

February 3, 1944
Paraphrase of Outgoing Navy Cable - Moscow,
February 3, 1944

Citation:

"Paraphrase of Outgoing Navy Cable - Moscow, February 3, 1944", February 3, 1944, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Container # 171, W. Averell Harriman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/209766>

Summary:

W. Averell Harriman and Joseph Stalin discuss information the Russian have gathered from Japanese sources about future Japanese plans and troop movements during World War II.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

Container 171,

277

W. A. Harriman papers, Loc

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

☐ Referred to ☒ Change/Classify it
☐ With concurrence of _____
☒ Declassify ☐ in part and excise as shown
 EO 12958, Sec. 1.3 (a) 8, 17, 18, 19, 20
 ACDC/RSR by MCD

PARAPHRASE OF OUTGOING NAVY CABLE - MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 3, 1944.

~~SECRET~~Harriman Navy
Cable to PresidentFOR THE PRESIDENT FROM HARRIMAN - PERSONAL AND ~~SECRET~~

44 2-2

Last night Stalin volunteered that his information indicated the Japanese were becoming gravely concerned over their position. He said that when the Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact was signed there was a secret exchange of letters in which the Japanese agreed to sell their oil and coal concessions in the northern part of Sakhalin Island to the Soviets. The Japs had 1941, undertaken to complete this transaction before October/but until recently had made no move to fulfill their commitment. Stalin said the Japs have now stated they are prepared to complete the transaction and before long an agreement may be signed. Stalin's comment was Quote This information shows that they are very scared Unquote.

He explained further, saying that he wanted to give another instance, that at a recent Japanese official function in Tokio (where the Soviets do not have a Military Attache), a Russian Lt. Colonel (one of the Soviet agents), was approached by the Chief of the Japanese General Staff, Sugiyama, who expressed a desire to meet Marshal Stalin. Sugiyama said the Germans meant nothing to the Japanese and that their treaty with Germany was only a scrap of paper. Stalin said of course he would not see the man and that no answer had been given, adding Quote Let them go to the devils Unquote. He considered it significant, as a further indication of their fear, that such a high ranking officer would approach a junior officer on such a subject.

MFE

- 2 -

February 3, 1944.

~~SECRET~~

In addition Stalin gave me the following information which he said had come from Soviet intelligence reports:

The Japanese are now reported to be building a new inner defense line and to be evacuating plants and machinery to Manchuria and Japan. They may be preparing to withdraw from their outer line of defense running through Indonesia and may suddenly begin to retreat.

Stalin

Marshal/said the above information should be checked, although he believed his sources were accurate. In response to my inquiry as to where the inner defense line would run, Stalin said he was not sure of the details but it would run roughly through Shanghai, the Shantung Peninsula, Manchuria and around the islands. He believed the Japanese would withdraw to inner lines easier to defend ~~rather than~~ and would not engage their main forces to defend the outer perimeter.

I said that I would cable the above to you and inquire whether we had any information or comment which I could give him.

SECRET

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM HARRIMAN - PERSONAL AND SECRET:

Last night Stalin volunteered that his information indicated the Japanese were becoming gravely concerned over their position. He said that when the Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact was signed there was a secret exchange of letters in which the Japanese agreed to sell their oil and coal concessions in the northern part of Sakhalin Island to the Soviets. The Japs had undertaken to complete this transaction before October 1941, but until recently had made no move to fulfill their commitment. Stalin said the Japs have now states they are prepared to complete the transaction and before long an agreement may be signed. Stalin's comment was Quote This information shows that they are very scared Unquote.

He explained further, saying that he wanted to give another instance, that at a recent Japanese official function in Tokio (where the Soviets do not have a Military Attache), a Russian Lt. Colonel (one of the Soviet agents), was approached by the Chief of the Japanese General Staff, Sugiyama, who expressed a desire to meet Marshal Stalin. Sugiyama said the Germans meant nothing to the Japanese and that their treaty with Germany was only a scrap of paper. Stalin said of course he would not see the man and that no answer had been given, adding Quote Let them go to the devils Unquote. He considered it significant, as a further indication of their fear, that such a high ranking officer would approach a junior officer on such a subject.

In addition Stalin gave me the following information which he said had come from Soviet intelligence reports:

The Japanese are now reported to be building a new inner defense line and to be evacuating plants and machinery to Manchuria and Japan. They may be preparing to withdraw from their outer line of defense running through Indonesia and may suddenly begin to retreat.

Marshal Stalin said the above information should be checked, although he believed his sources were accurate. In response to my inquiry as to where the inner defense line would run, Stalin said he was not sure of the details but it would run roughly through Shanghai, the Shantung Peninsula, Manchuria and around the islands. He believed the Japanese would withdraw to inner lines easier to defend xxxxxxxxxxxx and would not engage their main forces to defend the outer perimeter.

I said that I would cable the above to you and inquire whether we had any information or comment which I could give him.