

Tourist Nomura

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Japan's envoy of Pearl Harbor time finds Americans friendly on first trip here since '41.

By STEWART BRONFIELD

ADmiral KICHISABURO NOMURA, Japan's Ambassador to the United States at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, has been traveling in and about New York for the past fortnight. The 76-year-old former diplomat, on his first trip to this country since December 1941, finds New Yorkers and Americans generally a remarkably friendly lot, and is enjoying thoroughly the trip he made "in absolute peace" with all who have remained true friends before and after the war," and to conclude a deal for American publication of his memoirs.

He is often asked, as he was the other day, the horrible question about Pearl Harbor. He signed and stamped, as he has done for twelve years, that he was "so shocked and surprised as any one" when Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor at the very moment he was talking peace in Washington.

"I told them," he recalled wearily, "that I might be called back at any time. But there would only be talk and more talk. That's all I told them that I was certain the United States would not attack Tokyo, and the Japanese would not attack San Francisco."

There is a widespread belief that when Nomura and the special envoy from Japan, Saburo Kawan, walked into the Secretary of State's Central War Room, after a very unimpressive after-lunch talk on Pearl Harbor, Hull exploded into a terrific, uncontrolled, and back-breaking tirade, saying, "That's the end of this war. In them, Mr. Hull reveals that his fury was directed not at the diplomats personally, but at the "peace" he felt they carried Nomura, referring to the occasion later, called himself "the worst-informed Ambassador in history."

SINCE Pearl Harbor Nomura has been a quiet shadow for twelve years. He recently accepted the post of president of Victor Records of Japan, Ltd., which distributes RCA's records in the Orient. Until this emergency, Nomura had been out of headlines and conversations here and in Japan. "I have lived quietly in seclusion," Nomura explains.

New York, he notes, has changed greatly since Al Smith shooed him around the town many years ago. But not, he adds, New Yorkers themselves. He frequently harries back to their friendliness. "I go to Central Park," he says, "to sit on the chair there. Many people come up to me and speak to me. This is very friendly, so? When I was at the U. N. building, I

became thirsty and looked for a cold drink. I saw the 'vulgar' but there with cherry and orange soda, but I did not know how to do with it, and stood there looking at it. A young fellow came up, put in a coin, and offered me an orange drink. New Yorkers, yes, they are most friendly."

HE hasn't eaten at the only Japanese restaurant in New York. He prefers taking his meals at city stores, because he says, it is more interesting and the waitresses are pretty. This is a custom, he revealed, that goes back to his time as Ambassador in Washington. "I don't know," he said, "I would stop at a Japanese store, and I would eat there, and they charge only half the fee of a fancy hotel." The Japanese people, he says, must become more honest. "If a Japanese does not know a thing, he will not admit it. He says nothing. He is like me, standing in front of the automobile, not knowing what to do and not asking."

Added about reports that the most militant Communists in Japan were actually Koreans, he said: "Yes. There are only a few thousand Koreans registered in Japan. But smuggled in there are almost one million!"

He remarked that he has shaken hands with six of our Presidents since he first came to Washington during Theodore Roosevelt's administration. Would he shake the hand of President Eisenhower before returning to Tokyo? "I don't know—I am sure only a private companion: I wouldn't want to trouble him."

A speech at Colgate University at the request of an exchange professor there and a trip to Franklin D. Roosevelt's tomb at Hyde Park with Mrs. Roosevelt were the highlights of his limited schedule. "At 76," he smiled, "my bed awaits me early each night."

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