

NAVY DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to No.

Op-16
A8-5/EF37/Tatibana,
~~A2-11/EF37/TNS-11~~
Serial No. 0466116
CONFIDENTIAL

June 16, 1941

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
C-C-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Answer

From : Director of Naval Intelligence.
To : The Chief of Naval Operations.
Subject : Japanese Espionage activities - Recommendations.
Reference (a): DNI Confidential Memorandum of 16 June, 1941, Serial No. 0508916.

1. The subject Memorandum covers the question raised by the Japanese Naval Attache on two visits to this Office. Briefly, in each case he proposed the Navy Department use its good offices to secure the release of Commander Tatibana, I.J.N., now awaiting trial in Los Angeles on a charge of espionage, with the further statement that in the event of no trial, his Government would immediately recall this Officer. It will be noted no mention was made of T. Kono, a Japanese civilian alien, also charged with violating the Espionage statute.
2. There is additional evidence affecting two Japanese language students, namely, Lt. Cdr. S. Okada, I.J.N., and also Engineer Lt. W. Yamada.
3. It is possible that as the trial of Tatibana progresses the evidence produced may show that the Japanese Naval Attache, Captain Yokoyama, I.J.N. is involved.
4. It is well known to this Division that a large, well-financed, and well-staffed Japanese espionage system is being built up in this country as rapidly as possible. Figures prominent in the Japanese Espionage Service in Manchukuo and Shanghai have recently entered the United States as Officers of the Japanese Government. It is also known that preparations are being made by the Japanese to move their spy center into Mexico in the event the United States becomes involved in hostilities.
5. It is my considered opinion that important naval interests are placed in serious jeopardy not only of espionage but also of sabotage should this Japanese espionage system be permitted to exist. The time to stop it is now, when it is in its incipency.

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(SC) A8-5/EF37

Op-16
A8-5/EF37, Tatibana
A2-14/EF37/EN3-11
Conf. Ser. No. 0466116

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

Subject: Japanese Espionage activities - Recommendations.

6. Therefore, it is recommended the trial of Tatibana proceed until a conviction is obtained.

7. In the event it becomes necessary to indicate our attitude to the Japanese Naval Attache, I further recommend that he be told politely and tactfully that the Navy has done all in its power to do.

A. J. Kirk

*Op 13 has shown State that
Navy desires this trial to
proceed - *A. J. K.**

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Serial No. 0508916

Op-16-F

A8-5/EF37/Tachibana

~~A2-14/EF37/EN3-11~~

CONFIDENTIAL

June 16, 1941.

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MEMORANDUM for the Chief of Naval Operations.

SUBJECT: Japanese Naval Attache - Visit of to discuss implications of the Tachibana case.

1. Captain Yokoyama, I.J.N., Naval Attache to the Japanese Embassy, called on Saturday to discuss the Tachibana case. He stated that:

(a) He had been especially selected by the Imperial Japanese Navy Department over the protests of the Commander-in-Chief of the combined Fleet (who required his services) as Naval Attache to Washington to work with the Ambassador, Admiral Nomura, in the interest of promoting cordial relations between the United States Navy and the Japanese Navy.

(b) The Japanese Navy Department and the Japanese Navy are sincere in their belief that peace must be maintained between the United States and Japan in order to solve amicably problems which have arisen or may arise between the two countries in the Pacific area.

(c) The Japanese Navy believes that the attitude between the two Navies in this respect will have great influence on the Japanese Government in preserving peace.

(d) Admiral Nomura and Captain Yokoyama have worked consistently toward frank and open cultivation of amicable relations and the spirit of friendship and understanding between the United States and Japanese Navies.

(e) In view of this consistent endeavor, the arrest of Tachibana is considered by them an extremely unfortunate event and an instance which they (the accredited representatives of the Japanese Navy Department) greatly regret.

(f) While neither the Ambassador nor the Naval Attache desires to influence or interfere in any way with civil cases (which they recognize the Tachibana case to be) or with the ordinary processes of civil law, the Naval Attache desires to point out that the prosecution of this case might have important and serious results (out of all proportion to the case itself) in the relations between the two countries.

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CGA8-5/EF37

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SUBJECT: Japanese Naval Attache - Visit of to discuss implications of the Tachibana case.

He therefore desired to express his hope that a solution of this case could be found short of actual trial. He offered no suggestions or ideas on the form such adjustment should or could take.

2. Captain Yokoyama's message was received with sympathetic interest, and he was assured that the matter would be presented to the proper responsible officials of the Navy Department.

A. G. Kirk
A. G. Kirk.

June 16, 1941.

Addendum:

Captain Yokoyama, at his own request, returned at noon today to repeat, in effect, what he had said on June 14.

He was asked if any suggestions had occurred to him, and replied that, in the event no trial took place, his Government would immediately recall Tachibana.

He expressed his personal request for our good offices, and hoped something could be done prior to June 18, the date set for the Grand Jury hearing.

A. G. Kirk
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