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Nomura Sees Japan Defense Buildup as 10-Year Problem

Ex-Envoy Doubts Nation Will Become Arms Power Again

By Crosby S. Noyes

At the present rate of rearmament, Japan will not be able to defend itself against aggression for at least a decade.

This is the opinion of one of Japan's foremost prewar military and diplomatic leaders, Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, who will be remembered here as the Japanese Ambassador at the time of Pearl Harbor.

Admiral Nomura, now president of the Victor Corp., of Japan, is back in Washington for his first visit since the fateful days in December, 1941. He is here, he says, to pay his respects to the American branch of his company and look up old friends.

Some have persisted that the main purpose of the admiral's visit is to talk turkey with Ameri-

can leaders about Japanese rearmament. The Admiral has denied this. He is not unwilling, however, to discuss the military future of Japan.

To Americans who think of Japan hopefully as a future bastion of anti-Communist power in the Far East, Admiral Nomura offers no encouragement.

"In time," he says, "Japan must regain its independence both in a military and economic sense. It will take time."

"I do not think that Japan will ever again become a great military power in the Far East. What we have to do is to build up our ability to defend ourselves. That will take many years—10 years, I would say—before Japan could defend itself without American help. In any event, collective security will always be the important thing."

The former Ambassador also failed to endorse the optimistic view that democracy is firmly in the saddle in post-war Japan.

People Like Democracy.

"The people like democracy," he commented. "The people now are sovereign instead of the emperor. But they are not yet mature in the true principles of democracy. They have the will to be free without the sense of responsibility that it takes to be free."

Approving the general policy of the United States in regard to Red China, Admiral Nomura remarked:

"It may turn out that the Chinese Communists are very different from the Soviet Communists. The Chinese are a very independent people. Whether they will also turn out to be more friendly to the free world, I would not like to guess."

Sees Change Here.

As for changes in the United States since his last trip here, the admiral noted that great improvements have been made in such things as the use of manpower and improvement of transportation and communication. Always the diplomat, he politely declined to comment on political developments.

In many interviews since the war, Admiral Nomura has declared that he was the "worst informed" diplomat in Washington before Pearl Harbor. While negotiating with Secretary of State Hull in the final hours, he had no knowledge that the attack was coming.

Somewhat sadly, however, he admits that, had he known, he could have done nothing.

"Japan had already made her great mistake and had taken the wrong direction," he said. "At that point, no single ambassador could have changed the course of events. What is important now is that Japan and the United States must always remain good friends. The international situation demands it."

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