and vigorous force that it was four years ago. The plains and hills of China have taken toll, and economic weakness at home has raised serious internal problems which a

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