

High Commissioner, hearing of his difficulties, placed his official residence at their disposal, greeted Brooke-Popham and Van Kleffens officially, had his photograph taken with them for the newspapers in his office, and then left them to proceed with their private discussions. The American attitude, as evidenced both in Manila and later in Washington, was one of sympathy and support but of firm avoidance of any commitment.

8. Mr. Van Kleffens thought that the Philippine Islands would be very difficult to defend. Manila was not a suitable battleship base, and the American Asiatic fleet, which had its headquarters there, was not a major battle fleet. The Americans did, however, have a fleet of 18 submarines in Manila, which was to be increased shortly to 25, and they had a sizeable air force which, in the event of Japanese aggression southward, would be reinforced by three squadrons of long range bombers from the Dutch East Indies.

9. Mr. Van Kleffens had flown out to the East Indies on the Pacific Clipper from San Francisco three or four months ago, and had returned by the same route. He was very much impressed by the progress the United States had made in the interval in fortifying the way stations at which the Clipper landed. The air fields at Midway, Wake Island and Guam were in excellent shape and, he thought, well fortified, but Canton Island, the title to which was the subject of difference between the United Kingdom and the United States, appeared to be quite undefended. This island, which has a powerful radio station and is an essential link in the air communications between this continent and Australasia, could be seized easily by an enemy and the whole system of air communication in the South Pacific would be paralysed. Hawaii itself was very powerfully held and he thought quite impregnable. The United States had now a land force of 30,000 men stationed on the Islands.

10. In Washington Mr. Van Kleffens had seen both President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull. The impression of American policy which he had received in Manila was confirmed by the President. They were ready to give all possible support, but determined to avoid any commitment as to what action the United States would take in the event of war in the Pacific. He had discussed United States relations with Japan with Mr. Hull and with Lord Halifax, but he did not know what might come of Mr. Hull's conversations with Admiral Nomura. When they began Mr. Hull was hopeful that they might lead to a fundamental change in Japanese foreign policy. He was now wavier. In speaking of Admiral Nomura's status in putting forward in Washington a Japanese policy quite out of line with that with which Mr. Matsuoka was identified, he remarked that in February last the Japanese Ambassador in London had spoken to the Dutch Minister there in much the same terms in which Nomura had talked to Hull, intimating that there was a very large body of responsible and moderate Japanese opinion which was very unhappy about the conduct of the war in China and embarrassed by Japan's affiliations with the Axis, and indicated that the Emperor himself was not in sympathy with recent Japanese policies. This statement had been made to the Netherlands Minister by the Ambassador in the presence of two other senior